

Reading to End Racism

Reading to Middle School Students

The following are tips that help address some common challenges of working with middle school students and will assist you to create a rewarding session. Bear in mind that middle school students have energy to burn and have their own opinions about things. To find the activities mentioned below, refer to your Middle School Activities packet.

To Remember

DO: Break the class up into activity groups

DON'T: Let one or two kids control all the conversation

Your Introduction

- Think about what you will wear that day – it may leave a lasting impression.
- Decide how you will refer to individual students, i.e., sir/ma'am, name tags, clothing, etc.
- Begin by telling the goals of the session: a story, participation in discussion, how we can eliminate racism, feedback forms at the end.
- Be *personal* in your introduction of yourself and your own story
- Have them briefly introduce themselves using yourself to model: i.e., ethnic identity, unusual thing about yourself.
- Set a tone of mutual respect: take turns, no one dominating the conversation, no interrupting.

Possible Activity: *Introduction, Circle Game/Line Game*

Definitions

- Don't underestimate their ability to think about and discuss hard topics.
- Be sure to cover Prejudice, Discrimination, Racism and Institutional Racism.
- Re-state what they say if you are not sure of their meaning; try using a graphic on the board

Possible Activity: *Institutional Racism*

Your Reading

- Be sure to point out the title/book cover/author.
- Ask them to predict what the content might be.
- If the reading is short, read it twice after some discussion. Keep your reading to 10 minutes or under.
- Don't be afraid of a good picture book!
- Be sure to pick literature that deals with issues you care about.

Possible Activities: Connecting the Reading to the Topic

- *Think/Pair/Share* after the reading (timing, turn taking and pairing are important), 2-4 in a group
- Writing or drawing (give kids choice) with a report back to the group
- *Role-play*: 3 minutes to brainstorm skit ideas, 1 minute to act out (this may take practice)
- *Agree/Disagree*

What can we do to change things?

Acknowledge how difficult this is

Brainstorm with kids leading to activity (like *Role-play*)

6. Evaluation

Be sure to leave 5-10 minutes