

PEACE

24/7

Empowering Youth to Be Ministers of Peace and Justice



Divine Diversity



Become Aware

Traveling alone is a new adventure for you.

Headed by bus to visit family in a distant city, the ride seems like an eternity.

Eventually anxiety turns to curiosity and you begin to relax and observe. Two children,

about three and four in age, visit back and forth as they draw on tablets of paper. Their language appears to be a unique mix of Spanish and English, but their laughter and smiles are what you really "hear." A few seats ahead you notice as an elderly gentleman, quietly moves from his seat so that an expectant mother and her small child can have seats together. The woman seated behind them appears to be

absorbed in her newspaper. Her business suit hints of an important meeting at the end of her journey. When she hears the young toddler become upset and sees the stress it is causing the expectant mother, she leans forward to visit. Within minutes the mother is relaxing, reading the newspaper, and the business woman is holding the toddler, sticky fingers and all.

The bus stops again for more passengers. As you got on the bus early in the morning, John the bus driver seemed abrupt and not very friendly. But at this stop you notice that he gets off to help two women. The women quickly catch your attention—they appear to be about thirty, but their actions more closely resemble those of a six-year-old child. John patiently guides them to their seats. He even asks other passengers to switch seats so that these women can sit closer to him. Amazingly, the couple he asks to move do so willingly. As the bus pulls out of the station, John's two friends appear to be talking his ear off. The hardness in your driver's face has softened. The two women,

who are somewhat irritating to you, seem to bring great joy to John the bus driver.

As the miles turn into hours, you close your eyes, lean your head against the window, and try to sleep. The woman seated next to you—who up to this point has spent most of the trip bumping your side with her elbow as she attempts to pass her time knitting—reaches down into her big bag and pulls out a soft pillow. Gently tapping you on the shoulder, she offers the pillow to you for comfort.

As the weariness of a long day creeps over the bus, you awake to the sound of singing. The two women seated behind the driver have begun singing silly songs. But the most amazing part is that many of the other passengers have chosen to clap and sing along! By the time the bus reaches your destination, you, too, are singing with gusto. The bus is filled with laughter and your tiredness has been replaced with joy. This is a certainly a day to remember!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Acknowledge Responsibility

- Think about the people in your family or a group of friends. How are they different from one another?
- What unique gifts do they bring to life?
- How would life be different if these people—and the diversity of gifts they share—were suddenly not there?
- What happens when the uniqueness of a person is ignored, not valued, criticized, or critically judged?
- What are issues surrounding the diversity of persons that might create conflict, violence, and/or unjust actions?
- As a disciple of Christ, what is your role in the challenge to uphold and appreciate the diversity of all persons?

1 Corinthians 12:4—6, 8—11 NRSV

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

To one is given...the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge..., to another faith..., to another gifts of healing..., to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

No Two Exactly Alike

Under God's great design, every person is created with their own individual characteristics. There are many tests available to help you analyze learning styles, personality traits, and relational skills. Obviously no test is going to reveal the true person inside you. However, such studies can help you become more aware of your own diversity and the diversity of others. Following is a simplified list of the learning style characteristics based on *Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Where do you fit? Where do your family and friends fit? Remember, you may have a predominant way of learning, but you can also learn many other ways.

VISUAL/SPATIAL

- learns by seeing
- thinks in pictures
- Skills:** art, manipulating images, construct/fixes things, design
- Careers:** visual artist, sculptor, navigator, inventor, architect, interior designer

VERBAL/LINGUISTIC

- highly developed auditory skills
- thinks in words
- Skills:** listen, speak, write, teach, debate, remember information
- Careers:** journalist, writer, teacher, lawyer, politician, translator

LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL

- uses reason, logic, and numbers
- thinks in logical /numerical patterns
- asks questions, is curious
- Skills:** problem solving, classifying, experimenting, questioning, calculating
- Careers:** scientist, engineer, computer programmer, researcher, accountant

* adapted from
www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm
Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

BODILY/KINESTHETIC

- ability to control body movements
- handles objects skillfully
- thinks by interacting with space
- Skills:** dancing, sports, crafting, acting, building with hands
- Careers:** athlete, artisan, actor, dancer, firefighter

MUSICAL/RHYTHMIC

- produces and appreciates music
- thinks in sounds, rhythms, patterns
- sensitive to environmental sounds
- Skills:** sing, play instruments, compose music, hear rhythm
- Careers:** musician, singer, disc jockey, composer, music teacher

INTERPERSONAL

- relates to and understands others
- sees things from another's view
- Skills:** senses feelings, intentions, and motives; peacemaker; listens
- Careers:** counselor, salesperson, mediator, politician

INTRAPERSONAL

- self-reflective
- aware of inner feelings, dreams
- Skills:** recognizes own strengths and weaknesses, analyzes self, sees their role in relationships
- Careers:** researcher, theorist, philosopher

Acquire More Understanding

For more information search:
multiple intelligences
Myers-Briggs
learning styles


Diversity Mural

Wonderful group activity

- gender
- age
- religion
- extroverted
- introverted
- family history
- neighborhood
- grades
- language
- friends
- sexual orientation
- group identity
- physical ability
- mental ability
- music
- athletics
- art
- mathematics
- logic
- employment
- skin color
- culture
- height
- weight
- hair color
- hobbies
- interests

Picture Perfect

Create a list of qualities that describes you—the unique you. Frame the list like you would a picture. Place the framed "picture" in a prominent place to remind yourself of the unique individual that you are.



Take Action

- Share the challenge to value diversity. Get permission to hang your Diversity Mural in a public place (school, church, store).
- If your Diversity Mural turns out to be highly expressive, seek permission to enlarge and paint it on a permanent location for all the community to see. A place to start might be the side of an old building that would otherwise be covered in graffiti.
- Do your research, then sponsor a celebration that honors the many different cultures represented in your community.
- Become a people watcher! Observe the gifts and talents people have to share. Acknowledge the value of these gifts, and help others become aware of them as well.
- Start at home. When you hear family and friends make negative judgements against people—especially ones they don't even know—take the time to offer another perspective. Respond by pointing out at least one positive trait about the person and the uniqueness they bring to the world.
- For a family night and potluck at church, ask families to share recipes, music, dances, and/or games that reflect the uniqueness that is a part of their heritage.

Questions for Discussion

What makes a person diverse in one group and not diverse in another?
What challenges do you face when you stand out as the "different one?"
What are advantages and/or challenges of being in a diverse group versus a non-diverse group?

Become an Advocate

Organize a "Do You Know . . ." bulletin board or table at church and/or school. Prepare a questionnaire that will help the community learn more about each other, the gifts each has to offer, and the love they have to share. Let featured persons post pictures, share favorite movies, books, awards, and anything else that represents who they are and what they want others to know about them.

