

Just Because

Content Area: Family Life Education, Mental Health

Infusion: Language Arts, Music

Grade Level: 7-Adult

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: “Just because” examples
Butcher block paper
Markers

Objectives:

1. Using directions provided, students will complete a “just because” poem.
2. After class discussion, students will explain how individuals with a variety of backgrounds can belong to a number of other groups.

NHES:

- #1. Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health
- #2. Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

Preparation:

On butcher block paper, write the following structure for the poem

Just because...

Doesn't mean...

It does mean ...

Just because...

Is there a place at the table for me?

Procedures:

1. Read one of the attached poems.
Note: A second may be read if students need additional clarification.
2. Instruct students to write their own poem using the structure and example(s) provided.
3. Ask for volunteers to read their poems.
Notes: a) You may choose to ask for additional volunteers with similar topics to read their poems, and then discuss. b) You may use an additional page of butcher block to list categories (race, religion, etc.) as poems are read.

Discussion:

1. The phrase “Is there a place at the table for me?” is an analogy for what? (Can I be your friend? Can I work with you? Can I still be a member of your family? Do I belong?)

2. Use the list of categories the class generated to identify “most common” prejudices and/or forms of discrimination. Identify other groups that may be the victims of discrimination.
3. Using the poems generated, ask students how an individual’s view of him/herself may be different from an outsider’s view.
4. How can we welcome everyone to OUR table?

Shelley – What do you think about our standing at a table and as participants read their poems have them join us? Probably won’t have time for everyone to read their poems, so we can just invite all to join us.....

Just Because Poems (Examples)

Just because I do well in school
Doesn't make me feel less stupid
 When I am wrong.
It doesn't mean that when I do my homework
 My home works.
 When I pass a test
It doesn't mean that I'm not
 Failing in life.

Just because I do well in school
Doesn't mean I don't face challenges
 But it **does mean** that I am willing to
 Sacrifice in order to secure my future.
Is there a place at the table for me?

Just because I am gay
Doesn't mean I can't play "manly" sports
 Like football and wrestling.
It doesn't mean that I am feminine or "girlie".
 I lift weights and have a "buffed out" body.
It doesn't mean that I want to be a hairdresser, or perform in
 Broadway musicals.
 I am planning on becoming a college graduate, a
 Doctor, and someday maybe even a dad.
It doesn't mean that purple is my
 Favorite color.
 I don't like rainbows or triangles.
 I think our symbol should be
 A spike-studded helmet or
 A Harley-Davidson motorcycle.
 But it **does mean** that
 I like men and that
 My sexuality alone does not define me.
Is there a place at the table for me?

Just because I am Black
Doesn't mean I am athletic - I hate to run.
It **doesn't mean** I am uneducated -
I happen to be a straight A student.
Just because you see me coming, **doesn't mean**
You should rush to the other side of the street
I am not dangerous - I am kind, and loving.
Just because I'm Black, doesn't mean that
All of my ancestors are from Africa
I am part Native American, and part Irish.
Being Black **doesn't mean** I use my race
As an excuse for my mistakes.
But is **does** give me hope, courage, and strength.
Is there a place at the table for me?

Just because I'm White
Doesn't mean that
I've had everything handed to me
On a silver platter.
I have had certain privileges
But I have also worked hard to create
My own opportunities.
It **doesn't mean**
I'm racist or a White supremacist.
But, I do have pride in my origins-
I think everyone should.
Just because I'm White doesn't mean that
I **believe** in White Power
I believe in Black Power, Mexican Power,
And Asian Power...People Power.
Is there a place at the table for me?