

Quilting Connections

Discovering the interests, similarities, differences, and backgrounds of others takes time, and is not always intuitive. Particularly when forming new groups, it is important people have opportunities to use words and pictures to learn about themselves, peers, and leaders. The Unity Quilt not only gives group members a chance to verbally and nonverbally explore and communicate aspects of who they are, it also encourages leaders and participants to learn and build group culture from as early as day one! The completed quilt naturally shows connectedness and is a reminder of interests, diversity, and of course unity that bring feelings of belonging and safety to build upon. See this article for reference to one variation of Unity Quilt activity: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-ways-get-know-your-students-and-build-classroom-community/>.

Social Emotional Learning Competency:

- Self-Awareness and Social Awareness

Purpose:

- Learn about leaders and group members.
- Explore similarities as well as the diversity of thought, background, culture, and interests in a group.

Materials

- Paper
- Magazines or pictures
- Colored pencils or markers
- Tape/glue

Success Indicators

- Participants share thoughts, tell something new they learned about each other, and discuss diversity as it relates to connectedness.

Recommended Group Size: 10-25

Est. Time: 20-60 minutes

Recommended Age: K-12

For more information and activity resources visit <https://ohio4-h.org>

Activity Description

1. Provide all participants with a blank piece of paper and necessary decorating materials.
2. Prompt participants to fill their papers with drawings, cut-outs, and phrases that express who they are.
3. After participants decorate their papers – quilt pieces – work as a group to connect all pieces together using tape, staples, or another method.
4. As developmentally appropriate, ask the learners questions about the quilt.
 - Sample Questions:
 1. Pick one decoration on your quilt piece. What does it say about you?
 2. Do you notice something on your piece that is also on another?
 3. Oftentimes differences and diversity we notice in one quilt piece can make the whole quilt look beautiful. (e.g., many different colors). What do you notice?
 4. What are some decorations on other quilt pieces that you find interesting? What questions do you have about what you see?
5. When finished, share the importance of the quilt as a reminder of what connectedness means. Tailor language to age. We do not have to be the same to be connected. It is also important to acknowledge and accept diversity, and how individual differences can enhance the whole.

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