

Using Tootsie Roll Pops to Teach Tolerance

This activity helps students increase respect for differences and gain a deeper understanding of universal similarities.

Draw two columns on the board, labeled "On the Outside" and "On the Inside." Hold up a Tootsie Roll Pop. Ask students to describe the Tootsie Roll Pop, as you write, under the appropriate column, their comments: on the outside (hard, different-colored wrappers, different flavors, requires 600 to 800 licks to get to the center) and on the inside (soft, chewy, supported by a lollipop stick).

Use these questions to lead a discussion:

How are Tootsie Roll Pops like people—on the outside and on the inside?

How can you compare the different flavors of Tootsie Roll Pops with outer differences among people?

If you choose Tootsie Roll Pops by the wrapper color, do you also select friends by appearance (clothes, hairstyle)?

Why do Tootsie Roll Pops and people have a hard exterior?

Just as you look forward to reaching the Tootsie Roll Pop's sweet center, what reward do you get from making the effort to get to know new people?

Talk about a time you judged someone from the outside, then later found that the person was different on the inside.

Just as the Tootsie Roll Pop gets "held up" by the lollipop stick, who are some people in your life you use for support?

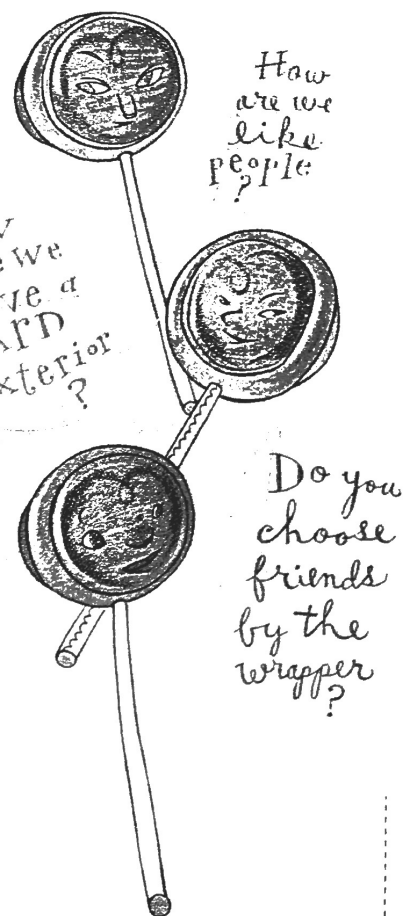
Do you try different flavors of Tootsie Roll Pops? Do you always choose the same types of friends, or do you sometimes move outside of your comfort zone to get to know new people?

Summarize the main concepts. Everyone has something valuable inside that we may not see at first. The "soft center" of people represents what we all have in common: feelings, hopes, dreams, fears

and insecurities. To feel safe and protected, people often use a hard outside to hide their soft core. However, a tough outer shell may prevent others from getting to know what is truly special about us. Making the effort to get to know what makes someone special on the inside helps us learn, grow and practice tolerance.

Give students a Tootsie Roll Pop each. Invite them to enjoy a sweet ending to the lesson!

This lesson enables students to look at themselves and others differently. One student commented that he wants to find "the soft center" of several of his classmates who seem unfriendly. Another student expressed a wish to melt her "hard shell" so that other students could



see that she is really sweet on the inside. Several other students shared how they usually hang out with people who are similar to them on the outside. They now want to find people who are like them on the inside.

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For students with special dietary needs: Tootsie Roll Pops are gluten-free, peanut-free, nut-product-free and Kosher-certified. For more information go to tootsie.com.