



Lesson 3: The Spectrum of Hatred and the Wall of Compassion
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Goal: Students will recognize some of the forms of hatred. They will grasp the way hatred, if unchecked, can lead to genocide. And they will explore hatred's adversary, compassion.

Activity:

The teacher selects groups of 3-4.

She distributes a large sheet of construction paper and a glue stick to each group. She also gives a large envelope to each group. In the envelope are 10 strips of paper. On each strip, one of the following words is typed:

1. **Stereotyping**
2. **Prejudice**
3. **Discrimination**
4. **Name-calling**
5. **Ganging-Up**
6. **Anti-semitism**
7. **Bigotry**
8. **Scapegoating**
9. **Racism**
10. **Genocide**

The teacher offers instructions:

Today we are looking closely at some words we have all heard. Your group's task is to discuss these words and their definitions. Discuss examples you've seen, in your own lives, of these words "in action."

Once you have defined the terms, work together to arrange the words vertically, in a spectrum of hatred. For the bottom of the spectrum, choose the word that strikes you as the root, or source, of hatred. Then, arrange the words upward until at the top of the spectrum, you place the word that indicates the most extreme form of hatred.

Remember, there is no right or wrong answer as you build your spectrum. Our goal here is for all of us to explore how hatred starts, how it grows, and how it ends. Only when we understand hatred can we build something else, something better, in its place.

As the students talk and work, the teacher circulates. She reminds students of the definitions of the words (or she may distribute a hand-out of definitions, but this is not usually necessary).

Her definitions are simple:

Stereotyping: Oversimplified generalizing about others without regard for the fact that *all* people are unique individuals

Prejudice: Negative feelings—grounded in ignorance—about others

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of others as the result of prejudiced thinking

Name-calling: Hateful, inaccurate labeling others

Ganging-Up: Bullying by the powerful against the less powerful

Anti-semitism: Hatred of Jews

Bigotry: An irrational attachment to negative stereotypes

Scapegoating: Blaming problems on others who are not to blame

Racism: Pre-judgment of others based on perceived racial differences

Genocide: Systematic, state-sponsored murdered of groups

When the groups have discussed the words and decided how to arrange them, they glue their strips onto the construction paper and sign their names to their spectrum.

The teacher brings the whole group together, and individual teams present their work. Students discuss difference and similarities in their spectrums. The teacher encourages students to discuss

the spectrum as it applies to their own lives. She asks various questions to “bring home” the spectrum:

In our school, who is bullied?

In our school, what does prejudice look like?

In our personal lives, have we ever scapegoated somebody?

The discussion continues for as long as it’s useful. The groups post their work.

Then the teacher switches gears:

Now let’s talk about the opposite of hatred. Let’s talk about compassion.

She defines **compassion**:

Compassion is empathy. Compassion is walking in someone else’s shoes. It is the understanding of someone else’s experiences, especially his or her suffering.

The teacher re-groups the students. She passes out construction paper and old magazines, and she gives instructions:

Working as a team, create a collage. Cut up words or pictures or both to show what compassion looks like. Feel free to draw or write words. And refer back to your spectrum of hatred as you work. See if you can find images and words that are the opposite of the words on your spectrum of hatred.

As the students work, the teacher circulates. She helps students look closely at images and words.

When the collages are complete, the students post them. The collages create a Wall of Compassion that stands in contrast to the Spectrum of Hatred.

The teacher ends class with thanks to the students for their participation in this important work. And as always, she invites the students to write any questions they have on index cards, to be answered the next time class meets.