

THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

K-2 Curriculum Unit





THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Significant regional differences in ethnic representation will continue into the 21st century, with diversification playing a most significant role in the make-up of classrooms and work forces. According to the 2010 US Census, 31.1 million of the nation's population were foreign-born and by 2050 the US population is projected to have no single ethnic group that constitutes a majority of the population. This is just one example of how important it is for schools to teach the value of diversity since working with diversity will be a bottom-line issue for all future business in the global marketplace. As such, from a young age, students need to recognize the importance of appreciating diversity. This curriculum focuses on helping students understand and embrace diversity through the use of culturally relevant literature.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This elementary curriculum has been based on Common Core Standards for grades K-2 and 3-5. Common Core Anchor Standards for English/Language Arts state that students must read both widely and deeply. The literature within the lesson plans and the included book list will give teachers the opportunity to increase both the depth and width their students are reading. Understanding diverse texts will help students in a variety of ways, from gaining cultural knowledge to increasing understanding of literary elements. We posit that a focus on culturally relevant literature will increase student understanding of others and lead to a more compassionate classroom environment thus leading to the development of more compassionate global citizens in the future.



THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE FIVE LESSONS

Books:

- All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold
- Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes or the Dreamscape video *Lost and Found Cat* (available on HOOPLA)
- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- The Name Jar by Yansook Choi
- Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Manchev
- Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus

Materials:

- TSOS story cards
- Drawing paper
- Crayons (or colored pencils, markers)
- Paint
- Paintbrushes
- Googly eyes
- Small rocks (1 per student)



THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

YOUR FEEDBACK IS CRITICAL

We would love your feedback! Help us broaden the scope of our education, advocacy, and integration programs by participating in our data collection initiative. Everything we learn from the feedback can be used to evolve and advance our programming.

STUDENT PRE-TEST & POST-TEST LINKS

We hope to measure the change in students' attitudes and behaviors as they are exposed to refugee-related content. Please consider utilizing our electronic pre and post- tests with your students. All data collected will remain confidential and will be aggregated to assess overall changes. We would be happy to share all data with you that is collected from your classroom(s).

- Student Pre Test: <https://forms.gle/8vMkR6iBPfYsvbmW8>
- Student Post Test: <https://forms.gle/TWJWWyZkF36BVAch7>

TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

Once you have utilized the lessons within your classroom, please share about your experience!

- K-2 Teacher Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/5KJ3LGB2LDEvc7oQ6>

LESSON 1

The logo consists of a solid green square with the letters "TSOS" in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within it.

SUMMARY

Students will be given TSOS story cards and will discuss the images on the cards. They will learn about refugees through the book All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold.

MATERIALS

- TSOS story cards
- The book All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold
- Drawing paper and crayons

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will begin to understand that children around the world with different customs have similarities to themselves. They will begin to understand the importance of welcoming new students to their classroom.

LESSON 1

The logo consists of the letters "TSOS" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green square.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

1. Read All are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold. Talk about how students in our class come from all different places and all kinds of families. Discuss that the children in the story were all very different but they all belonged.
2. Give each child or pair of children one of the TSOS story cards to look at. Give them a moment to really look at the picture on the card. If they are able to read, let them read what the card says quietly to themselves.
3. Ask the students if they can tell you what they think is happening in their picture. Allow students to take turns sharing about their picture.
4. Tell students that some of the children in these pictures might look different than you in some ways, but there are some ways they are the same. Ask the students to look at the picture and tell you some characteristics they notice about the child in their picture that is similar to themselves (perhaps they have the same hair color or eye color, they might be the same age or like to do something similar, they are all children). Have them share with a neighbor and then give students the opportunity to share with the group.
5. Ask the students if they could ask the child in their picture a question, what would they ask? Have them share their question with a neighbor. Give students the opportunity to share with the group.

LESSON 1

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

6. Explain that the children in the pictures are from different countries than they are and live far away, but they are similar to themselves in many ways.
7. Explain that sometimes children from other countries move and they might come to our classroom. How could we welcome them?
8. Have students go to their seats and draw a picture of how they could welcome a new student to their classroom.
9. Bring the students back to the group and ask them to share what they have drawn.

LESSON 2

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SUMMARY

Students will understand the difference between treating someone “nice” and being “mean”. They will see an example of what happens when many people work together to be kind.

MATERIALS

- Dreamscape video *Lost and Found Cat* ([available on HOOPLA](#)), or
- Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush’s Incredible Journey by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes
- Drawing paper and crayons

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will understand what it means to be kind. They will be able to list actions that show kindness. They will recognize that kindness can bring positive outcomes.

LESSON 2

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

1. Show the movie, *Lost and Found Cat* or read the book, Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey.
2. Draw two columns on the board. Label one "kind" and the other "not kind". Explain that "kind" is when we are doing things that will help people or make them feel good and "not kind" is when we are doing things that make people feel badly. On your list write down actions that were nice in the story and actions that were mean (example: when the other cats were making fun of Kunkush, that was not kind. When all the aid workers were helping to find Kunkush that was kind).
3. Talk to the class about how it is important that we treat others with kindness, even if they are different from us. Talk about how when the aid workers all decided to be kind and work together to find Kunkush's family they were able to find them. Point out that when we choose to be kind, we can make a difference in the lives of others.
4. Have students think about a way they can be kind to others and have them draw a picture of themselves doing that kind act.

LESSON 3

TSOS

SUMMARY

Students will read a story about the importance of names and discuss how to be tolerant of the differences of others. They will write an acrostic poem using their own name.

MATERIALS

- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- The Name Jar by Yansook Choi
- Paper and pencil

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will gain an appreciation of their own names and the names of other students. They will begin to understand the importance of tolerance of the differences of others, and they will learn that words can both hurt and heal.

LESSON 3

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

1. Early in the day read the book Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes. Discuss the importance of names. Why do you think the author wrote a whole book about someone's name? Why do you think the teasing bothered Chrysanthemum so much? How did it make you feel? What, if anything, did Chrysanthemum learn from what happened?
2. Later in the day remind students that we learned about the importance of names when we read the book Chrysanthemum. Share how your name was chosen or if it has any special meaning. Divide students into small groups and allow them to share how their name was chosen, if they know. Invite the children to share stories about their names for example how they learned to say it or write it, a funny pronunciation by a younger sibling, or how they got their nicknames. Be sensitive to students who may not be comfortable sharing.
3. Read The Name Jar, by Yansook Choi.
4. Point out that in the beginning of the story Unhei (pronounced "Yoon-hye") was embarrassed about her name. Discuss why she was embarrassed and what changed so that she was no longer embarrassed? Discuss as a class what you can do to make sure no one has to feel embarrassed about their name in your classroom (example: always be respectful, don't make fun of people, be kind, etc.).

LESSON 3

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

5. Have students create acrostic poems using their names and words that describe them. Example: J-oyful O-optomistic H-happy N-noisy
6. Have students share their acrostic poems with the class. Remind children that their names are special. People feel proud of their names because their names describe them.

LESSON 4

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SUMMARY

Students will read a story that will help them understand the importance of including everyone. They will discuss why it is important to be inclusive and will learn about being a good friend.

MATERIALS

- Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Manchev
- Paper, pencil, crayons

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn the importance of helping everyone feel included. They will be able to list character traits of a good friend and discuss how to incorporate those traits themselves.

LESSON 4

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

1. Ask students if they have ever had a time when they felt left out. Let a few students share.
2. Read aloud the book Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Manchev.
3. Discuss some of the different types of pets in the story. How did the boy and the tiny elephant in the story feel when they saw the sign that said “Strictly no elephants?” Why is it important to include everyone? How did they solve the problem of not being included?
4. Including others is one way to be a good friend. What are some other ways to be a good friend? On the board, make a list of character traits of good friends (Examples: sharing a toy, helping with a problem, etc.).
5. Have the students think of which pet from the story they would choose (or have them choose a pet that wasn’t found in the story). Hand out a paper to each student and have them draw a picture of the pet they would choose. On the back of the paper have them write or draw how they could be a good friend to that pet.

LESSON 5

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SUMMARY

Students will read a book about a refugee child's "pet" rock. Students will have the opportunity to share a "pet" rock with someone who needs a friend.

MATERIALS

- Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus
- One small rock for each student in the class (students can find them on the playground, bring them from home, or you can purchase a bag of small rocks from home improvement stores)
- Package(s) of googly eyes
- Paint and paintbrushes to decorate the rocks

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn the importance of kindness and generosity. They will learn the character traits of a good friend and how to incorporate those traits themselves. Students will have the opportunity to share a "pet" rock with someone who needs a friend which will help them experience how it feels to be a good friend.

LESSON 5

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

1. Ask the students if they have any special possessions that they love? Let a few students share.
2. Read aloud the book Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egneus.
3. Discuss what made Pebble so special? Have you ever been worried about someplace new? Were you maybe worried on the first day of Kindergarten? Did you have a friend? How did that help?
4. Review some of the things you can do to be a good friend (remind students you discussed this in the last lesson when you read *Strictly No Elephants*). Talk about how Lubna was willing to give Pebble to Amir. Why do you think she did that? How do you think she felt when she did it? Have you ever given something to someone else? How did you feel? How did giving Pebble away help Amir?
5. Explain that you are going to make pet rocks to give away. Have students be thinking of someone who might need a special friend.
6. Make the pet rocks. Allow students to paint and decorate their rocks. Once they are dry attach the google eyes.

LESSON 5

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

7. Have students take home the pet rocks and give them to someone who needs a special friend.

8. Follow up activity: After students have taken their pet rocks home and given them to someone, discuss as a class how it made them feel to share their rock with someone else. Give students a chance to share their experience.

THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

VISION STATEMENT

We transform the perception and reception of refugees worldwide one story at a time. Ultimately, we envision a world where there is no "them," only us.

MISSION STATEMENT

We share stories of the refugee journey to advocate and educate, and to actuate integration.

Advocacy

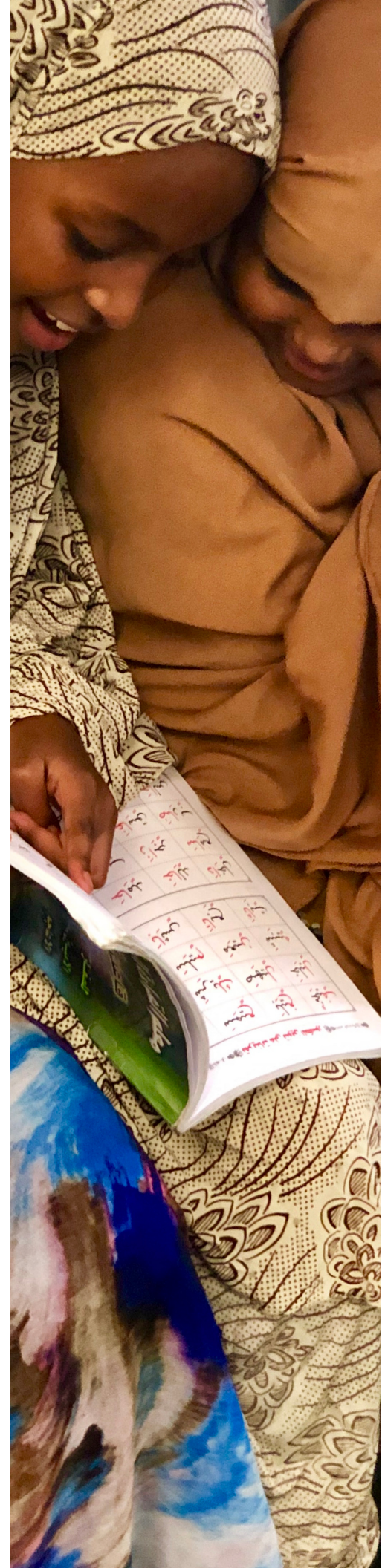
We amplify refugee voices so they can dispel misconceptions, live new lives in new lands, and contribute to their adopted communities in significant ways.

Education

Our story archive and educational curricula ignite curiosity, stir compassion, and guide toward connection. By humanizing the abstract and closing proximity, our stories also model how to build community and support initiatives that foster belonging and integration.

Integration

A strong social webwork depends on local citizens and refugees connecting with and learning from one another. Our stories are the unique fibers we all weave into one vibrant and strong fabric of community.



We began in 2015 as a handful of writers, artists, and humanitarians who wanted to put our talents to work on behalf of refugees entering Europe. By the spring of 2016, we had formed the 501c3 nonprofit, Their Story Is Our Story—or TSOS, and headed to Greece to film, photograph, interview, paint, and ultimately befriend refugees. Our plan was to capture maybe a couple of dozen stories during that week, but to our surprise, we finished with over 70 interviews encompassing nearly 200 people.

Since then, TSOS has expanded to include dozens of team members—including refugees and former refugees—across several countries. We have traveled the world documenting stories of refugees, refugee volunteers, and refugee-supporting organizations. We have gathered hundreds of stories, produced dozens of videos and painted as many works of art, taken thousands of photos, and have published our first photojournalistic hardcover volume of refugee stories, *Let Me Tell You My Story*.

We have made dozens of public presentations, including at UN gatherings, at institutes of higher education in the US, and in Europe. Our members have been guests on numerous television spots, radio shows, and podcasts. We are now launching our own podcast, educational curricula, and the Global Refugee Story archive housed at the largest private university in the USA. We have established strong partnerships and received generous grants from multiple foundations. This funding helps sustain our original but always-progressing mission of sharing first-hand stories to change the perception and reception of refugees worldwide.

**THEIR STORY
IS OUR STORY**

www.tsosrefugees.org