

POTATO ACTIVITY

Goal: To show children that despite outward different appearances, people are often similar on the inside.

Materials: A bag of potatoes (you can use lemons or apples)

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions: Give one potato to each child. Then ask each child to “get to know his/her own potato”. Children will examine their potatoes – smell them, touch them, throw them in the air, and roll them around. After 5-10 minutes, collect the potatoes in a big basket. Then ask the children to find their own potatoes in the pile. Remarkably, most children will recognize their potato at once. Some may even get protective of theirs.

Next, ask the children to describe how they recognized their own potatoes. “My potato was big”, one might say. “My potato had a mark on the side”: And another, “My potato had dents and bruises”. Then talk about how people, too, come in different sizes, different shapes, different shades of color, different “dent and bruises”.

After exploring these ideas, collect the potatoes again but this time peel the potatoes before placing them in the basket. Then ask the children to again find their potatoes. Presented with this quandary, children will usually exclaim, “But the potatoes all look the same!” This reaction opens the door to discussing how people, like potatoes, are often similar on the inside.

This 20 minute activity can have a long-lasting impact, especially if children are reminded of the lesson in times of conflict.

Source: Adapted from Stern-LaRosa, C. M. (2001). [*Talking to Your Child About Hatred and Prejudice*](#), Anti-Defamation League.

