

# Can I be Different and Belong?

1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>

1/29/2012

**This Week's Theme:** Alike or different, everyone belongs!

**Teacher Insights:** We all want to belong, children and adults alike. As children grow, they are tempted to hide their differences from each other in order to feel like they belong. But belonging does not necessarily mean that we all have to be the same. We can belong to a group or a community. We can belong to a group or community and bring our own unique talents and gifts with us. Today's lesson focuses on this idea that we can be different and still belong. Although we may not have control over what the children experience in their schools or neighborhoods, but we can create an environment at church that welcomes and honors everyone's uniqueness as a gift from God. Out of this environment, we can help the children develop an inner resolve to be who they are within any group or situation.

**Unity Principles:** (today's principle is highlighted)

- 1: God is all Good and active in everything, everywhere.
- 2: I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone.
- 3: I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.
- 4: Through affirmative prayer and meditation, I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.
- 5: Practice, Practice, Practice. I do and give my best by living the Truth I know! I make a difference!

## **Pre-session:** All Things Belong Sculpture

- **Greet Parents and Children.** As much as possible try to greet parents at the sign-in table.
  - **At the Sign-in table ask:**
    - Please print names
    - Does your child have a **yellow registration form** filled out?
    - Any special needs that we should know about?
- **With the children in the classroom:**

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- **Prayer requests:** Have each student write their prayer request on the forms that you will find in your tubs and place them in your classroom prayer box.

### **Pre-session Activity: All Things Belong Sculpture**

As the children arrive, invite each child to make their own unique sculpture by using the straws, masking tape, and a paper plate as a base. At the end of the pre-session time have the children combine their individual sculptures to make one large sculpture.

## **Sacred Circle: Can I be different and belong?**

- **3 Ohms:** In order to synchronize our energies, have the children sit in a circle and begin sacred circle with 3 ohms.
- **Light the Christ Candle:** Remind the students that we light the Christ candle to remind each of us that we have the power to live a life of love like Jesus!
- **Who is Jesus for us in Unity?** Our way-shower, the great master of love.
- **Affirmation: I can be different and belong!** I bring special gifts to the world!
- **Introductions/Affirmations:** In turn, have each student stand say their name and a characteristic they bring to the classroom. For example, "I am Brandon and I bring peace to the circle today." All the children warm up their hands and put their hands in the prayer position, bow, and say, "Namaste' \_\_\_\_\_, you are \_\_\_\_\_!"  
*Namaste' means: The divine in me recognizes and honors the divine in you.*
- **Heart Agreements:** Heart Agreements establish the boundaries of how everyone in the group agrees to "show up" in Sunday school. They are not being TOLD how they must show up; they are telling YOU how they have agreed to show up. During the course of the lesson, you may refer back to the Heart Agreements. For example, if a group of kids is perpetually talking while you are speaking, then you may say to the class as a whole, "What was our heart agreement about listening to speakers?" And let the kids tell you!

**Our basic heart agreements are:**

**Gentle Hands  
Open Hearts  
Walking Feet  
Listening ears  
Kind Words**

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- **Love Offering:** Divine Love, Blesses and multiples, all that I have, all that I give and all that I receive. And I am joy-filled and grateful. FYI: students may place lots of things besides money in the love offering basket: joy, friendship, peace, love, etc.

**Meditation:** As children of God we all belong to God's family. Let's take that truth into a time of meditation this morning. Let's close our eyes and take long slow deep breaths of God's fresh air... Pause... This is the same air that our families and friends are breathing... the same air that people in China and England and Africa are breathing... Pause... Here on this beautiful earth, we express all the colors of the rainbow. Each of us is unique and we all belong... Pause... We belong in God's family. We belong on this planet. We belong to each other... Pause... Let's imagine how this circle here today is growing to include everyone in this church, anyone who has ever visited this church... Pause... Now let's see this circle growing to include everyone in this country... Pause... And now, the whole world...Pause... Let's be sure to include all the animals and birds and creatures of the sea... Everyone in our circle... all unique and all belonging. Thank you God for the beauty of our differences. Thank you, God, for this family. Amen.

## Lesson: Can I Be Different and Belong?

**In today's story there are some people who are focused on what is fair and what is not fair. As we read the story listen for how everyone in the story is being blessed. This is a story that Jesus told so that his followers could understand what God is like. Let's see if we can find out what he is trying to teach them:**

"The kingdom of heaven is like a person who owned some land. One morning, he went out very early to hire some people to work in his vineyard. The man agreed to pay the workers one coin for working that day. Then he sent them into the vineyard to work. About nine o'clock the man went to the marketplace and saw some other people standing there, doing nothing. So he said to them, 'If you go and work in my vineyard, I will pay you what your work is worth.' So they went to work in the vineyard. The man went out again about twelve o'clock and three o'clock and did the same thing. About five o'clock the man went to the marketplace again and

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saw others standing there. He asked them, 'Why did you stand here all day doing nothing?' They answered, 'No one gave us a job.' The man said to them, 'Then you can go and work in my vineyard.'

"At the end of the day, the owner of the vineyard said to the boss of all the workers, 'Call the workers and pay them. Start with the last people I hired and end with those I hired first.'

"When the workers who were hired at five o'clock came to get their pay, each received one coin. <sup>10</sup> When the workers who were hired first came to get their pay, they thought they would be paid more than the others. But each one of them also received one coin. When they got their coin, they complained to the man who owned the land. They said, 'Those people were hired last and worked only one hour. But you paid them the same as you paid us who worked hard all day in the hot sun.' But the man who owned the vineyard said to one of those workers, 'Friend, I am being fair to you. You agreed to work for one coin. So take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same pay that I gave you. I can do what I want with my own money. Are you jealous because I am good to those people?'

(Matthew 20:1-15 NCV)

### Discussion Questions:

- What happened in the story?
- What do we know about the owner of the land?
- What do we know about the people who became his workers?
- How did the owner pay the people he hired?
- How did the people who got the job need to be?
- How were they different from each other?
- What is a group you belong to where the only qualifications are that you are willing to belong? (Family, School, Church, Club, Team?) What do you receive for being a part of that group?
- What unique qualities or skills do you bring to that group?
- One of our Unity principles states: I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe. What are some attitudes that you have when you are with one of your groups such as your class at school? What attitudes help you receive the most benefit from it?

## **Creative Expressions:**

### **We All Belong Guessing Game:**

Today we are going to play a game about "belonging." Everyone in the game will belong to one group or another, but it is up to each of you to figure out what the people in your group have in common. To begin, I am going to call up two groups. It will be your job to figure out why the children belong to each group. For example, one group may be wearing blue, while the other group is not. (Secretly determine the reason for your sorting. It should be something visible. Call up one child to one side of the room and then another child to the other side. With the third child ask the group still seated if they can predict to which side that child will belong. Then tell the third child which group to join. If they guess the correct reason, invite them to continue until all the children are selected to see if their theory is correct.)

**After several rounds, ask:**

**How did you feel not knowing which group you belonged to?**

**How did you feel when you joined your group?**

**How does it feel knowing that no matter who you are, you still belong?**

For the final round, invite one child after another to come up and join into one group, until everyone is together. Welcome all guesses.

**Say: We all belong to this class. We all belong to this church. And we all belong to the family of God. We can all belong and still be different! Say that with me. We can all belong and still be different!**

### **I Belong to God's Family Job Application:**

In your tubs you will find copies of a job application to be in "God's Family". Invite the children to fill out their application listing the qualities, interests, and skills on the form. After each child has filled out an application bring them back together and have each child read their application out loud. At the end of each child's application have the entire group say, "You're hired!"

## **Closing Prayer:**

In Unity, we celebrate our differences. We also know that we all belong to God's family and our differences are needed in this world. Let's affirm this truth by saying the following prayer together!

Thank you God, for our differences. We are all unique and we all belong to God's family!! Amen.

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# Teacher Reminders: Please HELP

- Return the teacher tub and all supplies to the Resource Room
- Sign out by writing the number of children you had on the Teacher Sign-In Sheet.
- At 11 put the sign-in sheets in your supply tubs.
- Put the love offering in the envelope in your tubs.