



Learning to Respect Differences through Cultural Diversity in Literature: Teaching Acceptance

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.05.06

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"Learning to Respect Differences Through Cultural Diversity in Literature: Teaching Acceptance," is a multicultural literature-based thematic unit. Through books representing the following cultures: African-American in *Sunder*, Hispanic in *Poems Across the Pavement*, Japanese in *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, and Jewish in *The Hiding Place*, I hope to establish an appreciation and pride in my own students for their cultures and a respect for people of other cultures with which they are not familiar.

In each book chosen, the cultures represented face adverse situations. However, there is a remarkable spirit exemplified by all. The difficulties each group encounters are overcome through tremendous will, strength and determination.

Sunder is a classic piece of literature telling the story of an African-American boy's desire to become educated when African-Americans were limited in their abilities to do so. A great tragedy befalls his family. Nevertheless, this tragedy proves to be the catalyst that enables him to ascertain his dream.

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes is a poignant, true story of a young Japanese girl who contracts the A-bomb (atom bomb) disease, leukemia. She was two years old when the bomb was dropped. She was twelve years old when the doctors realized she had leukemia. She dies, but her legacy lives on to this day in a monument erected in her honor.

The Hiding Place is also a true story. A Christian family become leaders in an "underground operation" that helps Jews who are seeking escape from Nazi occupied Holland. Corrie Ten Boom, the sole survivor of those taken to the concentration camps, tells this compelling story.

Poems Across the Pavement contains poetic vignettes of the author's experiences throughout his life. Luis Rodriguez, the author, grew up on the Mexican side of Watts, LA, was heavily involved in a gang, but would sneak away to the library to read poetry - later to become a poet himself.

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