

## *Growing Anti-racist UU's: A Curriculum for Children*

[www.uucharlottesville.org/anti-racist-curriculum/](http://www.uucharlottesville.org/anti-racist-curriculum/)

### **How Does It Feel to be Stereotyped?**

#### **Lesson 11 for Grades 3-5+**

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

This lesson continues work on stereotypes, including how it feels to be stereotyped. Watching a video about “shopping while Black” lets participants see how bystanders might respond.

##### **GOALS**

- To understand more about stereotyping
- To briefly experience stereotyping

##### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

For label activity: First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, Living Our Values Everyday lesson, credited to Lilia Banrevy

##### **LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE**

Opening	8 min.
Activity 1, What is in a Label?	20 min.
Activity 2, Video and discussion of Shopping While Black	20 min.
Closing	5 min.

##### **LEADER PREPARATION**

- When you label somebody and put them in a box, then you put the lid on the box, and you just never look inside again. I think it's much more interesting for human beings to look at each other's stories and see each other. Really see each other and then see themselves through other people's stories. That's where you start to break down stereotypes. -Stephanie Beatriz

- A stereotype may be negative or positive, but even positive stereotypes present two problems: They are cliches, and they present a human being as far more simple and uniform than any human being actually is. -Nancy Kress

## MATERIALS FOR LESSON

- tech set up to show you tube video
- poster from last lesson with definition of stereotype

*A **stereotype** is a picture, idea or belief many people have about a person or a group that is based upon how they look, their religion, or other characteristic. It does not look at differences among individuals. Stereotypes may be untrue or only partly true.*

- mailing labels (one per person with a few extras)
- permanent markers (some narrow, some thicker)
- flip chart and paper

## LESSON PLAN

### OPENING

- Light chalice
- Reading:

We are still teaching (conditioning) people in this country . . . the myth of white superiority. We are constantly being told that we don't have racism in this country anymore, but most of the people who are saying that are white. White people think it isn't happening because it isn't happening to them.

-- Jane Elliot

- Joys and Sorrows

### **Activity 1: What is in a Label?**

(Thanks to Lilia Banrevy for this activity.)

**Purpose:** To explain what racial stereotyping is and expose the harm in engaging with such behaviors. To help students examine their own judgmental behaviors.

**Preparation:** Before class, write a stereotypic attribute on each label (e.g. violent, athletic, cute, overemotional, incompetent, good at math, lazy, untrustworthy, unclean, musical, materialistic, unintelligent, exotic, forgetful, and frail) and hide them from the students.

### **Description:**

- 1) After reviewing definition of stereotype from last lesson,  
*A **stereotype** is a picture, idea or belief many people have about a person or a group that is based upon how they look, their religion, or other characteristic. It does not look at differences among individuals. Stereotypes may be untrue or only partly true.*  
explain that you will be conducting a labeling exercise to help them learn how stereotypes work.

2) Attach a label to each student's forehead or back so that the label is not visible to the wearer (they should not know what the label on their forehead says at this point). Be sure to not give children labels that fit a prominent stereotype for their demographic (for example, don't give a blond girl "unintelligent," a black boy "lazy," or an Asian girl "exotic"). Make clear that the labels you are giving them may have nothing to do with their actual attributes. Note: *If anyone objects strenuously to participating, give them the option to excuse themselves from participating in the activity, as this could make some students uncomfortable. Those who opt out can act as observers in these situations.*



3) Ask them to spend 10-15 minutes talking to each other about "what they want to do when they finish high school – or become adults" (or another general topic). Tell your students that they should move around to talk with several different people, and that they should treat one another according to the other person's labeled attribute (for example, someone labeled "forgetful" might be repeatedly reminded of the instructions). If some individuals have difficulty thinking of things to say, stand by them and coach them.

4) Once their time is up, reconvene and ask students to leave their labels on for a little while longer (if the class size and furniture allows, it's best to sit in a circle). Then ask students to share how they felt during the exercise, how they were treated by others, and how this treatment affected them. Students will often mention their discomfort not only with being stereotyped but with treating others stereotypically.

5) Finally, tell students that they can now remove their labels. Then discuss questions such as the following:

- Was the label what you guessed, or were you surprised by it?
- When people stereotyped you, were you able to ignore it?
- Did you try to prove that the stereotype on your head was wrong? If so, did it work?
- How did you feel toward the person who was stereotyping you?
- If your label was positive (for example, "good at math"), how did you feel?
- When you were stereotyping others, how easy was it to find evidence that supported the stereotype?
- When you were stereotyping others, how did you react to evidence that went against the stereotype?

## Activity 2: Video of shopping while black (8-9 min)

**'What Would You Do?': Shopping While Black:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH60U\\_rb6M4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH60U_rb6M4)

**Alternative: 'What Would You Do?': Shopping While Black 2:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhM7GzIt3sU>

Bring up that it's perhaps uncomfortable that people were being filmed without their permission. It's part of an ABC TV show that does lots of different situations. Sometimes, though, it's helpful to think what would we do if we were being watched. or to ask ourselves what does our Unitarian Universalist faith encourage us to do in this situation.

After viewing the video, discuss:

- How did the other shoppers react to what was happening to the African American shopper?
- Were you surprised that most of the other shoppers did not want to get involved?
- Why do you think most people ignored what was happening to the African American shopper?
- How would you feel if no one helped you when someone was treating you badly?
- Have you ever been in a situation when you saw someone being bullied? What did you do? Why?
- What do you think you could do if you witnessed this type of situation here in our town?

Let's go back to what is stereotyping?

*A **stereotype** is an idea or belief many people have about a group that is based upon how they look, their religion, or other characteristic. It does not look at differences among individuals. Stereotypes may be untrue or only partly true.*

Discuss how shoppers responded, if group didn't discuss this already.

How might you respond (assuming the people targeted are kids)?

**What does our Unitarian Universalist faith urge us to do?**

## **CLOSING (5 minutes)**

Follow typical closing procedure for this class and read:

"Never be discouraged from being an activist because people tell you that you'll not succeed. You have already succeeded if you're out there representing truth or justice or compassion or fairness or love."

-- [Doris Haddock \(Granny D\)](#) \*

\***Doris "Granny D" Haddock** (1910-2010) was a White American political activist from New Hampshire. Granny D became famous when, between the ages of 88 and 90, she walked over 3,200 miles across the continental United States to support campaign finance reform.

Extinguish chalice

## **TAKING IT HOME (HANDOUT 1)**

### **LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

When class ends, please stop for a minute with your co-teacher to . . .

- Take a deep breath together and acknowledge that you have done one thing today for racial justice. Sometimes the problems seem so huge that we need to find specific actions we can take, and this is one of them.
- Discuss if any children weren't fully included in the lesson and how they might be in the future.
- Note any issues that you want to follow up on in the next class.
- Note any issues that you want to mention to your congregation's racial justice curriculum planners or your religious educator.

## Racial Justice Lesson 11, Take It Home

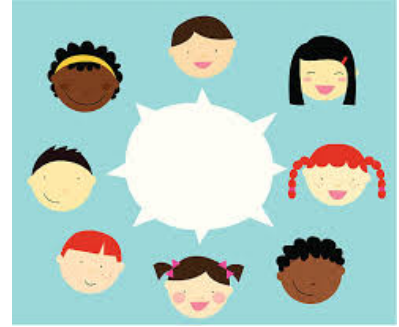
### How it feels to be stereotyped

Children are given a label on their forehead with a characteristic, such as “athletic,” “good at music,” or “forgetful.” They converse with others, with partners treating them as if the label were true. Then they debrief their experiences.

We discuss that a **stereotype** is a picture, idea or belief many people have about a person or a group that is based upon how they look, their religion, or other characteristic. It does not look at differences among individuals. Stereotypes may be untrue or only partly true.

They see another video in the series “What would you do?” called “Shopping while Black”:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH60U\\_rb6M4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH60U_rb6M4)



They discuss how stereotypes hurt African Americans and notice the positive ways a few witnesses responded.

*Perhaps as a family you could watch this video and discuss it at home.*

*It would also be interesting to talk about ways in which members of your family feel they are stereotyped.*

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### FOUR CORE GOALS OF ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

From Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, 2010. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves*

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
  2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
  3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
  4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discrimination.
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