

Diversity Lesson Plan – Appreciating Differences

Through the story of Patulous, The Different Caterpillar, and activities, children will learn to appreciate differences in themselves and others.

Outcomes: Students will

distinguish between similarities and differences.

understand prejudice.

learn empathy by imagining what it might be like to be any of the characters in the story of Patulous, The Different Caterpillar.

understand the life cycle of caterpillars and butterflies. By understanding metamorphosis in caterpillars, children will connect the concept of transformation in themselves and others. We can change, and be open to and welcome differences which make us, our class, family, and communities better.

develop leadership skills to model inclusive behavior in the class, school, family and community.

appreciate the literary styles of alliterations and allegories.

Materials:

**Patulous, The Different Caterpillar by A. Volta
Available through Amazon ISBN 978-0-9711040-0-6**

Either provide each child with a picture of a flower (available on workingparents.com/patulous.htm), or as a homework assignment have them bring a photo or picture of a flower from a magazine. Let them know it can be any type of flower (the more variety, the better)

Copies of Lifecycle - 'Did you know?' page 26 from Patulous, The Different Caterpillar

Have plain paper for each child to draw a butterfly or caterpillar, or provide a copy of an outline of a butterfly or caterpillar for children to color – page 27 from Patulous, The Different Caterpillar

Have one plain poster size sheet of paper.

Provide one sheet of writing paper per student or their writing journals for students who write on a regular basis.

Suggested Procedures: Review the materials section above and activities below to determine which you will incorporate in the classroom.

- 1) Gather students in a circle on the floor, or if there is not enough room, consider arranging chairs or desks in a circle so everyone can see each other.
- 2) Take turns going around the circle by having each student to hold up their flower picture so everyone can see it. If they know the kind of flower it is, please have them tell the class. Acknowledge all the beautiful flowers.
- 3) **Outcome - identifying similarities and differences:** Make two columns on the board labeled 'Similarities' and 'Differences.' Ask students to name what is alike and different about flowers and have them tell you which column to place their answer. Suggestions:

Flowers	
Similarities	Differences
stems	color
petals	shape
leaves	size
stamen (anther, filament), ovaries, ovule , stigma (for more advanced students)	smell
Need water, sunlight, care	texture – some smooth vs rough petals and stalks (thorns vs smooth stems)
provide nourishment – nectar, pollen for birds and bees, petals and leaves for snails and caterpillars; Attract insects and bugs for other insects to eat	some do well in shade vs sun

- 4) Read the story of Patulous, The Different Caterpillar
Optional: If you have the budget, a nice addition to the story is to bring in fennel or any of the flowers from the story of Patulous: roses, nasturtiums, petunias, delphiniums, butterfly bush. Plastic flowers from craft stores are another reusable option.

5) Discuss Patulous, The Different Caterpillar as an entire class

Note: For some questions, helpful answers are below, but not the only answers. Also, if children ask if Patulous is a boy or girl, either is correct. Patulous was chosen not only because the word Patulous means to spread widely and to be open, but also Patulous is not gender specific. The name could be for a boy or a girl to identify with.

- **What did they think of the story?**
(were parts funny, happy, sad, worrisome, hopeful etc)
- **What characters did they like and why?**
(Patulous, Sammy, Gabriella, or Lily) –some may say the other caterpillars or butterflies too.
- **How are the caterpillars the same?**
(green, nap, eat, play)
- **How is Patulous different?**
(splotchy skin, round and maybe short; in the story Patulous would like to be long and slender)
- **What happens when Patulous begins to look different than the other caterpillars?**
(excluded from the community of caterpillars, they don't let Patulous play with them, they don't want anything to do with Patulous, they think because Patulous is different, it is not acceptable/not cool)
- **Is it fair to exclude Patulous?**
Outcome: *Prejudice is the unfair treatment of others or a group*
- **Have you ever felt left out?** (most if not all will say yes)

Ask the students to share an experience.
(Expect a variety of answers, you may gain insight of what's happening on the playground at recess or before & after school)
- **Patulous meets other creatures, how are they the same?**
(eat, play, nap)
- **How are the new friends different?**
(different creatures – caterpillars, snails, ladybugs, grasshoppers – liken to different cultures. Eat different things – caterpillars like leaves, snails like flowers, play different games. Caterpillars play roll-down-the-hill, the others play jump grass.

- **Patulous changes even more after becoming friends with Sammy, Lily, and Gabriella. How does Patulous change?** (skin is more colorful)
- **What does Patulous learn from Gabriella, Lily, and Sammy? What lessons can we learn from the story of Patulous, the Different Caterpillar?** Expect a variety of answers – main points for reflection:
 - ❖ We are all similar and we are all different. Those who are open to differences in others and cultures – diversity – will have fuller and richer lives.
 - ❖ We can change. We can be the example. Sometimes it's being open to new ideas and differences, and sometimes making amends for mistakes and unacceptable behaviors like bullying and excluding others.
 - ❖ Having friends involves making choices. Distinguish between friends who like you for who you are rather than what they expect you to be.
- **Do you think Patulous will return to fly with the other butterflies? Why or why not?**

6) Outcome: Appreciation of allegories.

Allegorical understanding of Patulous, The Different Caterpillar

Refresher - The main purpose of an allegory is to tell a story with characters and symbols, with meanings, to convey abstract ideas to get a point across.

Ask students what symbols or meanings they see in Patulous -
Some suggestions to help students along:

Patulous – the word itself means to spread widely or to open

Outcome: relating the lifecycle of caterpillars and butterflies to us. Review the Lifecycle stages and 'Did you know' section in Patulous, The Different Caterpillar. Connect the stages of caterpillars to butterflies to how we grow as children, teenagers, and adults. Sometimes we will not understand the results of being different in one stage to another. Similarly, Patulous thought the differences were hard to go through, but in changing into the next stage into a butterfly, the glory of being different is revealed. Similarly, sometimes difficulties or experiences in one stage help us in another. For example, sometimes struggles as children help us as teenagers, sometimes struggles as teenagers help us as we become young adults and so on.

Flowers – each of the different flowers represent the richness of diversity in shape, size, color, and cuisine just as in society: we're the same yet we come in many different shapes, sizes and colors.

Other caterpillars – represent the ignorant, or peers who try to influence us by what they believe are ‘true’ norms of behavior, looks, or beliefs about what is ‘cool.’

Sammy, Lily, and Gabriella – represent diverse cultures and communities who, unlike Patulous’s community, may offer true friendship and role models of wisdom to meet life’s challenges.

Rainbows – some students may pick up on the colors of the flowers and Patulous representing the iridescence and magnificence of rainbows (ROYGBIV) by accepting all ‘colors’ of different cultures.

Heart – some students will notice the heart on Patulous’s wings. This is a reminder outside appearances do not always reflect the nature of a person. Sometimes we have to look beyond appearances to see ‘the heart’ of a person or culture.

7) **Outcome: Fun with Alliterations**

Refresher: alliteration the repetition of consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables.

Have students identify as many alliterations as they can from the book, Patulous, The Different Caterpillar and write some on the board to use as an example for the next writing exercise: Provide students with a sheet of writing paper or ask them to get their writing journals. They are going to be **Writing Word Warriors** by creating their own alliterations. The activity may be done in small groups or individually. Have each student choose their name, a place or new vocabulary word to create their own alliterations. A good idea is to advise to not pick too long a word or too short. You may wish to establish minimums and maximums. After they are finished have each group or student choose their favorite to share with the class.

Example: molt

Miss Meg makes magnificent messy marmalade and marshmallow milkshakes.

Optimistic Olympians outshine overworked opponents.

Liz likes lavender and lime lollipops.

Tangerine toads talked tirelessly to terrific turquoise turtles.

Additional Activities:

Have students think about what it would be like if there were only one type of flower in a garden, or if we all only ate one type of food. It would be boring. If they have a hard time understanding this. Ask a student how successful sports teams like baseball,

soccer, basketball, volleyball, dance, or band would be if everyone wanted to play the same position or instrument? How more colorful and beautiful it is to have a diverse garden, a variety of foods, team, and diverse friends in our own classroom, community and around the world.

- 1) Create a classroom poster garden: Have poster sheet on a table and instruct each student to glue their flower picture (from opening activity above) on the poster. Entitle the poster – ‘Our Diversity Garden – Growing Better Together’
- 2) To enhance the lesson of diversity, hand each child either a plain sheet of paper, or one with a copy of an outline of a caterpillar or butterfly. Direct each student to choose only ONE crayon to draw and or color a picture of a caterpillar or butterfly. Next, have the students draw or color another picture of a caterpillar or butterfly using all their crayons. Have them compare. Do they like one more than the other – why?
- 3) **Outcome: Empathy.** This activity may be completed as either a writing assignment or as small group discussions. For writing, have each student choose a character from Patulous and write a paragraph as if the student was that character and what it is like to be that character. For another day, have each student choose either a character in the book or choose another creature from a garden to give Patulous advice - e.g., perhaps a frog, turtle, dragonfly etc. Depending upon time, have them illustrate their ideas.
- 4) **Outcome: Modeling leadership behaviors.** Divide students into small groups to brainstorm ideas to promote diversity, acceptance in the classroom, playground, or school. Have a representative from each group present their ideas and write them on the board. Divide the number of suggestions by 3 and using that result, have each student choose that number of their favorite ideas. For example, if the classroom has 15 suggestions divide by 3 = 5 and have each student choose their top 5 choices. Take the top 5 choices and select how many are feasible to do as a class or a school. Lastly, vote for the top one or two choices.

Ideas for brainstorming session:

Reward program for observing students who promote positive behavior. Define positive behaviors - complimenting rather than teasing, including rather than excluding, welcome package for new students, sharing positive quotes, etc Determine what the reward may be either individual stars/tickets or as a class to redeem for a class party, ‘free’ ½ hour for choosing small group games, extra art time, ‘no homework pass’, extra credit points, etc.

Heritage day in the classroom – Have children share a story about what part of the world any of their family members have lived or visited. Invite to bring pictures or postcards.

International dress, flag, and music day – Have students bring pictures of flags or traditional dress from other countries. Create an international poster board by gluing the pictures and labeling with the represented country. Have students share music from their country of ancestral heritage. For older students have them bring a youtube link of ethnic music.

For schools that have clubs, have a club mixer day, where representatives from each club visit classrooms to share what their club does. Or, have combined club meetings – the chess club and band, Spanish and Chinese, African American and French, Fashion and Business club – you get the idea.

As class or school have a Peace rally by celebrating International Peace Day by making pinwheels for peace: **Pinwheels for Peace day (Sept 21)**

<http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org>

Instructions & templates for pinwheels for peace:

<http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com/pinwheeltemplate.html>

Consider as a class or school to participate in **World Kindness Day (Nov 13)**, or World Kindness week, Nov 10 – 16.

Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

<http://www.actsofkindness.org/index.asp>

Classroom Resources

<http://www.actsofkindness.org/index.asp>