

Celebrating Diversity

Kendall Monson

Chippewa Middle School, Grade 8

In an environment like middle school, students strive to fit in, but it is actually very important to do just the opposite: celebrate those who do not. Middle school students are desperately seeking acceptance and respect, which are important human rights issues. Human rights requires a school environment of respect, care, justice, equality, acceptance and appreciation, regardless of students' race, religion, body type, or gender. Human rights suggests that those who are different should be acknowledged and not feel like outcasts at a time in their lives when they are so vulnerable. It is important to honor those who are different in middle school, because it is wrong to judge, diversity keeps things interesting, and middle schoolers are at a stage in life where they are only just beginning to explore who they are.

First off, we should praise differences in middle school because it is wrong to judge things that people cannot change. Students cannot usually change physical characteristics, like the color of their skin. Also, cultural and spiritual beliefs are too valuable and important to change just to fit in with peers. No one has the right to say that you are lesser or not as good as another. We were all created equal, and that is how it is supposed to stay. Judging someone is just an opinion, not a fact. You may not know the whole story about someone. We should celebrate differences in middle school peers because no one else was created just like you.

Secondly, our community needs to commend those who are not the typical middle school student because diversity is exciting. If all people were the same there would be no beauty in life, because everyone would look the same, act the same, and talk the same. Being in middle school would be very monotonous. Middle school students do not like to stand out because they tend to be easily embarrassed but no one would be able to stand out in constructive ways either, because everyone would be trying so hard to fit in. Everybody should be able to put their own positive spin on life and be celebrated for it. Being a different race, religion, height, weight, or gender should be considered exciting, not something to be looked down upon.

Finally, middle schoolers are at a stage of life where they are establishing their identities. They should be encouraged to investigate who they are because if they do not they might end up following other people's misguided paths. Despite peer pressure, students should not downplay either their religion or race, because it is fundamental to who they are. Middle school is exactly the time when they need to explore their heritage. Exploration can only happen in an environment of acceptance. Celebrating, not downplaying, their heritage and cultural identity will result in increased confidence at a time when self esteem could be low. Middle school is a great time to discover one's self.

Since it is wrong to judge, diversity keeps things interesting, and middle schoolers are at a point in their lives when they are exploring their identities, it is important to celebrate those who are different. No one has the right to treat someone unfairly because they are a different race, religion, or body type. A diverse middle school is very exciting. And finally, discovering who you are is vital. As a result of all of these things, extraordinary middle school students should be celebrated for being the diverse individuals they are.