

# TOOLS FOR TOLERANCE



Simple Ideas For Promoting Equity  
And Celebrating Diversity

# 101

TOOLS FOR  
TOLERANCE

**TOLERANCE.ORG**



A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center®  
400 Washington Avenue · Montgomery, AL 36104  
[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

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Simple Ideas For Promoting Equity  
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**H**ate can only be conquered by ordinary people willing to promote tolerance. You may already be one of them. The ideas in this guide will help foster tolerance in yourself, your family, your schools, your workplace and your community. Some of the ideas are things to do. Some are things to think about. Some are things to remember.

But a word of caution is in order: This booklet is not a sure-fire recipe for making the world a better place. These ideas are only some of the possibilities. The best ideas are those that work for you and your community.



Please share your successful strategies with the rest of America by dropping us a line at 101 Tools, c/o Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104, or E-mailing us at [101tools@tolerance.org](mailto:101tools@tolerance.org). We'll include new ideas in the next edition of *101 Tools for Tolerance* and on our Web site, [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).

# Ideas for YOURSELF



**1** Attend a play, listen to music or go to a dance performance by artists whose race or ethnicity is different from your own.

**2** Volunteer at a local social services organization.

**3** Attend services at a variety of churches, synagogues and temples to learn about different faiths.

**4** Visit a local senior center and collect oral histories. Donate large-print reading materials and books on tape. Offer to help with a craft project.

**5** Shop at ethnic grocery stores and specialty markets. Get to know the owners. Ask about their family histories.

**6** Participate in a diversity program.

**7** Ask a person of another cultural heritage to teach you how to perform a traditional dance or cook a traditional meal.

**8** Learn sign language.

**9** Take a conversation course in another language that is spoken in your community.

**10** Teach an adult to read.

**11** Speak up when you hear slurs. Let people know that bias speech is always unacceptable.

**12** Imagine what your life might be like if you were a person of another race, gender or sexual orientation. How might “today” have been different?

**13** Test for hidden biases that you may have, and read what you can do about them.  
[www.tolerance.org/hidden\\_bias/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/index.html)

**14** Take a Civil Rights history vacation. Tour key sites and museums.

**15** Research your family history. Share information about your heritage in talks with others.

**16** List all the stereotypes you can — positive and negative — about a particular group. Are these stereotypes reflected in your actions?

**17** Think about how you appear to others. List personality traits that are compatible with tolerance (e.g., compassion, curiosity, openness). List those that seem incompatible with tolerance (e.g., jealousy, bossiness, perfectionism).

**18** Create a “diversity profile” of your friends, co-workers and acquaintances. Set the goal of expanding it by next year.

**19** Sign the Declaration of Tolerance (see page 16) and return it to 101 Tools, c/o Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104.

**20** Read a book or watch a movie about another culture.



# Ideas for YOUR HOME



Invite someone of a different background to join your family for a meal or holiday.

21

Give a multi-cultural doll, toy or game as a gift.

22

Assess the cultural diversity reflected in your home's artwork, music and literature. Add something new.

23

Don't buy playthings that promote or glorify violence.

24

Establish a high "comfort level" for open dialogue about social issues. Let children know that no subject is taboo.

25

Bookmark equity and diversity Web sites on your home computer.

26

Point out stereotypes and cultural misinformation depicted in movies, TV shows, computer games and other media.

27

Take the family to an ethnic restaurant. Learn about more than just the food.

28

Involve all members of the family in selecting organizations to support with charitable gifts.

29

Gather information about local volunteer opportunities and let your children select projects for family participation.

30

Play "action hero" with your children. Are the heroes all aggressive males? Help your children see the heroic qualities in those whose contributions often go unrecognized (e.g., nurses, bridge builders, volunteers in homeless shelters).

31

Affirm your children's curiosity about race and ethnicity. Point out that people come in many shades.

32

Help young children make an illustrated list of what friends do or what friendship means.

33

Read books with multi-cultural and tolerance themes to your children.

34



Watch what you say in front of children when you're angry. Curb your road rage.

35

Watch how you handle emotional issues with girls and boys. Do you attempt to distract crying boys but reassure crying girls?

36

Examine the "diversity profile" of your children's friends. Expand the circle by helping your children develop new relationships.

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Enroll your children in schools, daycare centers, after-school programs and camps that reflect and celebrate differences.

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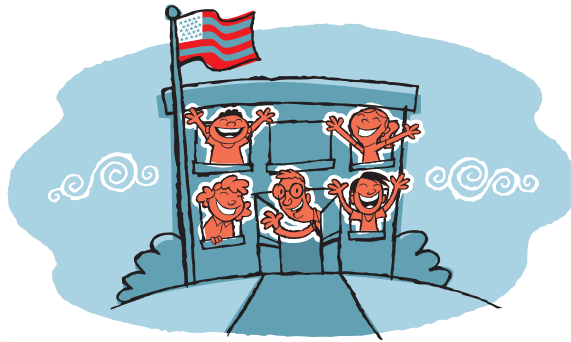
Participate in a Big Brother or Big Sister program.

39

Live in an integrated and economically diverse neighborhood.

40

# Ideas for YOUR SCHOOL



41 Donate tolerance-related books, films, magazines and other materials to school libraries. Organize a book drive.

42 Buy art supplies for a local school. Sponsor a mural about the cultural composition and heritage of your community.

43 Volunteer to be an advisor for a student club. Support a wide range of extra-curricular activities to help students “find their place” at school.

44 Coach a girls’ sports team. Encourage schools to provide equal resources for boys’ and girls’ athletics.

45 Sponsor a conflict resolution team.

46 Ask school counselors what resources they have for supporting gay and lesbian youth. Offer additional materials if necessary.

47 Assess your school’s compliance with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Organize a class project to improve compliance.

48 Donate a tape recorder to a school that is conducting oral history projects. Suggest a focus on local struggles for civil rights.

49 Start a pen pal program. Get students in touch with people in different parts of the community, country or world.

50 Applaud the other team. Promote good sportsmanship and ban taunting.

53 Encourage school administrators to adopt Internet-use policies that address on-line hate, harassment and pornography.

56 Create a bilingual (or multilingual) calendar highlighting school and community activities.

59 Celebrate “Someone Special Day” in addition to Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. Keep adoptive and foster students in mind when planning family-oriented programs.

51 Encourage schools to go beyond the “heroes and holidays” model to develop a rich, on-going multicultural curriculum. Give Teaching Tolerance materials to educators in your community.

54 Discourage the use of divisive school emblems or mascots.

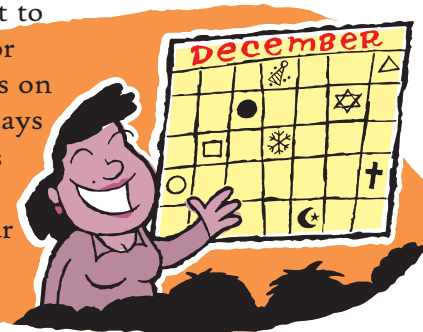
57 Invite bilingual students to give morning greetings and announcements on the PA system in their home languages.

60 Ask schools not to schedule tests or school meetings on the major holidays of any religious group. Develop a school calendar that respects religious diversity.

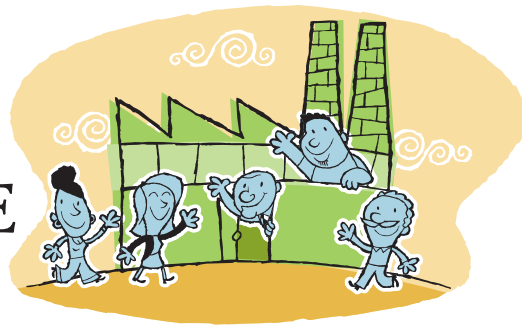
52 Provide confidential methods for students to report harassment or bullying.

55 Ensure that schools comply with the McKinney Act, the federal law mandating educational services for homeless children.

58 Make sure that school cafeterias offer options for students and staff with dietary restrictions.



# Ideas for YOUR WORKPLACE



**61** Hold a “diversity potluck” lunch. Invite co-workers to bring dishes that reflect their cultural heritage.

Arrange a “box-lunch forum” on topics of **62** diverse cultural and social interest.

Partner with a local school **63** and encourage your colleagues to serve as tutors or mentors.

**64** Sponsor a community-wide “I Have a Dream” essay contest.

Examine the degree of diversity at all **65** levels of your workplace. Are there barriers that make it harder for people of color and women to succeed? Suggest ways to overcome them.

Cast a wide net **66** when recruiting new employees.

**67** Give everyone a chance for that promotion. Post all job openings.

Fight against the “just like me” bias — the tendency to **68** favor those who are similar to ourselves.

Value the input of every employee. Reward **69** managers who do.

**70** Avoid singling out employees of a particular race or ethnicity to “handle” diversity issues on behalf of everyone else.

Establish an internal procedure for employees to report incidents of harassment or discrimination. **73** Publicize the policy widely.

Push for equitable leave policies. Provide paid maternity and **76** paternity leave.

Advocate for domestic partnership benefits. **78**

Vary your lunch partners. Seek out co-workers of **71** different backgrounds, from different departments, and at different levels in the company.

Add social justice funds to 401(k) investment **74** options.

Don’t close your door. **77** Foster an open working environment.

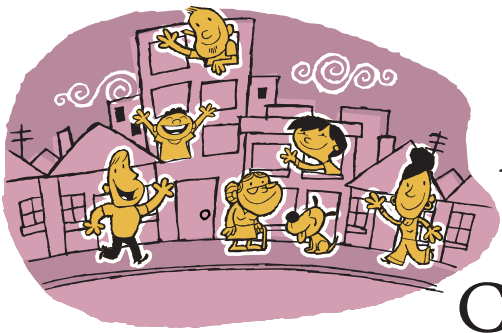
**79** Provide employees with paid leave to participate in volunteer projects.

Start a mentoring program that pairs veteran employees with newcomers. **72**

Ensure that your workplace complies with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. **75**



Publicize corporate giving widely, and challenge other companies to match or exceed your efforts. **80**



# Ideas for YOUR COMMUNITY

**81** Frequent minority-owned businesses and get to know the proprietors.

**82** Participate in a blood drive, or clean up a local stream. Identify issues that reach across racial, ethnic and other divisions and forge alliances for tackling them.

*Start a monthly “diversity round-table” to discuss critical issues facing your community.* **83** *Establish an equity forum.*

**84** Hold a community-wide yard sale and use the proceeds to improve a park or community center. Celebrate the event with a picnic.

*Build a community peace garden.* **85**

**86** Make copies of the Declaration of Tolerance (see page 16), encourage others to sign the pledge, and return it to 101 Tools, c/o Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104.

**87** Start a “language bank” of volunteer interpreters for all languages used in your community.

**88** Encourage your local public officials to be tolerance activists.

**89** Create a town Web site.

**90** Host a “multicultural extravaganza” such as a food fair or art, fashion and talent show.

**91** Create a mobile “street library” to make multicultural books and films widely available.

**92** Establish an ecumenical alliance. Bring people of diverse faiths together for retreats, workshops or potluck dinners. Be welcoming to agnostics and atheists, too.

**93** Write a letter to the editor if your local newspaper ignores any segment of the community or stories about cooperation and tolerance.

**94** *Start a campaign to establish a multicultural center for the arts. Ask local museums to host exhibits and events reflecting diversity at home and elsewhere.*

**95** Present a “disabilities awareness” event with the help of a local rehabilitation organization.

**96** *Make sure that anti-discrimination protection in your community extends to gay and lesbian people.*

**97** Encourage law enforcement agencies to establish diversity training for all officers, to utilize community-based policing and to eliminate the use of inequitable tactics like racial profiling.

**98** Give copies of our *Intelligence Report* to law enforcement agencies in your community. Do officers receive training about hate groups, hate crimes and domestic terrorism?

**99** Ask for a free copy of our publication *Ten Ways to Fight Hate* and become a community activist against hate groups and hate crime.

**100** Conduct a “diaper equity” survey of local establishments. Commend managers who provide changing tables in men’s as well as women’s restrooms.

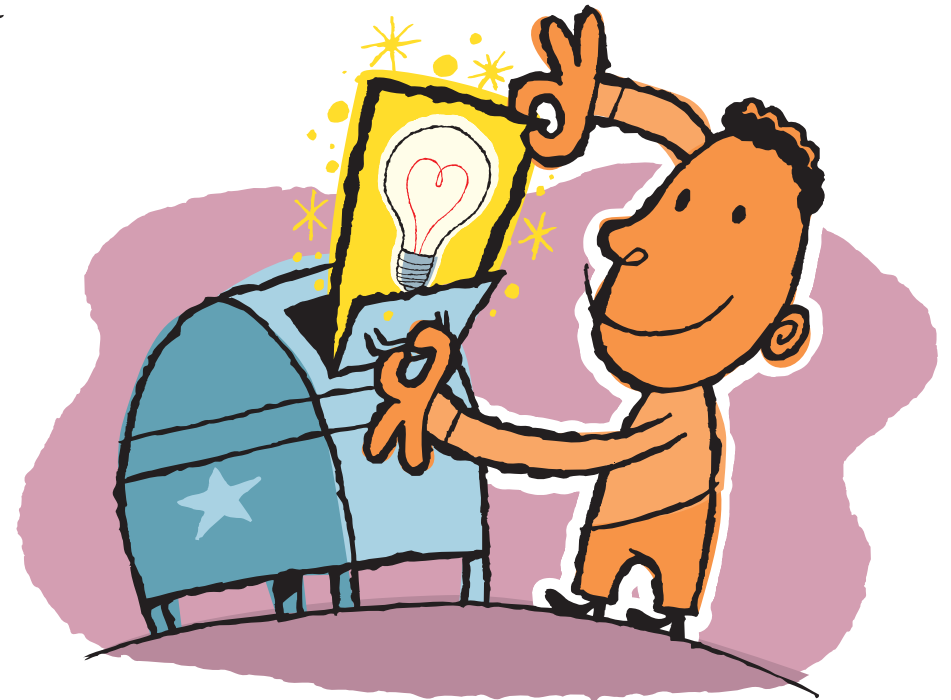




# 101

## SHARE YOUR IDEAS

We end our list where we began — with a reminder that the best ideas come not from books, but from the experiences of caring and committed individuals and communities. Send your best suggestions for promoting equity and celebrating diversity to 101 Tools, c/o Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104, or E-mail us at [101tools@tolerance.org](mailto:101tools@tolerance.org). Let us share what's worked for you in the next edition of *101 Tools for Tolerance* and on our Web site.



# DECLARATION of TOLERANCE

**T**olerance is a personal decision that comes from a belief that every person is a treasure. I believe that America's diversity is its strength. I also recognize that ignorance, insensitivity and bigotry can turn that diversity into a source of prejudice and discrimination.

To help keep diversity a well-spring of strength and make America a better place for all, I pledge to have respect for people whose abilities, beliefs, culture, race, sexual identity or other characteristics are different from my own.



To fulfill this pledge, I will ...

- examine my own biases and work to overcome them,
- set a positive example for my family and friends,
- work for tolerance in my own community, and
- speak out against hate and injustice.

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## SIGNATURE

Please sign and mail a copy to:

101 Tools, c/o Tolerance.org, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104

You may sign the pledge online at [www.tolerance.org/101\\_tools/declaration.html](http://www.tolerance.org/101_tools/declaration.html)



## WE SHARE A WORLD

For all our differences, we share one world. To be tolerant is to welcome the differences and delight in the sharing.

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