

# RELIGION | What Colour is God?



## Materials:

Small bags of M&M's, one bag for each person

1. Ask the students to take a blank sheet of paper from their journals or the supply basket on their table. Introduce the activity with these or similar words:

I am going to give you a word. When you hear this word, I want you to think of a color and write the color on your piece of paper. Do not tell anyone what you wrote on the paper until I direct you to do so.  
The word is God!

2. After everyone has written down a color, engage the large group in a discussion about what they wrote and their reasons for choosing the colors they did. Ask:

- What color did you choose to describe God? Why?
- Comment on the variety of colors chosen and the variety of reasons given for the same color.

Continue the large-group discussion with the following questions:

- Based on your answers, what can we learn about God?
- What can we learn about our relationship with God?
- What do you think God sees when God looks at each one of us?
- What are your thoughts about being created in the image and likeness of God?

3. Ask one last question: When I think about how God created us, I think of M&M's. Can anyone guess why? After the students have responded, affirm their answers and summarize them with these or similar words:

We have learned from an early age that we are created in the image and likeness of God. Just as we are all different from one another in many ways, on the inside and the outside, we all differ in our views of God, our ways of describing God, and our ways of approaching God.

M&M's are different on the inside and the outside. They have different colors on the outside. They are different on the inside, too, because some have nutty or crunchy centers. They come in different size bags and containers.

Yet all M&M's have chocolate in common. In the same way, even though we are all different, we are all created in God's image and we are all loved tremendously by God.

Close this activity by summarizing the answers of the retreatants and rewarding the efforts of all with small bags of M&M's to enjoy during their break.

# MEDIA | Video Challenge



## Materials:

Gather the following supplies:

- A large-screen TV
- A VCR or DVD player
- Movie tapes or DVDs (see below)

Identify scenes from movies—fairly recent ones, if possible—that highlight issues of diversity. They can be positive or negative issues. You should have at least two scenes that are 3 to 6 minutes long. Cue the tapes to the scenes before the retreat. These are some possibilities:

- *The Mask* (1994, New Line Entertainment, 101 minutes, rated PG-13); differences in appearance
- *Save the Last Dance* (2001, Paramount Home Video, 113 minutes, rated PG-13); racial and economic diversity
- *Spider Man* (2002, Columbia-TriStar, 121 minutes, rated PG-13); people who are teased for being "brains"

1. Show the movie scenes you have chosen. Then ask the group to discuss the following questions. Be prepared to revise some of these questions based on the videos you choose.

- What type of diversity is highlighted in these clips?
- What challenges do the characters face?
- Share examples of this diversity issue found in our everyday world.

2. Finish by discussing these general questions together:

- Is there enough diversity in the movies? In other types of media?
- How does Hollywood affect our response to people who are different from us?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Examine other types of media, such as print media like advertisements, and visual media such as commercials, music videos and television programs, as well as auditory media, such as various songs, and answer the same questions outlined above for each type of media. Summarize all of your findings in a chart.

# Diversity within Unity



We are all members of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Each of us is \_\_\_\_\_ created in God's image.

Each of us has special \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

which God calls us to place at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church and others.

Through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit,

God \_\_\_\_\_ each of us to live our lives as Jesus would.

We recognize and \_\_\_\_\_ that our diversity and uniqueness are

gifts to the \_\_\_\_\_.

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# RELIGION | What Would Jesus Do?



## Materials:

Gather the following supplies:

- index cards, one for each small group

1. Distribute an index card to each small group. Introduce this activity in the following way:

Earlier we talked about how strange the world would be if we all were the same and how our wonderful, wise God loves variety. We used movie clips to help discuss some tough issues in this world.

Now we will take some time to look at tough situations you encounter in your own lives. Please think of a situation-!-at school, with friends, in your family-when someone just was not treated right. It could be a time when someone left you out or when you excluded others. It can be an example of how people were mistreated or misjudged because of the color of their skin, or the school they attend, or the team they play for, or the way they dress. Decide on one situation for your small group.

Please write two or three sentences describing the situation on your index card.

2. After 5 minutes, collect all the index cards and glance at them briefly to make sure each small group followed directions. Scramble the cards and redistribute them to the groups, making sure no group gets its original card. Ask each group to read the situation on its card and prepare a response to present to the whole group. Here are two possible options for responses:

- Option 1: Prepare and present a role-play of what Jesus would do in the situation.
- Option 2: Describe the situation and what the group thinks Jesus would do in the situation.

Allow about 10 minutes for the groups to work on the task. Then invite each group to share its presentation.

3. Conclude the activity by encouraging the students to invite Jesus into a situation when they are not quite sure how to handle it. We must all allow the example *of Jesus* to guide us in how we treat others who are different from ourselves.

# RELIGION | Prayer Patch Tapestry



## Materials:

Gather the following supplies:

- ✓ 5-by-5-inch squares of multicolored construction paper (one for each student)
- ✓ 4.5-by-4.5-inch squares of white paper, one for each student, glue sticks
- ✓ a pack of multicultural crayons for each group, newsprint, markers

## ACTIVITY:

Glue the squares of white paper onto the squares of multicolored paper so that there is a multicolored border around each white square. The squares are now prayer patches.

1. Give each person a prayer patch. Have each recap the day by asking, "What are some of the things you learned from the retreat sessions today?" As they share their answers, record them on the newsprint. When they are done answering, post the newsprint where everyone in the group can see it.
2. Divide the large group into pairs. Ask the partners to talk with each other and choose a word or phrase from the flip chart. Then they should think of one or more symbols together to represent the word or phrase, and draw the symbols on their prayer patches. For example, a pair could illustrate the phrase "working together" with stick figures holding hands or the "gift of diversity" with a rainbow-colored hand. They can use several symbols together to create a patch, but they should avoid using words. Let them know that the prayer patches will make up a tapestry that will be used during the closing prayer. If time permits, invite the students to share their symbols in foursomes.

Note: If you have a very large group, you may ask each pair to create one patch. If your group is small, each person can make his or her own patch.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

# Come, All You People

## Materials:

- Gather the following supplies:
  - ✓ A CD player
  - ✓ Two or three candles
  - ✓ Music for opening and dosing songs
  - ✓ An easel and a piece of poster board large enough to be the backing for all the tapestry squares when they are put together
  - ✓ Masking tape
  - ✓ Prayer squares (from previous activity)
- Choose a song for the tapestry procession. Try to choose one that focuses on diversity.
- Choose gathering and closing songs for the prayer service that are bilingual or multicultural. "Come, All You People/*Uyai Mose*" by Alexander Gonda (*Gather Comprehensive*,

GIA Publications) and "I Say Yes, My Lord" by Donna Pena (*Gather Comprehensive*, GIA Publications) are recommended and are found in many popular hymnals.



- Recruit a young person to proclaim Galatians 3:26-29.
  1. Prepare the prayer space. Place the blank poster board on an easel near the front of the space. Teach the opening and closing songs to the group. When you are through practicing, light the candles to signal the beginning of prayer.
  2. Begin by inviting everyone to join you in singing the gathering song. Then offer the following prayer:

Today, we have celebrated our differences and discovered that there can be unity in diversity. As we close the retreat, let us bring our prayers to the God who created us in his image and loves us in all our wonderful variety. Let us pray for one another and remember always that we are all one in Jesus Christ.

3. Invite the person who has prepared the reading to come forward and proclaim the Scripture passage. Allow a few moments of silence following the reading.
4. Invite the students to come forward two at a time to tape their prayer patches on the poster board. Ask them to do this slowly and reverently, noting that the covered poster board will become a diversity tapestry. During this time, play the song you have chosen for the tapestry procession.
5. Introduce the sign of peace by talking about how Jesus reached out to all people in peace and how we offer this sign today-just as we do every time we gather for the Eucharist-as a sign of our willingness to share the peace of Christ with all other people, regardless of our differences.
6. Invite the whole group to pray aloud the "American Indian Prayer" on handout 7. You may wish to consider dividing the group into "left" and "right" sections that take turns reading sentences.
7. Invite the retreat leaders to go out into the community of students and offer a blessing or commission. The students can also be invited to bless one another. The gesture should be one that is comfortable for young people, such as a hug, special handshake, sign of the cross on the hand, and so on. The gesture is a challenge to take what they have learned at the retreat and put it into action.
8. Offer the following prayer:

We are all members of the Body of Christ. Each of us is unique, created in God's image. Each of us has special gifts and talents that God calls us to use to serve others. Through the Holy Spirit, God calls each of us to live our lives as Jesus would. We recognize and understand that our diversity and uniqueness are gifts to the world. Amen.
9. Conclude by singing the closing song you have selected.