

Quick Ideas to Celebrate Diversity Using our Hands

Here are a few simple activities to celebrate the wonderful variety of our skin tones. We hope that engaging in these activities – at home and at work - will help people begin to see each other’s skin color as shades of... rather than as black or white. In doing so, we begin to break down barriers and preconceived notions of one another.

We suggest a variety of activities based on the multiple intelligences or “smarts” theory.



Self Smart: Get a box of the Crayola Multicultural markers, pencils or paint. Invite people to find the marker that best matches their skin tone. Or collect a variety of brown substances from your kitchen cabinet: white flour, wheat flour, cinnamon, cloves, garlic powder, crushed graham crackers, brown sugar, cocoa. Have people identify which marker or substance best matches their skin tone.

People Smarts: Have people put their hands in a circle and compare and contrast them: shapes, sizes, length of fingers, color of skin. Hold up a white marker. Is anyone truly white? Hold up a black marker. Is anyone truly black?

Picture Smarts: Have people trace their hand or their partner’s hand. Decorate your own hand using the appropriate markers or use glue to affix the kitchen substance. If you are a bit more ambitious and have some more time, there is also plaster gauze available to make body sculptures. You cut strips of gauze, dampen them, lay them over the body part; it sets in five minutes.

Word Smarts: Read the book [These Hands](#) by Margaret Mason. Although this is a picture book, it talks about the Civil Rights movement as well as the before and after in our country. This is part of our middle-school program. The story is engaging and provides rich material for stimulating conversations. OR create a poem about hands – easy poem formats include acrostic, alphabet or haiku. OR make a list of 10 different ways we use our hands.

Math Smarts: Make a chart of how many people’s skin color matches the different markers/ kitchen substances.

Nature Smart: Work together to plant a garden. If it’s cold outside, get a big pot and plant a tree in it. Have everyone use paint to stamp their handprint on the pot.

Body Smart: Play some hand games like One Potato, Two Potato or Miss Mary Mack or Cat’s Cradle.

Music Smart: Sing the song “With My Own Two Hands.” Compare the versions by Jack Johnson and Ben Harper; both are available on YouTube. OR Join hands and sing “We Shall Overcome.”

PS – Remember if you are going to order the book or markers through Amazon, go to our homepage and click on the Amazon Smiles icon before you order. Bridges Together will get a portion of the proceeds. This is a portion of the lesson in **Bridges: Our Smarts**.