



Livingston Youth and Community Services

Parent Assignment #4: Grade 4

America is the great "melting pot," a rich blend of cultural traditions from all over the world. Many American families can trace their histories to immigrant ancestors who traveled great distances, enduring risk and hardship, to make a home where they would be guaranteed basic freedoms. And for many American families these freedoms came with a struggle. Their parents and grandparents were deprived the basic rights we value. The differences (or diversity) that come from people from all over the world enrich our culture, bringing new ideas and energy. Today, more than ever, kids interact with people of differing ethnicities, religions, and cultures. Classrooms are increasingly diverse, reflecting the communities where families live and work.



About Tolerance

Tolerance refers to an attitude of openness and respect for the differences that exist among people. Although originally used to refer to ethnic and religious differences, the concepts of diversity and tolerance can also be applied to gender, people with physical and intellectual disabilities, and other differences, too.

Tolerance means respecting and learning from others, valuing differences, bridging cultural gaps, rejecting unfair stereotypes, discovering common ground, and creating new bonds. Tolerance, in many ways, is the opposite of prejudice.

But does tolerance mean that all behaviors have to be accepted? No, of course not. Behaviors that disrespect or hurt others, like being mean or bullying, or behaviors that break social rules, like lying or stealing, should not be tolerated. Tolerance is about accepting *people* for who they are — not about accepting bad behavior. Tolerance also means treating others the way you would like to be treated.

How Tolerance Is Taught

Like all attitudes, tolerance is often taught in subtle ways. Even before they can speak, children closely watch — and imitate — their parents. Kids of all ages develop their own values, in great part, by mirroring the values and attitudes of those they care about. Many parents live and work in diverse communities and have friends who are different from themselves in some (or in many) ways. Parents' attitudes about respecting others are often so much a part of them that they rarely even think about it. They teach those attitudes simply by being themselves and living their values. Parents who demonstrate (or model) tolerance in their everyday lives send a powerful message. As a result, their children learn to appreciate differences, too.

Of course, celebrating differences of others doesn't mean giving up your own heritage. Your family may have its own long-standing cultural and religious traditions that are something to be proud of. Families can find ways to celebrate differences of others while continuing to honor and pass down their own cultural heritage.

How Can Parents Teach Tolerance?

Parents teach tolerance by example — and in other ways, too. Talking together about tolerance and respect helps kids learn more about the values you want them to have. Giving them opportunities to play and work with others is important as well. This lets kids learn firsthand that everyone has something to contribute and to experience differences and similarities.

- Notice your own attitudes. Parents who want to help their kids value diversity can be sensitive to cultural stereotypes they may have learned and make an effort to correct them. Demonstrate an attitude of respect for others.
- Remember that kids are always listening. Be aware of the way you talk about people who are different from yourself. Do not make jokes that perpetuate stereotypes. Although some of these may seem to be harmless fun, they can undo attitudes of tolerance and respect.
- Select books, toys, music, art, and videos carefully. Keep in mind the powerful effect the media and pop culture have on shaping attitudes. Point out and talk about unfair stereotypes that may be portrayed in media.
- Acknowledge and respect differences within your own family. Demonstrate acceptance of your children's differing abilities, interests, and styles. Value the uniqueness of each member of your family.

Source: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/tolerance.html>

Assignment

Ask your child to review the day's lesson and handouts with you. Discuss their feelings about the lesson and any issues that may have come up for them that day in school.

1) Take turns “interviewing” each other: What is one thing you do to respect yourself? What is one thing you do to respect others? Has any one ever disrespected you? How did you handle it? How are kids disrespectful in school? What are the consequences? What can you or your child do to help build respect in school?

Talk about the answers. How are they alike? How are they different?

2) Talk about ways you handle difficult situations, such as dealing with disrespectful people, those who are intolerant of others or respecting people you may not like.

3) Learn together about holiday and religious celebrations that are not part of your own tradition. Honor your family's traditions and teach them to your kids — and to someone outside the family who wants to learn about the diversity *you* have to offer.

4) Point out the times when you see people showing respect to each other, in real life, on TV, in a movie, or in a book. If you see people treating each other badly, talk about what they could do to show more respect and tolerance.

5) Find a charity you and/or your family can volunteer for on the weekends.



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Parent Assignment #4: Grade 4 Respect and Tolerance

Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Which assignment did you choose, and why? _____

Was this lesson helpful? Yes/ No

Please explain _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Raffle Entry

Parent Assignment #4: Grade 4 Respect and Tolerance

Student's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____

School: _____ Grade 4

Please complete this sheet and return to LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039,
Fax: 973-992-9318, email: lycs@livingston.org, or leave at reception in school