

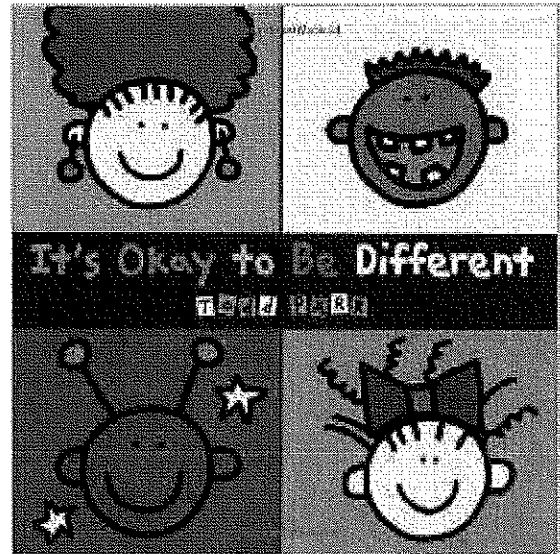
**Book Title:** It's okay to be different

**Author:** Todd Parr

**Artwork/Illustrations:** Todd Parr

**PRISM Lesson Links:** 1, 4

**Annotation:** It's okay to be a different color. It's okay to dance by yourself. It's okay to wear glasses. It's okay to have a pet worm.... It's okay to be different!



**Concepts at a Glance:** diversity, respect, self-acceptance, individuality

**Links to Explore:**

Song <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtX6FqC1e54>

**Discussion ideas and activities:**

1. Have students choose one of the statements in the book as the first line of a writing prompt OR have students write a new sentence beginning with "It's okay to..."
2. Have students paint a self-portrait in the style of Todd Parr - using vibrant colors, solid black lines, filling the entire page with color
3. Role-play a bullying situation that could arise out of one of the statements in the book. Brainstorm things to say to a bully or what to do in bullying situations.
4. Use the book to introduce the concept of *diversity: being different from one another*. Ask students if any of the characters in the book are like them.
5. Create a class Okay Book, like this one:  
[http://www.toddparr.com/schools/allen\\_brook\\_school.html](http://www.toddparr.com/schools/allen_brook_school.html)

## **It's Okay to Be Different**

**Todd Parr**

### **Book Description:**

- This book focuses on individuality and the acceptance of people being different.

**Introduction:** Are we all exactly the same? Is that okay? We are going to read about ways that we can be different. It's okay to be different.

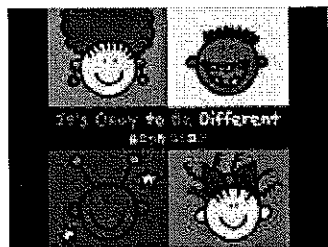
### **During/After Reading:**


- What are some ways the people in the book were different?
- What are some ways they were alike?
- What makes you different from your friends?
- What you like/dislike about your friends being different?
- Do you know anyone who is like the characters in the book?
- Which, if any, of these characters is like you?

### **Follow-Up Activities:**

1. In whole group ask the following questions. You may graph the responses with post-it notes on the board.
  - a. Who wears glasses?
  - b. Who has no hair?
  - c. Who has braces on their teeth?
  - d. Who has big ears?
  - e. Do any of these differences make us better than anyone else? No, we are all equal. These differences make us special and unique. They are what makes us who we are. Without these differences we wouldn't be unique.
2. Write about something that makes you different or special. What is unique about you?
3. Draw a self-portrait illustrating what makes you different or special. Under the picture, write "I am special because \_\_\_\_\_." Make a class book of pictures.
4. Discuss how we are to treat people who are different. Differences are not something to make fun of, but things to celebrate. Have students come up with proper ways to treat people who are different from themselves. Each student could copy the list into a book of their own to keep.
5. With a partner, list things that are the same about the two of you. List things that are different about the two of you. Together, write a paragraph telling about the things that are the same about the two of you. Write a paragraph telling about the differences.

## LESSON PLAN

**It's Okay to Be Different: Teaching Diversity With Todd Parr**

Grades	1 - 2
Lesson Plan Type	Standard Lesson
Estimated Time	Four 50- to 60-minute sessions
Lesson Author	<b>Karla Price</b> Boone, North Carolina
Publisher	

**INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN****STUDENT OBJECTIVES**

Students will

- Activate prior knowledge about diversity by exploring the words *different* and *similar*
- Gain knowledge by learning what the term *diversity* means
- Apply and further that knowledge in whole-class and small-group discussions about diversity
- Demonstrate comprehension and practice writing skills by writing about diversity
- Practice collaboration by working in small groups to generate ideas and create books
- Use oral and listening skills during shared readings of the books they create

**SESSION 1**

1. Introduce the topic of diversity by drawing students' attentions to their differences and similarities. You can present four or five criteria statements for the class to consider and ask students to stand up in groups. Some examples of criteria statements are:
  - All the 6-year-olds stand up
  - Everyone wearing tennis shoes stand up
  - If you like baseball stand up
  - Stand up if you have any freckles on your skin

Ask students if they can think of other differences that the criteria statements did not address. Why is it important to share these differences? What can they help us understand about each other?

2. Write the word *diversity* on the board and ask students if they know what it means. Jot down their responses working toward the following definition: *Being different from each other.*
3. Show the class the cover of *It's Okay to Be Different*. Ask students to predict what the book will be about.
4. Read *It's Okay to Be Different* to the class. Stop once or twice during the reading to discuss the text and pictures. Questions for discussion may include:
  - Do you know anyone who is like the characters in this book?
  - What do you think of the illustrations? Why do you think the author uses the colors he does?
  - Which, if any, of these characters is like you?
5. After reading the book, ask students to share their thoughts and ideas about what makes us all different and what makes us the same. Jot down students' responses on a piece of chart paper.

## SESSION 2

1. Draw students' attentions to the chart paper list you created during Session 1 (step 5); talk a little bit about the differences and similarities on it and ask them if they can think of additional kinds of differences they have experienced.
2. Have students get into their groups and pass out the Group Exploration Sheet. Explain that they will talk about how they and their friends are different than each other and other people in the world. Each group should use the Exploration Sheet to make lists of differences that are not included on the list from Session 1. Students should take turns writing ideas on the list; every student in the group should write down at least one idea. Tell students that they all need to make sure that their group members are sharing positive ideas that will not hurt anyone's feelings.
3. While students are working in groups, walk around to make sure that groups are on task. Observe participation and conversations. Since these discussions have the potential to become controversial or offensive, you should be available to refocus students if they are discussing a matter that is inappropriate.
4. Bring students back together for a class discussion. Ask them what kinds of differences they discovered in their groups. What was the most surprising difference to them? What did they learn from their group discussion? Do they have more in common with the students in their groups than with people in the rest of the world?
5. Ask students to pick one difference that their group talked about; it should be one that has affected them personally. Let students know that they will be writing about this topic and also creating a page on this topic for a book they create with their group.
6. Have students write about the difference that they are focusing on in their journals. Questions for them to consider include:
  - Has anyone ever made you feel especially good or bad about this difference? Who and why?
  - What do you like the most about this difference? What do you like the least?
  - Do you have to do things differently because of this difference?
  - Do you know anyone else who has the same difference?

## SESSION 3

**Note:** If you do not have classroom computers, this session should take place in the computer lab. You will need to bring along art supplies.

1. Have students visit About Todd Parr. Have students read about him and explore the "Fun" section of the site, making sure they all see the Allen Brook School's THE OKAY BOOK webpage. Tell them they will work in their groups to create similar books. Each student will create one page to contribute to their group's book. Their pages will have text and pictures to illustrate their ideas.
2. Have students get into their groups from Session 2. Model an appropriate sentence for the book page on the board; for example, *It's okay to have freckles on your skin.*
3. Have students take out their journals and review what they wrote during Session 2. They should use what they wrote to plan a sentence that will be on their page of the book, write the sentence in their journals, and then have other members of the group review it and offer feedback. Circulate while students are working to offer assistance as needed.
4. Students should work together to decide what the title of their book will be. They might choose a name for their group that they feel reflects differences they share (e.g., *The Left-Handed Book*). The title might also highlight each person's individual difference (e.g., *The Curly Hair, Likes Spinach, Purple Bike, Pierced Ear Book*).
5. Each group should share one computer in order to create their book together. Direct students to the Flip Book and demonstrate how to use it. Have them enter their first names as the labels for their individual pages. The first page will be the title page, so the label should be *Title*.
6. After entering the labels, each student should type a sentence on the page that is labeled with his or her first name. Students can choose the templates that they want to use for their pages. Tell students that they will illustrate their pages after they print them out.
7. When students have printed off their pages, they should illustrate them. Once the pages are all complete, students can trim and assemble their books.

#### SESSION 4

**Note:** Before this session, you should decide with your students how best to share their books with another class. An easy way to share is to have each group line up in the order that their pages are in the book. Each student reads his or her page in front of the class and then passes the book on to the next person. After students have read the entire book, they can pass it around the class for a closer look at the illustrations. You might give students time to practice reading their books aloud.

1. Have students share their books with another class, as you have arranged.
2. After each group has had a chance to share, encourage discussion with the new class. Questions to consider include:
  - Did any of the students who were listening hear an author share a difference that they also have?
  - Do you know anyone who is similar to any of the authors?
  - Does anyone have a special difference that has not been mentioned?
  - Why do you think it is important to understand our differences?

#### EXTENSIONS

- Use the list you made during Session 1 (step 5) to have students work on a book that focuses on similarities as opposed to differences.
- Have books dealing with diversity, inclusion, and acceptance available for students to read in your classroom. For a list of good books, visit [Celebrating All of Us: Inclusive Children's Books](#).

- E-mail a copy of the students' books to Todd Parr at [mail2todd@toddparr.com](mailto:mail2todd@toddparr.com) and ask if he will publish the students' work on his website.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT/REFLECTIONS

- Assessment for this lesson will be mostly informal. You should observe your students' reactions during class and small-group discussions. By paying attention to their conversations and individual responses, you can assess their comprehension of diversity and their ability to apply this comprehension by exploring their own differences.
- Informally observe students as they work in their groups. Are they respectful? Do they listen to each other? Do they collaborate on ideas and on a title for the group book?
- Read and reflect on students' journal entries. Respond to each student's entry, correcting misconceptions and applauding accepting comments.
- Assess students' book pages. You should look at the following aspects of each page:
  - *The text.* Is it thoughtful and does it demonstrate that the student understands the importance of accepting differences?
  - *The illustration.* Is it creative? Does it reflect the main idea of the text?
  - *Group work.* Did the student work with other members of his or her group to edit the page? Did the group assign an appropriate title for the book?
  - *Sharing.* Did the student read his or her page clearly? Was he or she able to discuss the page and answer questions about it?

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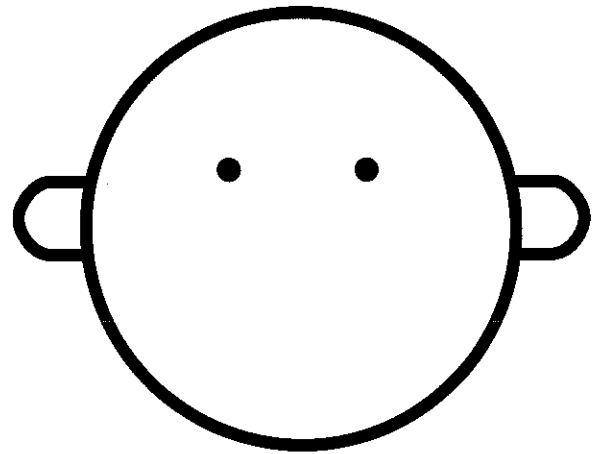
Thinkfinity | 



# It's Okay to Be Different

## "It's Okay to be ME!" Self Portrait

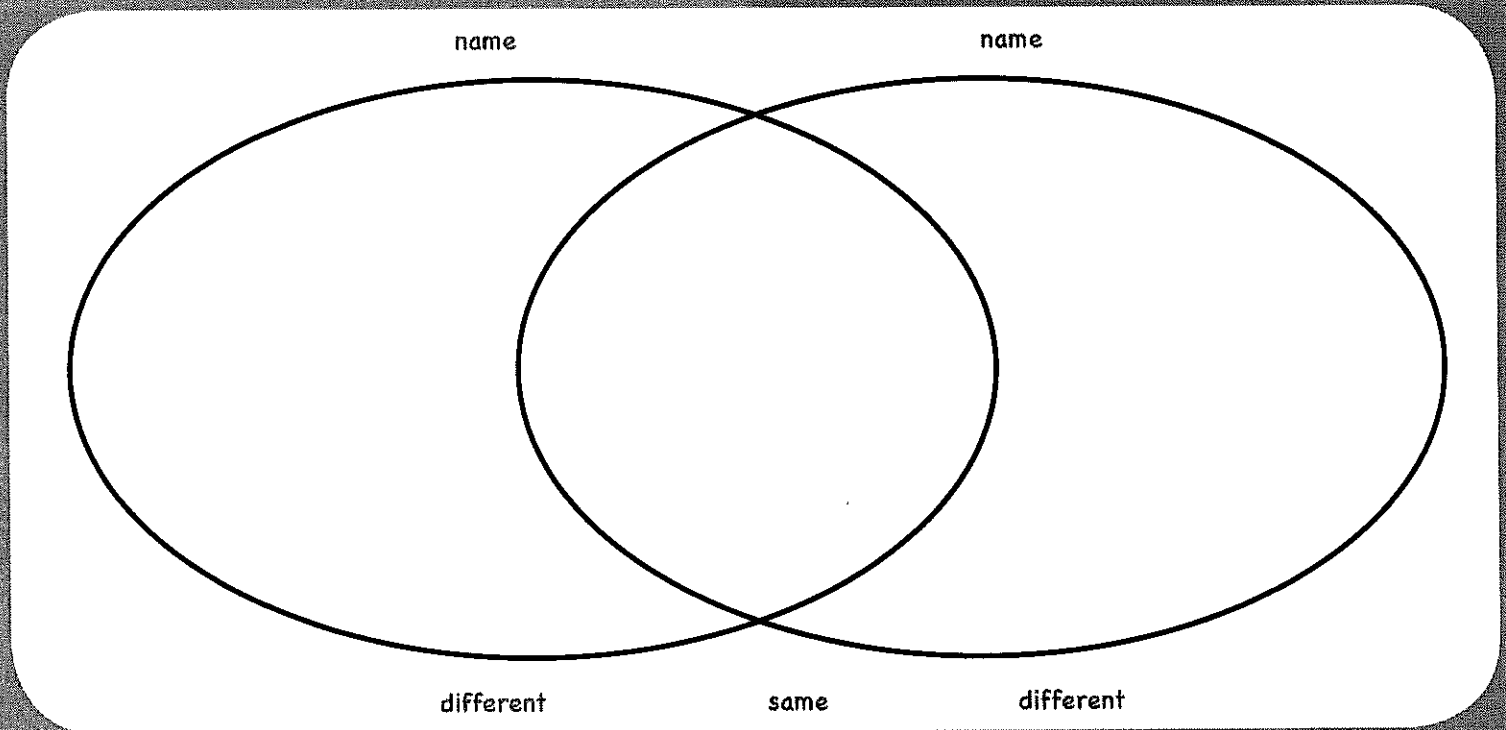
Encourage students to identify his or her own unique physical characteristics. Using the template provided, children can add color to the face, a nose, mouth, hair, and accessories to create a self-portrait.



It's Okay to Be ME!

## It's Okay to Compare and Contrast

Divide students into pairs and give each a blank Venn Diagram like the one below. Have each pair talk about how they are different from their partner and draw facial features on the Diagram. Note in a class discussion what we have in common and what makes each of us special.



## It's Okay to Like Different Things

Have a class discussion about favorite activities. On a blank piece of paper have each student complete the sentence "It's Okay to \_\_\_\_\_" with their favorite activity. Have students illustrate their ideas, then post the papers in the classroom and encourage students to try some of the activities their classmates wrote about.

It's Okay to be Different!

Handwriting practice lines consisting of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

By \_\_\_\_\_