
Introduction

Overview

Building Community and Combating Hate: Lessons for the Middle School Classroom includes a set of ten lessons for middle school educators or youth service professionals to use within their existing curriculum. The lessons reinforce concepts discussed throughout the Partners Against Hate publication *Program Activity Guide: Helping Youth Resist Bias and Hate*, 2nd edition. The lessons explore the following four themes that encourage individual and collective reflection, research, and action:

- interpersonal communication/conflict resolution,
- the escalation of hate and violence,
- the consequences of scapegoating and bias in history, and
- the rights, challenges and responsibilities of living in a democracy.

The first theme, interpersonal communication/conflict resolution, assists students in recognizing how diverse perspectives influence the ways in which people view and respond to conflict.

The second theme, the escalation of hate and violence, helps build an understanding of the continuum of hate and violence, with an emphasis on the ways that individual and collective choices counter or interrupt this escalation.

The third theme, the consequences of scapegoating and bias in history, examines events in history as a means of exploring the dangers of scapegoating in times of crisis.

Finally, the fourth theme considers the rights, challenges, and responsibilities of living in a democracy.

This publication was born out of the Partners Against Hate's desire to reach students grappling with issues and fears raised by the events of September 11, 2001. While we saw an unprecedented unification of the majority of our citizens in assisting and supporting one another during the hours, days, and weeks following the attacks, we also, unfortunately, witnessed many bias incidents and hate crimes perpetrated against people perceived to be Arab or Muslim. Educators, parents, and others who work with youth sought resources to answer the many questions that these events provoked. Now, more than ever, young people must be provided with an understanding of the escalating nature of hate and violence and the dangers of allowing stereotyping and prejudice to go unchecked.

Audience

These lessons are appropriate for use with middle school youth. Teachers and other youth service professionals will find these lessons helpful as they encourage youth to think about and discuss the following important ideas:

- Recognizing the similarities and differences among people;
- Acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual;
- Understanding and appreciating diversity;
- Considering the harmful effects of prejudice, stereotyping, name-calling, misinformation, and rumors;
- Understanding each person's role in creating fair and respectful communities.

How to Use this Resource

This publication is designed to be a companion publication to the Partners Against Hate publication *Program Activity Guide: Helping Youth Resist Bias and Hate*, 2nd edition. Teachers and other adults who work with youth are encouraged to become familiar with the information provided in the *Program Activity Guide*, and to use as many of the lessons in this publication as possible to ensure that all of the key concepts outlined in the previous section are addressed. It is also important that teachers and youth service professionals integrate these kinds of lessons into existing curricula, thereby helping youth understand that appreciating diversity and speaking out against prejudice and hate are not separate from other learning. Use the chart below to identify ways in which the lessons in this guide correspond to National Standards in a variety of content areas. An addendum following each lesson lists the specific standards applicable to the lesson. Additional books, kits, and guides that include lessons to use with youth can be found in the **Resources for Educators and Youth Service Professionals** section of this publication.

NOTE: The term “students” is used throughout these lessons; however, the lessons are appropriate for use in a variety of settings, including classrooms, afterschool programs, and youth service programs.

Connection of Lessons to National Standards

Lesson Title	Language Arts	History	Life Skills	Behavioral	Civics
1. Ground Rules for Discussion	X		X		
2. Who Am I? Introduction to Diversity	X		X		X
3. Diversity of Beliefs and Values	X		X	X	X
4. Stereotypes	X		X	X	X
5. Prejudice	X		X	X	X
6. Name-Calling	X		X	X	X
7. Misinformation and Rumors	X		X	X	X
8. The Escalation of Hate	X	X	X	X	X
9. Personal Responsibility	X		X		X
10. Remembering Those Hurt By Hate	X		X		X

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