



From a great teacher:

I've enclosed a copy of my lesson plan, but the basic idea is to take samples of all your referenced foods and spices (while adding some more of my own, like nutmeg, allspice and cloves, Dijon mustard, lemon curry and black pepper) and set up a center where kids can mix up these ingredients to make a recipe for their skin. I have one student, Markell, who is 100% Hershey cocoa. Interestingly, his twin sister, Marshell, added peanut butter, some regular chocolate and chili to match her skin tone. I wish you could have seen them, intently mixing and checking, rubbing these delicious-smelling spices into their skin like women at a make-up counter in a department store. They were so excited about their differences and worked so hard to make their exact tone! Our classroom smelled tantalizingly luscious! Everyone wanted to share their recipe and know about others'. My co-operating teacher recorded their individual recipes so we can make a classroom cookbook of sorts. We're going to make simple icons for each ingredient, like a cup for coffee, a teacup for tea, and a chili pepper for the chili so that the kids can read their own and others' ingredients.

I can't thank you enough for writing this book. I'm sure you've heard this many times before, but I wanted to be sure you heard my story – the story of 23 kids who were finally given a positive, encouraging message about their appearance.

The following is my lesson plan - it's overly formal, and I ended up making it a center, as I noted above, but you get the general idea.

What Color Am I?

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Rationale: (Why this, now?) We are wrapping up the study on ourselves as individuals and getting ready to look at our families. This is a good wrap up and transition into the family focus. We have also been talking about using appropriate colors when we draw pictures, and this will help us learn the names of those colors.

Standards and Indicators: Social Studies

Identify ways that individuals in the family, school and community are unique and ways that they are the same.

Procedure:

1. Before beginning, have all ingredients on a table guarded by a teacher.
2. Meet on oval. Show student black and white crayon.
Ask them what colors they are.
Ask if anyone is those colors.
If yes, hold crayon next to skin until they realize they are neither – no one is.
3. Introduce Colors book. Say it gives names to SOME of the colors people can be – but not all colors people can be are in the book.
4. Read book, emphasizing the words for color and their positive connotation.
5. Ask if everyone knows what those things are
– esp. cocoa, ginger, chili powder, amber, copper/bronze, French toast.
6. After book, ask students to describe what color I am
– not other kids in case of sensitivity to color issue.
7. Tell students we are going to TRY to make the color of their skin using the ingredients from the book. Remind them not every color can be reproduced and that we can never get a perfect match.
8. Calling up three students at a time, have teacher help kids use the ingredients to mix things to mimic the student's skin color. When a color is made, spread it on a sheet of white paper to dry and use later. Label each sheet with their name.
May want to rub into skin to check for accuracy.
9. Put these away to dry safely.
10. The students who are waiting their turn should draw their self portrait on the frame paper using the multi-cultural crayons. They may do this at their assigned seats.
11. Explain they can blend the colors by mixing them, like we do when we mix yellow and blue to make green. They may use other colors, too.
12. Students may get up 4 at a time to look in the mirror to see themselves and make their drawings as accurate as possible. Remind students mirrors are fragile and they may not touch, only look.
13. All students should get a turn mixing their skin color and looking in the mirror to draw themselves.
14. Collect portraits for SS books when done and collect skin color papers.
Later, these papers will be cut into small shapes and glued together to make into a rainbow poster to be displayed for open house.
15. When finished with both projects, students may read quietly around the room.

Materials: The Colors of Us book, chart, multi-cultural crayons, full-length mirrors, frame paper from book, heavy art paper, cinnamon, French toast, creamy peanut butter, chocolate, peaches, honey, brown leaves, cocoa, butterscotch, pizza crust (bagel), copper/bronze, amber, coconuts, toffee, coffee, milk or cream, ginger and chili powder, nutmeg, all spice, cloves, pepper, Dijon mustard, curry, etc.

Safety Concerns: Only eat what you have permission to! Do not eat the materials we are using to mix. Keep materials away from kids not mixing.
Check for allergies to chocolate, nuts. Mirrors are breakable – be careful!

Adaptations: Be respectful of different colors; be sure to create a safe environment to talk about different skin colors – some kids are sensitive about how light/dark they are.

Assessment: Are students able to explain that NO ONE is black or white?
Are they able to describe their skin color? Can they find an item that is close to their color?

Courtney Sheehan-Lobert