

Name of Program: Thumbs Up

Target Audience: Appropriate (and encouraged) for the entire wing, Sophs, Juniors & Seniors

Strategy for Implementation: Individual activity, followed by group discussion

Time of Year to Implement: Early second semester (once the wing is more comfortable with and know each other better)

Relevant Learning Goal: 1) Social Responsibility and 4) Intrapersonal Intelligence

Specific Lesson Outcomes:

- Students will explore personal values and identity
- Students will engage in educational experiences that differ from their own cultural upbringing
- Students will promote an equitable environment
- Students will foster respect for self, others, and the community
- Students will engage in interactions outside of their comfort zone

Purpose: To help encourage students to look at their multiple different identities, and how they've shaped them, as well as to help them find commonalities amongst each other in those identities.

Planning and Preparation:

-Materials: 11x17 sheets of printer paper, one per student

Paints of different colors (at least 8)

Paper plates (enough for one per every three or four students)

Clorox wipes (for cleanup)

-Introduction

Each student receives a sheet of the 11x17 paper, and is encouraged to write their name on it wherever & however they like, so long as it is large & legible.

Put a small dollop of each color paint on the plates, and make sure there is one between every three to four students.

Explain to students that you will be reading off different categories of "identity types" as well as giving examples of each type of identity. If they feel comfortable, the student should put a fingerprint on the page for that corresponding identity type, and will write above or around it the specifics of that identity.

-Body of Program

List off each of the identity types, one at a time, while giving the students time to think. After each type, it is helpful to give the students examples of the multiple different examples of that identity that might apply to them. Each type of identity corresponds to a color, and the students will make a fingerprint in that color for every example of that identity that applies to them. For instance...

Green is for jobs that you've had

-- Examples of some to give them: babysitting, tutoring, cashier, retail, etc.

Pink is for any different states or countries you've lived in

-- Examples for this are obvious, but feel free to list some off for them

Dark blue is for siblings or pets you have

-- Examples for this are brothers, sisters, half-siblings, or beloved animals

Purple is for languages you speak

-- Examples for this are English, Spanish, Hindi, Telugu, Mandarin, etc.

Orange is for talents you have

-- Examples for this could be musical, artistic, crafty, good with names, great memory. Etc.

Light blue is for any ethnicities you consider yourself to be

-- Examples for this can be Indian, Italian, Chinese, Nigerian, Irish, Russian, etc.

Red is for any disabilities or disorders that you have (and are comfortable sharing)

-- Examples for this could be dyslexia, ADD, anxiety, color blindness, asthma, diabetes, etc.

Black is for any religious or spiritual affiliations you may have

-- Examples for this could be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, or even spiritual

-Conclusion

Once students have concluded their thumb-printing portion of the piece, have them go back and identify what each individual print specifically stands for (ie: for every sibling, write their name above it; for every ethnicity, write what it is around it; for every job, put what it is you did, etc.) You can then have them talk with each other about any commonalities they found, as well as if any of their own answers came as a surprise to them.

Oftentimes, we are far more alike than we are different, and sometimes it just takes something simple to remind us of that. As part of the larger group discussion, it's important that everyone feels safe, so be sure to preface the discussion with the disclaimer that no one has to share if they don't feel comfortable.

(One suggestion I have that seems to help; each year I make one with my wing, and offer to go first, in an attempt to show that it's a safe space to share, and break the ice, if necessary)

Assessment: Students are encouraged to put their piece outside of their door (if they feel comfortable) in an attempt to celebrate similarities. At the end of the year (when another semester has passed) I ask the students if they have any new identities they would add, and allow them to do so, if they choose.

References: N/A