



Discussing Race

Spark Meaningful Classroom Conversations
To Promote Social and Emotional Development



sparkler

Find songs, videos, and more for this unit at www.PlaySparkler.org/ustime

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Introduction

Let's Grow Kids' Big Hearts!

People need “big hearts” (also known as social and emotional skills) to understand themselves and manage emotions and to connect and cooperate with others. Sparkler Learning — an early learning and family engagement organization — created Us Time to help educators working with children ages 2 through 6 explore the ideas of:

- ♥ Me (identity, feelings, self regulation)
- ♥ You (awareness of others, appreciation of diversity)
- ♥ Us (relationships, working and playing with others)

What is Us Time?

Us Time is a framework for classroom community meetings for young students, encouraging educators to use activities, songs, and stories from Sparkler and our partners to grow kids' hearts. This is an action-oriented guide that educators can print and use. It will help:

- ♥ Build multi-session curriculum lessons;
- ♥ Prepare students to address classroom conflicts; and
- ♥ Stretch and support the hearts, minds, words, and bodies of young students.

Us Time will invite children to embark on the life-long discovery of how to be a member of our world community. It will also help educators engage parents and caregivers by helping them to learn about SEL and by giving them access to the activities, tips, songs, and interactive tools available from Sparkler Learning and its partners. You know your classroom best. Each lesson can be pared down — or expanded — to meet your needs. Find more online at www.playsparkler.org/ustime.



Who Made This Guide?

Sparkler Learning is a nonprofit organization that works with educators and other providers serving young children to engage and support families. Our goal: Sparking healthy early childhood development and helping every child get a strong start! Sparkler also collaborated with Noggin — Nick Jr.'s early learning service — and other partners to create a social and emotional learning campaign called Big Heart World, which provides free resources to help parents, caregivers and educators grow kids' big hearts.

Us Time Elements

Each Us Time lesson can be customized to suit the needs and established structures of your classroom. Us Time lessons should begin with the "Us Time" song, followed by a group meeting to introduce the main ideas and review the community agreements, and conclude with the "Thank You" song. Everything that happens in between is up to you! You can choose to do one or several supporting activities per day. Activities can be done during the Us Time meeting, or as an extension activity during another part of your day. You may choose to include Us Time meetings in your daily schedule, or just a few times per week. Whatever you decide, it is recommended to keep your Us Time schedule consistent to help children know what to expect and learn the routines and expectations of Us Time. Below is a list of all of the Us Time elements that you will find throughout the lessons.



A Place to Gather, Plus Materials

During Us Time, students gather together on a rug or in a corner of the classroom. If materials are required (or optional) we let you know.



Opening & Closing Songs

An opening song helps establish a tone of joyful participation, and gives Us Time a feeling of ritual. We know that Us Time has started because we just sang the song! You can access Us Time songs online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs.



Voice and Body Breaks

Voice and Body breaks provide a break from sitting and waiting your turn. These moments can also be opportunities to reinforce big ideas through our bodies. Putting all our hands together, following the leader, building a giant machine with our bodies, stepping around the room in unison: These are all chances to practice working as a group, listening to each other, and expressing ourselves.



Discussion

Discussion is the heart of Us Time, when children get to share their own experiences, brainstorm ideas, and articulate lessons. Discussion can also be a good time to learn vocabulary to help children express their big ideas. If children have a lot to say, you can encourage them to turn to their partner to chat, instead of speaking as a full group together.





Activity

This is when children solidify their understanding through song, activity, or dramatic play. This helps them build a visible and physical manifestation of the lesson.



Story Time

Read together to explore the theme.



Vocabulary

Sometimes we will share vocabulary words, which educators and students can use during Us Time. These are never meant to be used as a list for memorizing, but rather as ways to increase shared community understanding of key terms and phrases.



Play Music/Video

We incorporate videos of songs and examples to enhance learning. You can access songs online at playsparkler.org/ustime.



At Home Resources

Toward the end of this guide, you'll find a letter to send home to parents/caregivers and other resources to share with families. Each lesson is also paired with take-home resources that summarize the lesson and the language of the meeting, and share some ideas for at-home activities to reinforce lessons.

Learn more: www.playsparkler.org/ustime.

Please email with questions/feedback or to get on the list for new releases: support@playsparkler.org.

Us Time: Race

Discussing Race

Welcome to the Race unit of Us Time, which is inspired by "Discussing Race With Young Children: A Step-By-Step Activity Guide," a family-friendly guide created by Sparkler Learning in collaboration with Noggin and OK Play.

This six-lesson Us Time unit designed for educators can be used in schools/classrooms with young children to spark community conversations related to identity, similarities and differences, race, and racism. After the introduction to Us Time (for those not yet using the practice in their classrooms) the unit will cover the following topics:

- Similarities and differences
- Families
- Empathy
- Noticing bias & standing up for others
- Appreciating all cultures
- Review

In this unit, students will gather for classroom community meetings ("Us Time") to explore ideas such as how a person's skin color is one part of their identity, how people who are different from each other can also have things in common and come together as a community, how we can work or play together with people who are different from us, and some ways we can take care of others in our community. The materials are aligned with both the Early Learning Outcomes Framework and CT Early Learning and Development Standards. Each lesson includes references to the specific standards the lesson addresses.



"Discussing Race with Young Children" is a step-by-step guide for families to use with their young children to spark meaningful conversations about identity, similarities and differences, race, and racism. The guide is aligned with this classroom resource and can be shared with families.

Find the family guide online:
www.BigHeartWorld.org/discussingrace

Unit Tips for Educators

Why Does “Race” Belong in Early Childhood Classrooms?

We know that race is an emotionally charged topic and can be an uncomfortable conversation for many of us. As an educator, you may feel that it's not your place, or that your supervisors might object to talking about issues of identity, race, and racism in your classroom. However, creating space for children to discuss and make sense of their observations is important work!

All children notice differences and similarities between people; it's an expected and normal part of their development. Research shows that children notice racial differences in people as early as infancy (Kelly, et al., 2005); by toddlerhood, children often choose playmates based on race (Katz & Kofkin, 1997).

Some people wonder: Why can't we just tell children that race and skin color don't matter, and that we are all the same and equal? It seems like talking about race will further divide us.

We all *wish* we lived in a world where everyone was treated equally regardless of the color of their skin, but that often is not the case. And research tells us that young children notice (Winkler, 2007). Avoiding conversations about race can also cause confusion for children of color who experience racism based on skin color (Lingras, 2021). Perhaps most importantly, by not having these conversations, we may miss a key opportunity to prepare children of all colors to successfully identify racism when it's happening, and to be able to do something about it.

5 Core Reasons to Talk About Race in Your Classroom

You can use these points when sharing information with your supervisors and classroom families.

1. As adults, we have an opportunity to support and guide children. By listening to children's observations and talking openly about race, we can set children up to understand and celebrate differences.
2. When we talk with children about differences — both seen and unseen — we are helping them learn to respect and be kind to the different people who make up their classroom, community, country, and world.
3. Early conversations about race can help to build children's ability to work well with people from different backgrounds. Working collaboratively and solving problems together are skills that will benefit children as they grow up in our diverse world.
4. Talking about differences helps children spot when people are being treated unfairly because of their race — and use their voice to stand up for what's right.
5. Framing conversations around a celebration of race, skin color, and diversity can increase self-esteem and pride in children of color.

Unit Tips (continued)



When we are available to answer children's questions and acknowledge their observations, it promotes their curiosity about the people and world around them. It can also help children accept (and celebrate!) individuals and families that look different, have different traditions, or speak in different ways from them. Conversely, when we hush or avoid the topic of race, we may inadvertently signal to children that what they asked or observed is something bad or negative. It therefore can create discomfort around race and differences.

We encourage you to consider the following ideas as you explore the curriculum with your students:

1. Avoid assumptions to help children learn not to assume.

This unit is built around photos and illustrations of diverse people. While there are some things that we can tell for sure about a person just by looking at a picture (like the color of their skin), there is far more that we can't tell just by looking, such as where a person is from, what language they speak, or their beliefs. The words that you use when talking with children can help them learn to avoid making assumptions. For example, start your observations by saying, "It looks like..." rather than stating your observation as fact. You can also respond to a student's observations by saying, "That could be true for some people, but not for everyone. We don't know for sure!"

2. Notice where you, as the teacher, are uncomfortable or hesitant.

You can practice using non-judgmental language to describe people before talking with your students. You can also let your students know that these are new ideas for you too, and that you'll be learning and practicing together with them. It's OK to make mistakes!

3. Know YOUR students.

The way that you approach certain conversations or activities should absolutely be adjusted to suit the needs of the students in your class. A conversation about families may not be appropriate for a student in an unstable family situation. The racial make-up of your class should influence your conversation as well.

Please find suggested resources for engaging in your own adult anti-bias work on the following page. Better understanding yourself and your beliefs can be useful before implementing the curriculum with children.

Unit Tips (continued)

It is useful to prepare yourself – as the educator – to teach this unit!



As a reminder, the images, discussion questions, and activities in these lessons are meant to support adults' conversations with young children and to prompt children to share their thoughts and questions about race and diversity.

When engaging in this work, our primary focus should be on listening to children's ideas and guiding them toward a fuller understanding of the topic. As adults, our thoughts and ideas about race and diversity are informed by a lifetime of experiences — some of which may be traumatic, deeply personal, and difficult to share. Talking about race, skin tone, family, and diversity can be emotionally charged topics for adults.

Before engaging in this work with children, it is important to consider how the adults in the room (yourself and any others present) may react to the topic, and prepare ourselves to moderate any emotional connections to the topic. Notice what you have an aversion to or what makes you nervous. For example, we might feel nervous about saying the "wrong thing," or have our own deep-seated resistance to even acknowledging differences among people based on how we were raised ourselves. All of this is important information and will help you as you prepare to lead children in a discussion.

You may be interested in doing additional reading before you begin teaching this unit to your students. Some recommended resources are below:

How To Discuss Diverse Skin Tones With Young Children by Britt Hawthorne
<https://britthawthorne.com/blog/diverse-skin-tones/>


Building Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs by Louise Derman-Sparks, Debbie LeeKeenan, and John Nimmo (Teachers College Press and NAEYC)
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2015/building-anti-bias-programs>

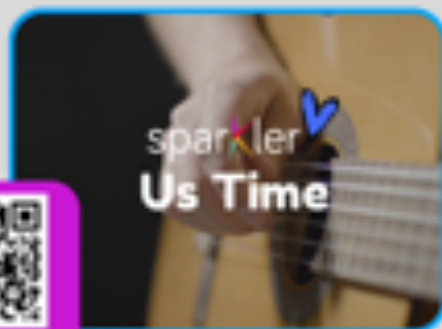
Recommendations from Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith: <http://www.drbriscoesmith.com/more-reading>

Unit Goals


- ♥ Help children develop an understanding of the concept of race and ethnicity.
- ♥ Help children connect the idea of fairness to race.
- ♥ Help children celebrate culture and diversity.

1. Every Us Time Meeting starts with the Introduction

- 
Us Time Song (1 min)
 Play the "Us Time" song. Gather the group in your meeting spot. Sing it together or play the video, which is available online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs.







Scan to play!

- 
Review Community Agreements (2 mins)
 Agreements are rules that people decide, together, to follow. Create or add to your agreements at each Us Time meeting.




2. Each lesson contains several activities.

Please choose which activities you want to include each day.




Lesson 1: Similarities and Differences

-  a. Discussion: On the Playground...page 11
-  b. Listen, Sing, and Dance Along to "Celebrate Our Difference"...page 12
-  c. Skin Color Matching...page 13
-  d. Tell a Story...page 14




Lesson 2: Families Are Different & The Same

-  a. Discussion: Each Family is Special...page 16
-  b. Activity: Family Picture Stories...page 17
-  c. Story Time: Families...page 18
-  d. Activity: Family Statistics...page 19




Lesson 3: Empathy: We All Have Feelings (And They're All OK!)

-  a. Discussion: At the Doctor's Office...page 21
-  b. Movement And Discussion Game: Me Too!...page 22
-  c. Movement Activity: Dance Along to "Dance Your Feelings"...page 23




Lesson 4: That's Not Fair

-  a. Discussion: That's Not Fair...page 25
-  b. Story Time: Read and Discuss...26
-  c. "Up Up Up" Dance Party...page 27



Lesson 5: Appreciate Culture

-  a. Discussion: Dragon Boat Festival...page 29
-  b. ¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambol! Hello!...page 31
-  c. Appreciation Culture Dance Party...page 33

Lesson 6: Spread the Word

-  a. Diversity Discussion...page 34
-  b. Spread the Word...page 35
-  c. Just As You Are Book...page 36


3. Every Us Time Meeting ends with a Conclusion

-  Review the big ideas from your discussion or activity (2 mins)
-  Thank You: Us Time Closing Song (1 min)
Conclude each day's Us Time session with "Thank You," the Us Time "goodbye" song. This song marks the end of Us Time. Find the song online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs.



Scan to play!

4. Send related activities home via Sparkler

-  Find related activities that you can share with families to continue the learning at home and build home-school connection!

Lesson Goals

Children will notice different skin tones, establish vocabulary for discussing them, and learn why skin is different.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE 6, Goal P-SE 11, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 2, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6, Goal P-LIT 4

CT.ELDS: SS.48.1, SS.60.1, C.48.7, C.60.8

Description

This lesson introduces the topic of skin color, using an image to spark discussion.

1a. Discussion: On the Playground

12 MINUTES
Including US TIME
Introduction and
Conclusion

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ On the Playground illustration
- ✔ Large paper or board for documenting students' ideas and marker or chalk for writing.

Vocabulary



- ✔ Similar - alike, not the same
- ✔ Different - not the same as each other, unlike



Find a printable poster-sized version at www.playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

Discussion



Discussion: At the Playground?

- ✔ Show: The On the Playground illustration (www.playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race).
- ✔ Ask: "What do you notice in the picture?"
- ✔ Ask: "Can you find two children playing with a football? What is the same about them? What is different?"
- ✔ Ask more questions about the individuals or pairs of people in the illustration to help children observe what is similar and different about the different people in the playground illustration.
 - ✔ Ask: "What is similar and different about the two children in the sandbox?"
 - ✔ Ask: "What is similar and different about the two children on the swings?"
 - ✔ Ask: "What do you notice about the two people on the bench?"

1b. Listen, Sing, and Dance Along to “Celebrate Our Difference”

Materials



Get Ready!

- “Celebrate Our Difference,” available at bigheartworld.org/discussingrace
- A space to move and dance



Activity



Movement: Celebrate Our Difference

Listen to “Celebrate Our Difference” by Oh, Hush!, Grayson DeWolfe, and Matrik from Noggin’s Big Heart Beats Album. Sing and dance along — and listen to the lyrics about celebrating differences in the world around us.

- Find the song online at playsparkler.org/ustimesongs
- Find more learning resources about the song online at: bigheartworld.org/big-heart-beats-album-celebrate-our-difference



Find “Celebrate Our Difference” online at
playsparkler.org/ustimesongs

1c. Activity: Skin Color Matching

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ On the Playground illustration
- ✔ Skin tone markers, crayons, or paper
- ✔ Large paper or board for documenting students' ideas



12 MINUTES
Including US TIME
Introduction and
Conclusion

Find a printable poster-sized version at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

Vocabulary



- ✔ **Melanin** - a pigment in the body that makes our hair, skin, and eye color appear darker when we have more of it and lighter when we have less. The more melanin someone has in their body, the darker their features will be.

Activity



Activity: Skin Color Matching

- ✔ Use skin tone markers, crayons, or paper to illustrate one particular skin tone.
- ✔ **Ask:** "Can you find someone in the playground who has skin this color?"

Introduce the word **melanin** to explain skin tone.

- ✔ **Say:** "There's something called melanin that everyone has in their body. Melanin gives color to our hair, skin, and eyes. The more melanin someone has in their body, the darker their hair, skin, and eyes will be. Each of us has our own color."
- ✔ **Say:** "For example: This person has a lot of melanin and that makes their skin darker. This person has a little bit of melanin — their skin is lighter."

Repeat the color comparison with different skin shades, using the "On the Playground" illustration or other pictures from books or examples from real life.



1d. Activity: Tell A Story

Materials



Get Ready!

- On the Playground illustration
- Large paper or board for documenting students' ideas



12 MINUTES
Including US TIME
Introduction and
Conclusion

Activity



Activity: Tell a Story

Use the On the Playground illustration to inspire a group storytelling activity.

- Say:** "Today, we'll all work together to make up a story about some people in the picture!"
- Select an image from the illustration inspired by your students' interests.
- Tell the first line of the story, writing or drawing on the board or on paper. (For example, say: "One day, Lulu fell and hurt her knee.")
- Ask:** "What happens next in our story?" Move around the circle of students, with each student adding an idea or sentence. Pause every few additions to read the story aloud and to keep everyone on track.
- When two or three students are left, prompt the class to work toward an ending for the story. If you prefer, you can give each student two turns to create a longer story.
- Optional extension: If this collaborative storytelling exercise goes well, try turning your class story into a book. Put each child's contribution on a separate page and invite them to illustrate. Keep your book on the classroom bookshelf.



Find a printable poster-sized version at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race



Every day, we are surrounded by similarities & differences!

In this lesson, we used an illustration of a playground scene to prompt conversations and tell stories about the similarities and differences in the world around us! Let's finish by remembering what we learned!

Closing Discussion



Say: "There are many ways people are different, and those differences make each of us special and unique! There are also many ways that we are the same (or similar), both in how we look and what we like to do. There are some things that we can tell about a person by looking at them, like the color of their skin or what they are doing. There are also lots of things that we CANT tell about someone by looking at them, like where they are from; what they are good at; or what they think, feel, or believe."

Ask: "What are some similarities and differences we noticed in the illustration?"

Ask: "What are some ways we are similar to and different from each other?"

For Their Backpacks



Available for free online



"Celebrate Our Difference" is part of Noggin's Big Heart Beats album



Community Colors: Upload a picture of your skin color and put yourself on the map! There are so many colors in our community!

If your school or organization is a Sparkler partner, share these in-app activities to help families play along at home and connect with the curriculum. Use the Sparkler Dashboard to send these activities directly to parents, print the handout, or invite families to scan the QR to play along in the app!



I Spy Friends leads families through a game using the same On the Playground illustration



Color Match is an at-home version of the skin-tone matching activity

Lesson Goals

Children will notice diversity within and among families. Children will discuss different family structures.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE 6, Goal P-SE 9, Goal, P-SE 10, Goal P-SE 11, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 2, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6, Goal P-LIT

CT ELDS: SS.48.1, SS.48.2, SS.60.1, C.48.7, C.60.8

Description

This lesson explores diversity within and between families, encouraging observation and discussion.

Important Note for Educators

Us Time is a safe space for discussion about topics on social and emotional learning. Family is an important part of our identity — who we are — and our families help us to develop an understanding of the world around us. Talking about our families can help children to explore the diversity within and among families. As you work on this lesson, please be mindful of the children who make up your class. Many people have challenging family lives and those experiences might be hard to discuss. Nobody should ever feel forced to share their experience.

2a. Discussion: Each Family is Special

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Family Photos collage, on the next page, and at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race
- ♥ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard and markers/chalk to record children's ideas



Activity



Discussion: Each Family is Special

- ♥ Using the Family Photos collage, select two families to highlight.
- ♥ Share one photo at a time with students. **Say**: "This is a picture of a family!" Point to each person in the picture. **Ask**: "Who do you think this person is in their family?" (mother, baby, grandfather, etc.)
- ♥ **Ask**: "Are all the families the same? Do you see any differences?" Point out and name any differences that students don't highlight on their own.
- ♥ Optional: When you have looked closely at each photo separately, highlight two families and ask students how the two families are similar and different. Use the following questions to spark ideas. **Ask**:
 - ♥ "Who are the family members in each family?"
 - ♥ "How many people are in each family? How many children? How many adults?"
 - ♥ "Do the people in each family all have the same skin color or different skin colors?"



Find a printable poster-sized version at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

2b. Activity: Family Picture Stories

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ 1 Family photo (or drawing) per student
- ♥ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard to record children's ideas



Activity: Family Picture Stories



Important Note: Please take a moment to consider your students' home situations before beginning this activity. Some children with unstable or challenging family circumstances may not feel comfortable participating, and that is okay. We can think of family in many different ways. You can encourage them to think of close friends who are like family.

Activity (continued)

- ✔ Ask each student to bring in one photo of their family or to draw a picture of their family.
- ✔ The photos or children's drawings can define "family" in any way that they choose — immediate family members, extended family, friends who are family, etc.
- ✔ During free play/choice time, individually talk with each child about their photo or illustration. Possible questions include:
 - ✔ Who is in your picture?
 - ✔ How many people are in your family?
 - ✔ How many brothers or sisters are in your family?
 - ✔ How many adults are in your family? How many children?
 - ✔ Do you have any animals in your family?
 - ✔ What is the same (or similar) about everyone in the photo?
 - ✔ What are the differences among the people in the photo?
 - ✔ What do you like to do with your family?
 - ✔ What do you love about your family?
- ✔ Assemble a class book of families, with one family per page. (You may choose to put the picture on one side of the paper and the student's answers on the opposite side).
- ✔ Once the book is assembled, read it together as a class.



2c. Story Time: Families

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ A book about families, like:
 - ✔ "Love Makes a Family" by Sophie Beer
 - ✔ "The Family Book" by Todd Parr
 - ✔ "Families" by Shelley Rotner & Sheila M. Kelley
- ✔ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard to record children's ideas, plus markers/chalk



Activity



Story Time: Families

Pick a book about families and read it aloud. Then, discuss!



- ✔ **Say:** "There are all kinds of families! Did you see a family in the book that reminds you of YOURS?"
- ✔ **Ask:** "What did you hear in the book that reminds you of your own family?"
- ✔ **Ask:** "Did you hear anything in the story that surprised you about families?"

2d. Activity: Family Statistics

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard to record children's ideas
- ✔ Student interviews

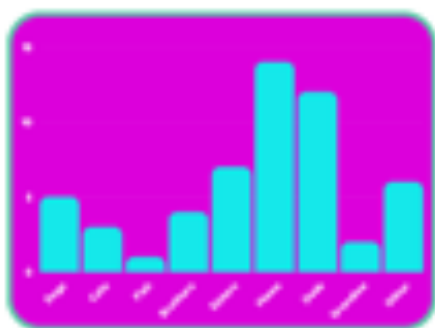
15 MINUTES
 including US TIME
 introduction and
 conclusion

Activity



Activity: Family Statistics

Based on students' interviews about their family photos, create graphs to visualize "family statistics." Start with one "data point" like families' pets. Using a white board or large piece of paper, talk about the data while inviting students to help create a bar graph on the board. For example, you might say, "We have a lot of pets in our class!" Everybody who has a dog, please join me at the front of the room to color in a square that represents your dog. Next, everybody who has a cat can represent their pet in the graph.



Get creative. Let the class's charts be inspired by the statistics they collected about their families. Consider:

- ✔ A pie chart of family pets
- ✔ A bar graph of human family members
- ✔ A histogram of siblings' ages
- ✔ A bar graph of hair color, skin color, or eye color of immediate family members

Closing Discussion

Say: "There are many ways that families can be different ... and the same."

- ✔ "The grown-ups in a family can be a mom and a dad, one or two moms, one or two dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or someone else!"
- ✔ "There can be one child, two children, or many children. There can be brothers, sisters, cousins, or someone else!"
- ✔ "Families can come together by birth, adoption, foster care, or another way!"
- ✔ "Families can all have the same eye, hair, and skin color, or those things can be different!"
- ✔ "The one thing that we know for sure is that all families LOVE each other."



For Their Backpacks

Available free online



My Book About Me is a simple craft project to help children understand, reflect on, and talk with confidence about who they are!



Let's Talk Siblings: Listen to an episode of Sparkler's Little Kids, Big Hearts podcast to hear kids share their ideas about what it's like to be siblings

If your school or organization is a Sparkler partner, share these in-app activities to help families play along at home and connect with the curriculum. Scan the QR to play along in the app!



18-36m



3-5 years

My Bread, Your Bread Share bread that your family eats or taste the bread from another culture to learn about other families!




18-36m



3-5 years

Family Flag Design a flag for your family! What colors, shapes, and symbols represent your family?

Listen to the "Bread" Song: It's an original song from the Us Time Identity unit about the connection between bread and culture from all around the world.

Everybody brought bread, bread, bread, bread!

Lesson Goals

Children will practice identifying and naming feelings. They will recognize that EVERYONE has feelings. They will notice when they feel the same as others — even those who are different from them.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE 6, Goal P-SE 7, Goal P-SE 9, Goal P-SE 11, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 2, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6

CT ELDS: SE.12.7, SE.18.8, SE.18.9, SE.24.7, SE.36.1, SE.36.3, SE.36.6, SE.48.1, SE.48.3, SE.60.1, SE.48.6, SE.60.8, SE.36.13, SE.48.12, SE.60.15, SE.48.7, SE.48.8, SE.60.4, SE.60.9, SE.60.10, SE.60.11, L.36.5, L.48.5, L.60.5, L.48.7, L.48.11

Description

This lesson builds foundations for empathy between students who may be different from one another.

3a. Discussion: “At the Doctor’s Office”

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ “At the Doctor’s Office” illustration: On the following page, or at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

12 MINUTES
including Us Time
introduction and
conclusion

Vocabulary



- ✔ **Empathy** - being able to understand how someone else is feeling, even when you aren't in the same situation
- ✔ **Feelings/Emotions** - Things we notice in our minds, like “happy” or “sad.” Feelings change!

Activity



Discussion: At the Doctor’s Office

Show: The “At the Doctor’s Office” illustration. **Ask:** “What do you notice in the picture?”

Throughout your discussion, model talking about children’s characteristics to help your students notice differences and similarities. For example: “You noticed that the little girl with brown skin is sneezing!”

Prompt conversation with the following questions. **Ask:**

- ✔ “Where do you think these children are?”
- ✔ “Look at this child’s face and body. How do you think they are feeling? Have you ever felt that way? What made you feel like that? What helped you to feel better? What might help that child feel better?”
- ✔ “Have you ever been to the doctor’s office? How did you feel when you were waiting to see the doctor? Who was with you to help?”



Find a printable poster-sized version at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race

3b. Movement and Discussion Game: Me Too!

Materials



Get Ready!

- 🌱 Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- 🌱 "At the Doctor's Office" illustration: On this page, or at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race



Activity



Movement and Discussion Game: Me Too!

Use the illustration, "At the Doctor's Office," to play a game.

- 🌱 Point to one child in the illustration.
- 🌱 Say: "How do you think this child is feeling? Stand up if you have ever felt the same feeling as this child."
- 🌱 Ask: "What is different about you and the child in the picture?"
- 🌱 Say: "Let's sit down and play again!"

3c. Dance Along to “Dance Your Feelings”

Materials



Get Ready!

- Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- “Dance Your Feelings” by Benjamin Weiner, available online at playsparkler.org/UsTimeSongs.



Activity



Say: “We’ve talked about how the people in the picture are feeling. Now we’re going to show feelings with our bodies by dancing! Let’s listen to the song and follow the instructions that we hear.”



Play: “Dance Your Feelings,” which is available in English or Spanish.



After dancing along with the song, try sitting in a circle and inviting a child to dance a feeling in the center of the circle.

- Ask:** “Can we guess the feeling?”
- Ask:** “What did you notice? How did you guess the feeling?”
- Invite other students to take a turn dancing while their classmates guess the feeling.



Closing Discussion

Say: EVERYONE has feelings. We all feel sad, happy, worried, excited, calm, or silly sometimes, though the things that make us feel our feelings can be different.

- ✔ Getting a shot (or “injection”) at the doctor’s office might be scary for some people, but not scary for others.
- ✔ When you understand someone else’s feelings, that’s called empathy. Having an empathetic friend feels nice.
- ✔ People who are different from each other can feel the same feelings.



For Their Backpacks

Scan to explore feelings & empathy with your 18-36 month old in Sparkler



Rainbow Feelings



Animal Bath



Freeze Dance



Little Helper

Scan to explore feelings & empathy with your 3-5 year old in Sparkler



Feelings Charades



Freeze Dance



Animal Feelings



Feed the Birds

Find more free online.



Help Someone! (Free Online)

Toddlers can make a get well card for someone, and little kids can go on a “helping mission” to help another person.

Lesson Goals

Children will practice identifying unfair or racist behavior, and be empowered to help in unfair situations.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE:3, Goal P-SE:5, Goal P-SE:6, Goal P-SE:7, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 4, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6




CT ELDS: SS.48.1, SS.60.1, C.48.7, C.60.8, SE.48.7, SE.48.8, SE.60.9, SE.60.10

Description

This lesson builds groundwork for understanding issues of fairness as they pertain to race.

Vocabulary



-  **Fair** - impartial and just, without favoritism or discrimination
-  **Exclude** - to leave out from a group
-  **Racism** - the belief that some races are better than others; there are systems in our society that that advantage or give benefits to some races and not to others

4a. Discussion: That’s Not Fair

Materials



Get Ready!









-  Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
-  “Exploring Exclusion” illustration on the following page, or at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race


12 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Activity



Discussion: That’s Not Fair

-  Show the “Exploring Exclusion” picture.
-  Ask:
 -  “What do you think is happening in this picture?”
 -  “What do you notice about the children here? What colors are their skin?”
 -  “How do you think this girl feels?” (indicating the Black girl being excluded)
 -  “What do you think these children are saying to each other?”
-  If students do not suggest that the child in the image is being excluded because of her or her doll’s skin color, **Say**: “Sometimes, people with dark skin are not treated fairly because of the color of their skin. Has anyone ever heard anything about that? I wonder if that is what is happening in this picture.”
-  Ask: “If we were all playing together with these children, how could we help?” (document children’s ideas with words and/or pictures).



Find a printable poster-sized version at [playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race](https://www.playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race)

4b. Story Time: Read and Discuss

Materials



Get Ready!

- 🌱 A book from the list on the following page
- 🌱 Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard and markers/chalk to record children's ideas

15 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Activity



Story Time: Read and Discuss

Read a book that features people with a variety of skin colors (suggestions on following page).

After reading the book, Ask:

- 🌱 "What is your reaction to the book? What did you notice while we were reading?"
- 🌱 "What is the difference between people with light skin and people with dark skin?"
- 🌱 "Can children with different skin tones play together?"
- 🌱 "Can children with different ways of moving around play together?"
- 🌱 "Can children who speak different languages play together?"
- 🌱 "Is it ever okay to tell someone that they can't play? Why or why not?"



Shades of People
By Shelley Rotner and
Sheila M. Kelly



Martin's Big Words
By Doreen Rappaport and
Illustrator Bryan Collier



All the Colors We Are
by Katie Kissinger



Last Stop on Market Street
By Matt de la Peña and
Illustrator Christian Robinson



Love Makes a Family
By Sophie Deer



The Day You Begin
By Jacqueline Woodson



Black is Brown is Tan
By Arnold Adoff and
Illustrator Emily
Arnold McCully



I Am Enough
By Grace Byers

4c. “Up Up Up” Dance Party

Materials



Get Ready!

♥ “Up Up Up” from Noggin’s Big Hearts Beat Album



Activity



“Up, Up, Up” Dance Party

Say: “We’re going to dance to a song together! Let’s listen to the words in the song as we dance to the music!”

Play: “Up, Up, Up” from Noggin’s Big Heart Beats Album by Gabe Sokoloff and performed by Ty Taylor.

Ask: “What did you hear in the song? How did it make you feel?”

Say: This song is about speaking up when something is not fair! Let’s remember to speak up every day when we see or hear something that is not fair.”



Closing Discussion

Say: “It is never okay to exclude someone from a group.”

Ask: “What can we do if we see someone being excluded?”

If students need help generating ideas, you can suggest the following:

- ✔ Tell a grown-up.
- ✔ Invite the child who’s being excluded to come and play with you.
- ✔ Tell the children who are excluding to stop, and that it isn’t kind to say that someone can’t play.



For Their Backpacks



Sign Language (play along in the Sparkler app)

Making a simple sign is a great way to practice being an upstander! It’s a hands-on way for your child to express themselves and to help others. There’s a lot of “wrong” in the world that we can help make right — from people littering in the community garden and pet owners not cleaning up after their dogs to racial injustice and polluted oceans. A great way that children can show what they care about is by making signs or posters to express their points of view and how they feel.

1. Let’s look around us for something that we feel isn’t right or fair and make a sign to stand up for what’s right!
2. Let’s choose an issue that matters to us, like protecting the environment, protecting animals, or keeping children safe. Let’s use paper and markers or sidewalk chalk to make a sign that reminds people to do what’s right.
3. Let’s make sure other people can see our sign to change hearts and minds!



Listen and Learn Together!

Listen to the Little Kids, Big Hearts podcast together and discuss what you hear. Little Kids, Big Hearts is a social and emotional learning podcast for young children and families, produced by Sparkler Learning.

- ✔ “Celebrating Our Differences” is an episode in which Elliott, Finley, Landon, and Sky discuss identity, race, belonging, and racism.
- ✔ “What Makes YOU Special?” is an episode in which Amico, Isla, Clara, and Ollie talk about identity.
- ✔ “How to Stand Up,” is an episode in which Riya, Simon, and Cora talk about what it means to be an “upstander.”

The podcast is on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you listen. Learn more: playsparkler.org/podcast.

Lesson Goals

Children will learn about a cultural celebration that may be different from their own. Children will learn to appreciate different cultures. Children will begin to understand that we may celebrate differently, but we still have much in common.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE:3, Goal P-SE:10, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 4, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6, Goal P-ATL:11

CT ELDS: SS.48.3, SS.60.1, SS.60.2, L.18.2

Description

This lesson presents a celebration called the Dragon Boat Festival to explore the idea of culture.

Vocabulary

Culture - The distinctive customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, art, and language of a society or a community. These values and concepts are often passed on from generation to generation, and they are the basis for everyday behaviors and practices.

5a. Dragon Boat Festival Discussion

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ "The Dragon Boat Festival" illustration — on the following page, and available at playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race
- ✔ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard and markers/chalk to record children's ideas

Activity



Dragon Boat Festival Discussion

Show the "Dragon Boat Festival" illustration.

Ask:

- ✔ "What do you notice in this picture?"
- ✔ "What might these people be celebrating?"
- ✔ "Let's look at the food on the table. Do you see food that you recognize? Do you see food that is NOT familiar to you?"
- ✔ "What else do you see that is new, or not familiar to you?"



13 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

(continued)



Find a printable poster-sized version at [playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race](https://www.playsparkler.org/posters-for-discussing-race)



Dragon Boat Festival Discussion (continued)

Say:

- ♥ "This is a picture of people celebrating The Dragon Boat Festival, which is a Chinese holiday. On this holiday, many people in China and around the world celebrate and think about people in Chinese history."
- ♥ "Racing Dragon Boats is one festival tradition! The racers paddle to the beat of a drum. Some people believe that the winning team will have good luck for the next year."
- ♥ "Can you see the dragon boats? Would you like to ride in and paddle a dragon boat?"
- ♥ "At the Dragon Boat festival, people celebrate by eating dumplings called zongzi. Zongzi is made with sticky rice stuffed with different fillings like meat or veggies. Have you ever eaten zongzi? Would you like to try it?"
- ♥ "This festival is part of some people's **culture**! Culture is a word for the food, games, celebrations, languages, and stories that groups of people share together. You are part of a culture, too! And, you can be part of more than one culture!"

5b. ¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambo! Hello!

10 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard and markers/chalk to record children's ideas
- ✔ "Hello" list, available on the following page

Activity



Discussion: ¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambo! Hello!

Say: "Celebrations are one way to express your culture. Language is another way!"

Write the word for "Hello" in several languages on a board or large piece of paper. Have the students repeat each word after you.

- ✔ **Say:** "Around the world, people communicate in different languages!"
- ✔ **Ask:** "Does your family ever say hello in a different language? What word do you use? Let's practice saying hello in different languages!"
- ✔ **Show:** A list of the word "Hello" in different languages (available on the next page).
- ✔ **Hint:** If we don't know how to pronounce the different "hellos" we can listen first in a tool like Google Translate before we try to say the word aloud!
- ✔ Have each student greet a classmate sitting next to them using the word for "Hello" in a different language.
- ✔ **Say:** "Let's try greeting each other in different languages for the rest of the day!"



“Hello!”



Arabic – (مرحبًا) Marhabaan

Bengali – (হ্যালো) Hyalo

Chinese – (你好) Nǐ hǎo

Dutch - Hallo

Estonian - Tere

French - Bonjour

Filipino - Kamusta

German - Hallo

Greek – (Γειά σου) geia

Haitian Creole - Bonjou

Hebrew – (שלום) Shalom

Hindi – (नमस्ते) namaste

Hmong - Nyob zoo

Igbo - Nnọọ

Irish - Dia dhuit

Italian - Ciao

Japanese – (こんにちは)
Kon'nichiwa

Khmer – (សួស្តី) suostei

Korean – (안녕하세요)
annyeonghaseyo

Latvian - Sveiki

Macedonian – (Здраво) Zdravo

Maori - Kia ora

Polish - Witam

Portuguese - Olá

Russian - (привет) Privet

Sinhala - (ආයුබෝවන්) Ayubōvan

Spanish - Hola

Swahili - Jambo

Swedish - Hallå

Tamil - (வணக்கம்) Vanakkam

Thai - (สวัสดี) Sawasdee

Turkish - Merhaba

Vietnamese - xin chào

Xhosa - Mholweni

Zulu - Sawubona

5c. Appreciation Culture Dance Party

Materials



Get Ready!

- ♥ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ♥ Songs available on the Us Time website, including, "Dance Your Feelings," "Celebrate Our Difference," "How You Feel," and "Puzzle Pieces," available at playsparkler.org/ustimesongs

12 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Activity



Play "Dance Your Feelings," "Celebrate Our Difference," "How You Feel," and "Puzzle Pieces," available at playsparkler.org/ustimesongs. If you prefer, play music from different cultures around the world, inspired by the traditions of members of your classroom community.



Say: "Let's dance along to the music!"

Say: "As we dance, let's listen to the words."

After dancing, ask:

- ♥ "What did you notice in the song? What message were the words in the songs trying to tell us?"
- ♥ "How did the music make you feel?"

Closing Discussion

Say: "All over the world, people have different cultures, with different traditions, ways of celebrating, foods, and languages. None are better or worse, just different from one another. We can appreciate and enjoy things that come from another culture, and we can share our own culture(s) with other people."

Ask: "What are your favorite foods or traditions from YOUR culture?" Let's think about sharing and teaching each other about our families' special traditions.

Lesson Goals

Children will review the big ideas from this unit, and practice sharing its message with others.

Standards Alignment

Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Goal P-SE:3, Goal P-SE:10, Goal P-LC 1, Goal P-LC 4, Goal P-LC 5, Goal P-LC 6, Goal P-ATL:11

CT ELDS: SS.48.1, SS.48.2, SS.60.1, C.48.7, C.60.8, SE.12.7, SE.18.8, SE.18.9, SE.24.7, SE.36.1, SE.36.3, SE.36.6, SE.48.3, SE.60.1, SE.48.6, SE.60.8, SE.60.9, SE.36.13, SE.48.12, SE.60.15, SE.48.7, SE.48.8, SE.60.4, SE.60.9, SE.60.10, SE.60.11, L.36.5, L.48.5, L.60.5, L.48.7, L.48.11, CCK.W.8

Description

This lesson introduces the idea of diversity, reviews the messages of the entire Race unit, and helps students spread the messages they've learned with others.

Vocabulary

Diversity - When people who are different come together. This means including or involving people from a range of different social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

6a. Diversity Discussion

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ Large paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard and markers/chalk to record children's ideas
- ✔ "Hello" list, available on p. 32.

Activity



Diversity Discussion

Say: "First, let's talk about diversity. Who remembers: what are some of the ways that people can be different?"

- ✔ Skin, hair, or eye color
- ✔ Language
- ✔ Food
- ✔ Holidays and celebrations
- ✔ Family structure
- ✔ Ideas/beliefs
- ✔ Abilities or interests, likes and dislikes
- ✔ Race or ethnicity

10 MINUTES
Including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

(continued)



Diversity Discussion (continued)

- ✔ Say: "We can be the same in some ways, and different others. But EVERYONE has feelings, and it's important to take care of everyone's feelings!"
- ✔ Ask: "Is it ever OK to tell someone that they can't play or do what they want to do because of how they look?" (No!)
- ✔ Say: "Excluding someone because of their skin color is called RACISM, and racism is never kind or fair."
- ✔ Ask: "What is the difference between someone with peachy pink skin and someone with brown skin?" (Just their skin!)
- ✔ Say: "That's right, we can't tell what a person is like by looking at their skin."
- ✔ As you have this discussion, note what children are saying. They may come up with a good, summarizing 3-5 word "slogan" that you can use for the next activity!

6b. Spread The Word

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ Large paper, paint, smocks and other art supplies to make a banner

25 MINUTES
including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Activity



Spread the Word

- ✔ Together, as a class, discuss a "slogan" (a short and catchy phrase) that summarizes the ideas in this unit. You can use children's ideas from your previous discussions, or come up with a new idea together. Consider:
 - ✔ All Are Welcome!
 - ✔ Everyone Can Play!
 - ✔ People Help People
 - ✔ [(Name of your class) Celebrates Diversity!]
- ✔ Paint or write the class' slogan across the top of the banner.
- ✔ Work with children to mix (or prepare ahead of time) 5-7 shades of paint that represent different colors of human skin.
- ✔ Then, invite the students to paint or draw colors, designs, or people who represent the idea of diversity. (Alternatively, you could also use a permanent marker to draw faces or hands and allow the children to color them in.)
- ✔ Read the slogan together with the class and hang your banner in the window or hallway of your school to share your ideas with the community.

6c. Just As You Are Book

Materials



Get Ready!

- ✔ Your Us Time classroom space, where the class will gather
- ✔ Paper and crayons
- ✔ "Just as You Are" song



Activity



Just As You Are Book

- ✔ Listen together to the song "Just As You Are." Consider:
 - ✔ Everyone belongs, no matter what!
 - ✔ Say: "I belong, you belong, we belong!"
 - ✔ Say: "Each person can belong in more than one community or in more than one way. For example, you belong in your family and in our classroom community."
- ✔ **Say:** "Let's work together to create a book about how we all belong in our classroom community, even though we're each unique."
- ✔ Here are the topics for each page (or pages!). **Ask** the students to work together to add words and pictures to each page. You can write their words and they can draw the pictures.
 - We have different skin and hair colors. We all belong!
 - We have different feelings. We all belong!
 - We like to play different games. We all belong!
 - We love different books. We all belong!
 - We come from different families. We all belong!
 - We have different traditions. We all belong!
 - (Feel free to add more.)
- ✔ When the book is finished, read it together to the class. Encourage all of the students to say "We All Belong" on each page.

Closing Discussion

- ✔ Review the lessons the students learned:
 - ✔ We can be similar to and different from others
 - ✔ Families are different (and the same!)
 - ✔ Everyone has feelings (and all feelings are okay!)
 - ✔ We can notice bias and stand up for others
 - ✔ We celebrate all cultures
- ✔ Ask: "What did we learn? How will what we learned change how we talk and play with one another and with other people in our community?"
- ✔ Ask: "Do you have any more questions about what we learned?"
- ✔ Say: "This class is always a safe place for you to ask your questions and talk through these and other hard topics!"

10 MINUTES
Including US TIME
introduction and
conclusion

Family Resources



On the pages that follow, you'll find additional materials that you can send home during Sparkler's Us Time unit about race. The suggested letter and other resources will help parents/caregivers understand what you're doing in the classroom, and help families explore the concepts and feelings with children at home.

Dear Families

Dear Families:

All children notice differences and similarities between people; it's an expected and normal part of their development. Research shows that individuals notice racial differences in people as early as infancy, and by toddlerhood, children often choose playmates based on race. Research also shows that adults delay conversations about race because they underestimate children's processing of this complex topic.

We have started a new unit in our classroom, in which we'll discuss identity, race, and racism in age-appropriate ways. We will start by exploring who we are and what makes each of us special. We'll talk about how each family is different and special. We'll conclude with a conversation about the importance of being an "upstander" and standing up for others.

In this unit, we'll draw on a guide called "Discussing Race with Young Children: A Step-by-Step Activity Guide," which was created by Noggin and OK Play and published by Sparkler Learning. You can find it online at www.bigheartworld.org/discussingrace. It's a guide that's intended for families to use with their young children. We are using the companion resources designed for schools and classrooms, which incorporate the illustrations that are at the heart of "Discussing Race," and intended to prompt meaningful, age-appropriate conversations.

We encourage you to read the guide and discuss the big ideas with your child. We know these can be challenging conversations for people of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. We want to emphasize: YOU can do it! It's not only possible, but it's important that your child starts to talk about these ideas in the early years. The guide identifies five core reasons to discuss race with young children:

1. As adults, we have an opportunity to support and guide children. By listening to our children's observations and talking openly about race, we can set children up to understand and celebrate differences.
2. When we talk with children about differences — both seen and unseen — we are helping them learn to respect and be kind to the different people who make up their classroom, community, country, and world.
3. Early conversations about race can help to build children's ability to work well with people from different backgrounds. Working collaboratively and solving problems together are skills that will benefit children as they grow up in our diverse world.
4. Talking about differences helps children spot when people are being treated unfairly because of their race — and use their voice to stand up for what is right.
5. Framing conversations around a celebration of race and skin color can increase self-esteem and pride in children of color.

We welcome questions about this unit, and we'll be keeping you updated as we go.

Sincerely,

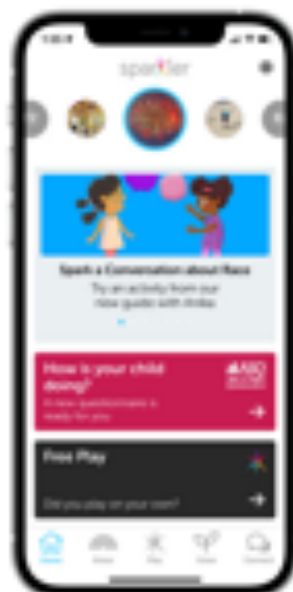
[Teacher's Name]

At Home Activities



Play to Learn!

Reinforce what your child learns at school by playing at home! Play is a great way for your child to remember, practice, and explore new concepts, skills and vocabulary.



Do you have access to the Sparkler App?

- ✔ Sparkler is a mobile app that some schools and other organizations are using to support and engage families. It's available for iOS and Android devices in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese.
- ✔ Look for these activities in your Sparkler app to keep discussing race with your child at home or on-the-go!
- ✔ Go to the "Play" section of the Sparkler app. Tap the four squares in the top right corner and scroll to find the Playpack called "Discussing Race." You'll find the following activities:

- ♥ Color Match: Match Skin Tones
- ♥ I Spy Friends: Spot Similarities and Differences
- ♥ Family Scavenger Hunt: Explore Family Photos
- ♥ Feelings Match: Have You Ever Felt That Way?
- ♥ Never Have I Ever: Explore Something New

No App? No Problem!



You can explore the interactive version of "Discussing Race With Young Children: A Step-by-Step Activity Guide" at www.BigHeartWorld.org/DiscussingRace. It's now available as an interactive guide or as a PDF (in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese).

Another great (free) way to explore these topics is to listen to the Little Kids, Big Hearts podcast episodes called (1) "What Makes YOU Special?" in which Amico, Isla, Clara, and Ollie talk about identity, (2) "How to Stand Up," in which Riya, Simon, and Cora talk about what it means to be an "upstander," (3) "Celebrating Our Differences," in which Elliott, Finley, Landon, and Sky discuss identity, race, belonging, and racism. The podcast is on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you listen. Learn more: www.playsparkler.org/podcast.

More At Home Activities

Listen Together

Listen to the Little Kids, Big Hearts podcast episode called, "Celebrating Our Differences," in which Elliott, Finley, Landon, and Sky discuss identity, race, belonging, and racism. Play the original song that debuted in the episode, "Puzzle Pieces." What do you notice in the song? Learn more at [playsparkler.org/little-kids-big-hearts-celebrating-our-differences/](https://www.playsparkler.org/little-kids-big-hearts-celebrating-our-differences/)

Free Do-Together Activities From our Friends at Big Heart World

- Listen to the song "Celebrate Our Difference" from Noggin's Big Heart Beats Album (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/big-heart-beats-album-celebrate-our-difference>). Color in the lyrics with a special coloring book (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/activity/celebrate-our-difference-lyric-coloring-book/>)
- Play "Hello Neighbor" (for babies, toddlers, or littles) to get to know others in your neighborhood (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/activity/getting-to-know-you>).
- What Colors are in Your Skin? Use the Big Heart World Community Colors tool to explore and talk about your skin colors and other people's skin colors (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/activity/what-colors-are-in-your-skin>).
- Make a sign to stand up for what's right with Sign Language (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/activity/sign-language>).
- Upstanding is easier with friends! Try "Upstanders Club" and get together with friends to stand up for others (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/activity/upstanders-club>).

Sparkler Content to Send Home



Let's Talk About Race is a unit of parent tips about race. It encourages parents to start the conversation with their children. "Race IS a big idea. It's OK if you don't have answers to all of your child's questions. No one does! Your child won't mind if you fumble a bit with your words — the important thing is to open the conversation. You might even learn some new things together." Read along in the app by scanning the code.



A Book About Me!
For Toddlers & Littles



Family Flag
For Toddlers



Big Dreams
For Littles



Family Flag
For Littles



Family Album
For Littles & Toddlers



Hello, Neighbor!
For Littles

More At Home Activities

COMMUNITY COLORS PROJECT

PUT YOURSELF ON THE MAP & CELEBRATE EACH OF US



Community Colors



Community Colors
For Toddlers



Community Colors
For Littles

1. Let's use my smartphone to take a close-up picture of your skin and my skin. For each picture, let's try to fill the entire frame with the color of your skin.
2. Let's upload our skin tone pictures to the Big Heart World Community Colors interactive and join the Community Colors party! People's skin can be so many different colors!
3. Let's talk about how people are sometimes treated differently — or unequally — just because of the color of their skin. That's something that we need to change!

¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambol! Hello!

There are about 7,000 different languages spoken around the world. Each one lets people express themselves! Learning even a few words in another language helps children learn to think flexibly and strengthens their memory. Learning about others also helps children understand other people better! Find a list of "Hellos" in different languages on p. 32.



¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambol! Hello!
For Toddlers



¡Hola! Bonjour! Jambol! Hello!
For Littles

Book List

Books Make Life Better!

Here are a few books related to feelings, which you can use as part of Us Time or suggest to families. Research shows that reading aloud is a great way for kids to reinforce important ideas. If you have time, using books during Us Time will help students make connections between the lessons and their lives.



The Day You Begin

By Jacqueline Woodson (Author), Rafael López (Illustrator)

There are many reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat, or something just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it. (Also available in Spanish!)



Your Name is a Song

By Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (Author), Luisa Uribe (Illustrator)

Frustrated by a day full of teachers and classmates mispronouncing her beautiful name, a little girl tells her mother she never wants to come back to school. In response, the girl's mother teaches her about the musicality of African, Asian, Black-American, Latinx, and Middle Eastern names on their lyrical walk home through the city.



I Am Enough

By Grace Byers (Author), Keturah A. Bobo (Illustrator)

This gorgeous, lyrical ode to loving who you are, respecting others, and being kind to one another comes from Empire actor and activist Grace Byers and talented newcomer artist Keturah A. Bobo. We are all here for a purpose. We are more than enough. We just need to believe it.



Love Makes a Family

By Sophie Beer

Love is baking a special cake. Love is lending a helping hand. Love is reading **one more** book. In this exuberant board book, many different families are shown in happy activity, from an early-morning wake-up to a kiss before bed.



The Family Book

By Todd Parr

There are so many different types of families, and THE FAMILY BOOK celebrates them all in a funny, silly, and reassuring way.

Books (continued)



Families

By Shelley Rotner (Author) & Sheila M. Kelly (Author)

Celebrate diversity with this picture book for very young children about the many faces of contemporary families. Bright photographs by National Geographic photographer Shelley Rotner capture families having fun together, enjoying all the ways they are similar and different.



Who's in a Family

By Robert Skutch (Author), Laura Nienhaus (Illustrator)

Family is important, but who's in a family? Why, the people who love you the most! This equal opportunity, open-minded picture book has no preconceptions about what makes a family a family.



Shades of People

By Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly

A celebration of the diversity of everyday life, this exploration of one of our most noticeable physical traits pairs simple text with vibrant photographs.



All the Colors We Are

By Katie Kissinger

Celebrate the essence of one way we are all special and different from one another--our skin color! This bilingual (English/Spanish) book offers children a simple, scientifically accurate explanation about how our skin color is determined by our ancestors, the sun, and melanin. It's also filled with colorful photographs that capture the beautiful variety of skin tones.



Black is Brown is Tan

By Arnold Adoff and Illustrator Emily Arnold McCully

When it was first published in 1973, Black is Brown is Tan featured the first interracial family in children's books. Decades later, this book remains a joyous and loving celebration of all the colors of the race, now newly embellished with bright watercolor paintings that depict a contemporary family of the twenty-first century.

Books (continued)



Martin's Big Words

By Doreen Rappaport and Illustrator Bryan Collier

This picture book biography of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. brings his life and the profound nature of his message to young children through his own words.



Last Stop on Market Street

By Matt de la Peña and Illustrator Christian Robinson

Last Stop on Market Street is a 2015 children's book written by American author Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson, which won the 2016 Newbery Medal, a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor, and a Caldecott Honor.



I Walk With Vanessa

By Kerascoët

This simple yet powerful picture book, from a New York Times bestselling husband-and-wife team, tells the story of one girl who inspires a community to stand up to bullying. Inspired by real events, I Walk with Vanessa explores the feelings of helplessness and anger that arise in the wake of seeing a classmate treated badly, and shows how a single act of kindness can lead to an entire community joining in to help.



Discussing Race

Learn more:

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