

Do Something!

Key Terms and Concepts

culture community tolerance

Purpose

To help students learn about cultures in the news, to develop tolerance and to feel they are making a contribution to the community in a time of need.

Objectives

Students will study countries in the news and participate in activities that improve their community with positive, healing gestures.

Activities

- “Connecting Cultures”
- “Hands On!”

Home Connection

- Culture Connections

Linking Across the Curriculum

- Social Studies
- Art



“Connecting Cultures” Activity

(set up: 30 minutes; conduct: multiple class sessions)

If the event under discussion has an international component, it will be helpful to students to learn how many things in common they have with children from the countries being discussed. Select a country to study and lead the students in a study about the lives of people in that country. One primary focus of the activity should be the promotion of tolerance among people.

TEACHING NOTE: If there is a community center, school or religious institution in your community with people from the country you are going to study, contact it for assistance. If there is a school, plan additional events to include students at the same grade level from the school, such as a service project for all the students to work together. If there is an elementary school for students of another culture, your students might work with them to lead them in a service project for the community in which you all live, such as those listed in the “Hands On!” activity on page 54.

1. Tell the students that your class is going to study (country name).
2. Ask them to help you plan activities to learn about life in that country. Tell them you will be sending a letter home to ask for help in learning about the country.

TEACHING NOTE: Check the World Wide Web. The country you have chosen to study may have a national Red Cross or Red Crescent Web site. Even if the Web site is written in a language other than one the students speak, the pictures will tell a story. The American Red Cross may be actively working in that country also. Visit www.redcross.org and check the International Services section.



Materials

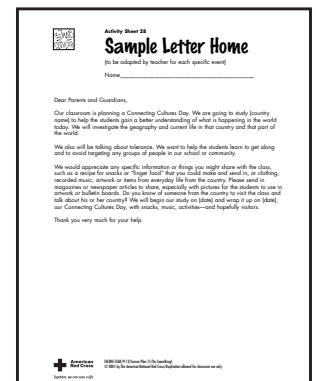
- **Activity Sheet 28:**
Sample Letter Home
(1 page)

Home Connection

Connecting Cultures

Send a letter home (Activity Sheet 28) inviting families to assist the class in learning about the country. Give them a date (such as a few days or a week) by which you need anything they can share. Tell them the day you will have a Connecting Cultures Day, an event to wrap up the study and immerse the students in the culture they have studied.

3. Begin by planning a day or section of a day to focus on the country. Consider having snacks, listening to music and hearing from representatives from the country. Ask the students if they know people from the country.



TEACHING NOTE: You may want to check with your local American Red Cross to see if it could send someone who has served in that country to speak with your classes. Ask for a “return delegate.”

4. Use the chalkboard to organize the ideas suggested and plan an agenda for the Connecting Cultures Day. Decide whether the students will invite someone to talk about a specific country and whether they want to have a lunch or snacks with food from the country.
5. When you begin the study, ask the students to share any items or materials they have brought in. Use the world map and mark the location of the selected country and the location of your school.
6. Divide the class into small groups and assign them topics. Ask them to research the food, dress, geography, art, history, customs, people, language, schools, wildlife, plants and so forth as well as the natural disasters that might occur in that country. Each group should write a report about the assigned topic. Ask one group’s members to try to plan a trip to the country, investigating how they would travel, how much it would cost, how long it would take and so on.
7. Give them several class sessions to work on the research and reports, giving daily progress reports.
8. Each day, work on creating an agenda for the Connecting Cultures Day, including planning music, activities, guests and refreshments.
9. If you expect guests, prepare a list of questions for them.
10. Conduct your Connecting Cultures Day as planned, having the students set up.



Wrap-up

Ask students to help clean up from the Connecting Cultures Day. Ask them to summarize what they learned. Ask if their attitudes toward the country changed and in what way.

TEACHING NOTE: Be careful about food allergies when planning snacks for the event.



“Hands On!” Activity

(set up/conduct: open-ended)

Young people, like adults, need to feel they are helping in times of crisis. Here are suggestions of activities that might help them feel needed and constructive. Whether they focus their efforts in an area directly impacted by tragic events or in their own community, they will be working toward making the world a better place.

- Plant a garden of hope or a memorial garden. Plant vegetables, care for them and celebrate the harvest by making soup and/or salad to eat, and/or taking the harvest to a local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. (Call the shelter in advance to find out if it accepts homegrown produce.) Or plant flowers, harvesting them into bouquets for a convalescent hospital, delivered with handmade cards.
- Make sandwiches for the poor at a local homeless shelter. (Call the shelter for scheduling and other suggestions.)
- Clean up trash on the school campus or in a local park. Be sure to set up appropriate health and safety precautions, such as providing latex gloves for the students and establishing procedures to notify the teacher when glass or other hazardous items are located.
- Attend first aid classes. Your local chapter of the American Red Cross may be able to assist you by teaching first aid skills to the class.
- Start a Red Cross Club at your school, working with your local chapter of the American Red Cross
- Write thank-you letters to firefighters, rescue workers and other heroes admired by the class.



Linking Across the Curriculum

SOCIAL STUDIES

Create a map to post in the classroom showing the locations of the school and places mentioned in the news related to the events under discussion. If events are ongoing, update the map with status reports, such as the location of armed forces.

ART

Create colorful posters for the school illustrating life in the country studied for the Connecting Cultures Day. Try to use a style consistent with the art and/or architecture of the country.