

GOOD APPLES

Suitable for Grades 3 - 6

Subject Social Studies, Language Arts, Health (or as part of a unit on individual differences)

Overview

The ability to respect and accept individual differences has a dramatic impact on the quality of life for all of us. Many times children feel more secure with sameness, afraid of being different themselves or of getting close to anyone who is. Students can develop an understanding and respect for individual differences.

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson, used during the early part of the school year, is to introduce the concept that everyone is the same in some ways and different in others.

Objectives

As a result of this activity the students will:

1. Understand that differences among people have a positive value to society.
2. Understand that such differences add to the quality, interest, and value of our lives.
3. Realize that, although we are different, we have many things in common.

Materials

One apple for each student in the class (plus 2-3 extra). The apples should be various sizes, shapes, and colors. With younger children it helps to choose apples with "distinguishing characteristics" such as leaves, scars, and small bruises. You will also need a sharp knife.

Activities & Procedures

Tell the students "We will be spending some time finding out about how people are the same and how they are different. Put the apples on a table in front of the class. Have each student in the class choose an apple. Tell them to get to know their apple really well. Suggest they notice their apple's special characteristics. Have them make up a story about their apple and tell it to a friend (modeling this step is helpful with younger students). Allow the students to share their stories with the rest of the class. Direct the students to return their apples to the table in front of the class. Mix the apples up and ask the students to come back and find their apple.

When they return to their seats ask how they knew which apple was theirs (they will indicate things like color, size, shape, special features). Ask what this has to do with people. Make a list of how people are different.

Discuss why this is important. Make a list of how people are the same. Discuss why this is important. The lists may be done in cooperative groups and then shared with the entire class.

Tying it together

Summarize the importance of individual differences and similarities in people. Suggest that one way in which all people are similar is that they all have a star inside them (something special that makes them shine, that they especially like about themselves), just like each apple has a star inside it. Cut each apple in half (don't cut the usual way, but through the center the other way). Let each child see the star inside their apple. While the students eat the apple, allow them to share something about their star, their strengths, their individuality.