

# A SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR YEAR-ROUND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

## SEPTEMBER

**Year-long project:** Work with administrators in your school to set up weekly or monthly PA announcements themed around the identities of the students in your school. Focus on students' individual talents.

**Set up an "Upside-Down Book":** On one side, the "We're Getting to Know Each Other" side, include pictures of the class. The other side, called "We Are Friends," can be completed later on in the year (See April).

**Our Hopes for the Year:** Drawings and essays from students getting to know one another. Students will illustrate key aspects of their hopes for how the year will turn out, with a focus on breaking the ice and building their class community.

**Create "welcome" cards** with a map of the school and "helpful hints" for any newcomers. Give the cards to the school principal for distribution for the following fall.

## OCTOBER

Hold a "**Foods of the World**" sale or a "**Foods of Many Cultures**" sale, like a school bake sale, to raise money for the school. Or, hold a "Food Diversity Party" to break the ice.

Set up a "**Welcome Hall**" (or classroom) bulletin board where students can anonymously post their feelings about getting accustomed to their new class/school.

**Fall Identity Poems:** Share seasonal poetry on topics of Identity, Who I am, Who You Are, and What Makes Us Unique.

**Read aloud Dr. Seuss's *The Sneetches*** (about discrimination) to a class of younger children.

As a class, **create a slogan or symbol for inclusiveness** and tolerance. Put it on book covers, buttons, and posters. Encourage other students to adopt it.

## NOVEMBER

**Set Up the Multi-Language Bulletin Board:** Display how to write "Thank You" in many languages and cultures. Theme the board to Thanksgiving and "giving thanks."

**Set up the "We're Glad to Be Unique" board** that identifies the skills and talents of the class, both large and small (how many students play the piano, read books, sing, etc.).

Organize a **school assembly celebrating musical diversity**. Invite local musicians of different cultural backgrounds to perform recorded samples of different musical styles during a class discussion.

**Write a class letter** to the editor of the local paper calling for cooperation and tolerance in your community.

## DECEMBER

**Hold a month-long "I'm Reading with Respect" book event** where students share books on respecting each person as an individual.

Write and **perform a play based on the events in Billings, Montana** (Student Journey Book, p. 8). Invite parents and family members to watch and discuss the play.

Have students write a **100-word essay** in response to this quote from Gandhi: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Share student responses with the school.

**Create a timeline** that celebrates the efforts of cultural groups who have faced prejudice and discrimination in the U.S. Post the timeline on a bulletin board.

## JANUARY

If your school has **service learning projects**, invite participants to visit your class and talk about their projects. If there is no service learning project, consider starting one.

Have each student **design and create a quilt square** on 8" x 8" pieces of construction paper representing what is important to them about two of the communities or groups to which they belong. Display the class "quilt."

**Create a mural** showing the cultural heritage of your school or community.

Work with other classes and parents to create a **school/community peace garden**.

## FEBRUARY

**Organize a visit with younger students** for your students to talk about stereotyping.

Create a "**Positive Classroom ABCs**" book with messages of tolerance for young students. "A" is for all are welcome, "B" is for believe in yourself, etc.

Communicate with parents about **school codes of conduct** and students' rights and responsibilities.

**Create a book titled *Our Wishes for the World***. Have each student contribute a statement on "My Wish for the World" and an illustration. Display in the library.

**Create a "Positively Speaking" campaign** to combat insults and stereotypes. Write positive words characterizing other people on posters, postcards, book covers, and banners.

## MARCH

**Invite a local urban archaeologist or historian** to help students uncover the history and evolution of your community.

**Organize a cooperative sports day** with events that require players to work together in order to succeed. Create a name for the day and a promotional campaign.

Choose one day a week as "**Discuss Your Point of View Day**" (every Monday, for example) and select a topic for the month. Each student brings in his or her "Point of View" for Show-and-Tell. Allow extra time for the class to discuss.

**Capturing Stereotypes:** Set up a box with a slot in it and have students "collect" the stereotypes they see every day.

## APRIL

**Photography: Sharing What You See:** Students take pictures of the same subject matter and write about what they see, with a focus on their different perspectives. They build a class "Journal of Perspectives" and publish it for the school.

On a map of the world, **identify the different countries that reflect the heritage** of each student in your class.

Work with your class to complete the "**We Are Friends**" side of the "Upside-Down Book" (See September).

**Create a multicultural calendar** highlighting the many different groups/clubs/activities that students can participate in.

## MAY

**Choose a class project**, such as picking up trash on the school grounds or in a local park. Then read the book *Seedfolks*, by Paul Fleischman, about the diverse people who are drawn to create a community garden in an abandoned lot.

Invite parents to an **end-of-school celebration** of diversity in which students "present" themselves and demonstrate a unique aspect of their identities through a poem, a story, a dance, or a piece of artwork.