

AGAPE

A PEACEMAKING
GUIDE FOR KIDS

MAKING PEACE

JANUARY 2025
ISSUE 03 / PURSUING JUSTICE



ON EARTH PEACE



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A PARTICULAR TOPIC COVERED IN AGAPE MAGAZINE?

Send your suggestions to:
children@onearthpeace.org

DEAR READER,

Welcome to our third edition of Agape! Today, we're going to explore how we can pursue justice in our communities!

First, I want you to know that **you don't need to do big things that change the world or be an adult to pursue justice.** You all, as kids, have a **super power** to move people towards change that adults don't have!

That's why at On Earth Peace, we wanted to give you a **toolbox and a resource to help you in your peacemaking journey.**

Sometimes, pursuing justice can be scary when you don't know where or how to start. But in these moments, use this magazine as a tool to learn how to stand up to microaggressions, create safe spaces, acknowledge your privilege, move through fear with love, apologize, and more.

Keep being curious about the world and ask "why?" Keep learning and growing in your peacemaking journey.

We believe in you! You got this.

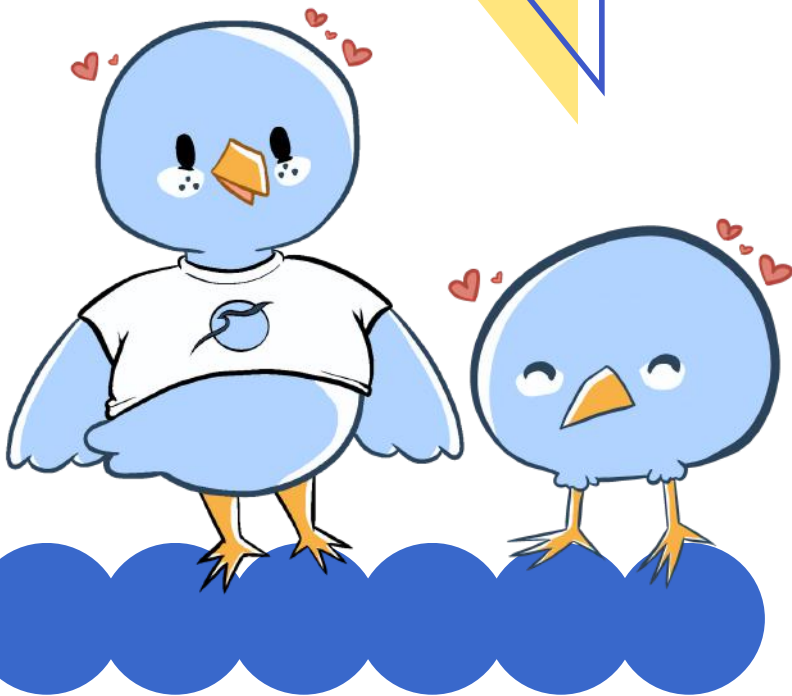
Emi Kanamara

Editor-in-Chief

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Hi reader!
We're so excited to guide
you through our 3rd
magazine as your OEP
peacemaking guides!



HOW DO WE PURSUE JUSTICE?

By Samhar Almomani

Everyone deserves to feel safe and loved, whether it is in their classroom, home, religious community, or anywhere else. People are happiest when they feel accepted by the people around them. Feeling safe, loved and happy can take many forms.

As we follow the lessons of Dr. Martin Luther King and those he worked with (Kingian Nonviolence) and advocate for social justice, **we must work on making sure that everyone feels welcome, can participate, and fully belong.**

Ensuring that everyone feels safe and loved begins by asking ourselves, “Where do I feel safe?” Do you feel safe going to class? Or at home? Do you feel safe hanging out with your friends? Or family?

Safety does not only refer to physical safety. You may be physically safe but *feel* unsafe in an environment.

BEGINNING TO UNTANGLE WHAT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL THAT WAY IS THE FIRST STEP IN BUILDING A LOVING COMMUNITY.

Personal safety looks different for everyone. A Black student may not feel safe going to class because their classmates make insensitive remarks about their race. A gay person may not feel safe at church if their pastors do not accept their identity. Someone who is an immigrant may feel unsafe walking around in public in case someone threatens them.

These fears are real and based on experiences, and they go through the minds of many people every day.

TO BE A SOCIAL JUSTICE CHAMPION IS TO BE SOMEONE WHO IS ACTIVELY BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS THAT ARE STOPPING EVERYONE FROM FEELING SAFE AND ACCEPTED.



It is not always easy to understand what others are going through, especially when we do not share their identities. Never assume that you “know” or fully understand their experience!

Instead, when someone is sharing a story with you, listen and seek to understand their experience as much as you can.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY FILLED WITH LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE BEGINS BY ENSURING THAT EVERYONE IS ABLE TO EQUALLY PARTICIPATE.

To make sure that everyone’s voices are heard, we might need to notice who is not in the room and make a plan for hearing from them and valuing their input.

It’s important to remember that communities grow and change, so the spaces we create also need to be adaptable.

Principle six of Kingian Nonviolence talks about how the universe is on the side of justice. Does this mean that if you witness harm being done to someone else, you should just wait for it to resolve? Absolutely not!

The universe is on the side of justice because we *guide* it. **We need to step in and do our work to make sure that justice prevails and that our beloved community is built.**

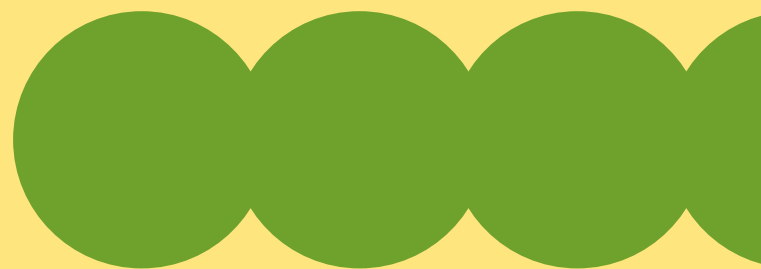
Starting out as someone who champions social justice can be scary at first, especially if you have not done anything like it before. The task can be overwhelming.

You will see a lot of harm being done and may find yourself unable to step in every time or solve every problem. You may begin wondering what the point of intervening is if it is bound to happen again. All of those feelings are expected.

THIS IS WHY IT IS BEST TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BEING AN ALLY, LEARN HELPFUL WAYS TO INTERVENE, AND LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS THAT MAY COME UP.

This magazine offers you a toolbox that you can search in and pick the right tool when needed to handle a situation. Kingian Nonviolence is one of the tools.

It focuses on resolving conflicts and building a beloved community. By using these tools, you can become someone dedicated to social justice. **It is never too early to begin learning more, and there are always people around you willing to help you with this journey.**



MEET THE AUTHORS



Samhar Almomani, Kingian Nonviolence Fellow

My name is Samhar Almomani and I'm the KNV Fellow (previously KNV Organizer). I'm based in Washington, DC. I learned about how to find safe spaces in different contexts and how to develop inclusivity and belonging for different student groups.



Maree Iboaya, Racial Justice and Gun Violence Prevention Organizer

My name is Maree Iboaya and I am from Findlay, Ohio. One thing I have learned from the Agape article is that, no matter your age, standing up against racism and prejudice can be scary. However, it is so important to set boundaries for ourselves and always stand up for what is right. This is a universal truth that will always ring true no matter if we are young or old!



Anesu Makufa, Organizing Fellow

My name is Anesu Makufa and I'm the Organizing Fellow at On Earth Peace. I'm also a spoken word poet from Zimbabwe, which means I love using words to express feelings and ideas in a creative way. I really enjoy working with young people like you, and my goal is to create safe places where everyone can share their thoughts and dreams.

KINGIAN NONVIOLENCE PRINCIPLE 6:

THE UNIVERSE IS ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE!

By Anesu Makufa

Growing up, my favorite movie was The Lion King. The first time I watched it, I laughed, I cried, and I sang along to the catchy songs. **As I have grown older, I still find myself loving the movie.**

I go through all the same emotions, but I do so now with a better understanding of why I feel the way I feel when watching the movie.

On the surface, The Lion King is about a young lion in the savanna, who's world changes dramatically when his father dies. Blaming himself, he runs off to start a new life in the jungle.

There he makes some new friends who encourage him to look to the present and forget his past and future worries.

A few years later, having grown up, he finds out what has become of his father's kingdom, ruled by the true villain responsible for the King's death. He returns triumphantly to confront this villain and defeats him in battle, taking his rightful place as king.

HAVING RESTORED PEACE AND JUSTICE, THE LAND, THE ANIMALS, AND THE UNIVERSE ARE AS THEY SHOULD BE ONCE AGAIN.



On a deeper level, the movie tackles ideas of challenges in life, friendship, and redemption. Sometimes in our lives, things really hurt us, make us feel lonely, and unable to confront the situation or the people involved.

However, with the right support, a lot of courage, and the right timing, **justice can be restored.** Things may not be the same as they were before, but change is sometimes important!

THE CHANGES THAT YOU GO THROUGH AS YOU PURSUE JUSTICE ARE OFTEN WHAT YOU NEED TO BECOME WHO YOU WERE ALWAYS SUPPOSED TO BE.

Dr. King said, "The Universe is on the side of justice." But what is the universe, and how can it be on the side of justice? The universe has many definitions, depending on your context, beliefs, and understanding of the world around you.

The universe is everything we know and experience.

For some, it is the Earth and all that is in it. For some it is the solar system and all that is beyond in the galaxy. For some, it includes all that God has created. For Simba, it is the Pride lands and everything the rising sun touches in the surrounding area.

JUSTICE CAN SOMETIMES BE CALLED FAIRNESS, WHERE EVERYTHING IS BALANCED SO THAT EVERYONE CAN THRIVE, EVERYONE IS TREATED WITH EQUAL RESPECT, AND EVERYONE FEELS THAT THEY BELONG.

In the Lion King, Mufasa tells the story of the circle of life, where everything in the world is connected - the grass nourishes the antelope, the antelope nourishes the lion, and the lion's body nourishes the grass once it dies.

THE UNIVERSE BEING ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE, IS WHEN EVERYTHING IS IN HARMONY, WHERE EVERYTHING WORKS WELL TOGETHER IN THE CIRCLE OF LIFE.

It might not happen immediately, but there is a sense of balance in life where the energy you give out is the energy you will receive— in everything you do, you will reap what you sow.

So what does this all mean for you as you go about your day? **Treat others the way you want to be treated. Things will usually work out well if you lead with kindness, respect, and generosity.**

By choosing to behave positively with someone, you could encourage them to follow your example. People generally magnify the feelings they receive from others, so the more good energy you give out, the more you will get back.

This principle asks us to practice **agape love**. (Perhaps you've wondered how we got the title for this magazine!)

ROAR!!!
Did someone
see my paws?



AGAPE IS OFFERING LOVE TO PEOPLE, NOT BECAUSE THEY HAVE EARNED IT IN ANY WAY, BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE PEOPLE AND ALL PEOPLE ARE WORTHY OF BEING LOVED AND NEED LOVE TO THRIVE.

When we refer to justice, we are talking about the universe being a place where all people can live fully themselves and with their needs met and their humanity cared for.

It takes faith and action to move the universe toward justice. **Following the Golden Rule is a good place to start—do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.** Most cultures and religions have a phrase that means the same.

Someone once told me that it takes less energy to smile than it does to frown; the muscles in your face are more relaxed when you share joy. Sometimes, when bad things happen, it will be good to remember that everything will eventually be okay.

Even though this might take time and effort, having faith that justice will win in the end helps us to be the best versions of ourselves and bring out the best in each other.

My favorite song in the Lion King is “We Are One”, which tells us that even when things don't make sense, when we get hurt along the way, or when our dreams don't come true when we want them to, it is important to remember that you are not alone.

YOU ARE PART OF FAMILY THAT BELIEVES IN YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE A PART OF THE CIRCLE OF LIFE THAT CONNECTS US ALL.

KINGIAN NONVIOLENCE

Kingian Nonviolence Family Pack is a six session packet of activities designed to do around a dinner table. Each Principle is explored through discussions, games, art, and experiences and made for all ages, 3-93+!



KINGIAN NONVIOLENCE PRINCIPLE SIX

*The universe is on the
side of justice*



LET'S DISCUSS...

What is something you
believe is true but do
not see?



What gives you hope?



How can we give
hope to others?

LET'S PLAY!

TELEPHONE OF HOPE:

On a piece of paper everyone
writes down a hope of theirs and
folds it. Shuffle the hopes and
hand them out to everyone. On
another piece of paper draw the
hope you have been given.

You can shuffle this round
multiple times and take a look
at all the various hopes and
pictures you have. Try and
match the pictures to the hope
and its owner.



LET'S GET CREATIVE!

**Make your own superhero
of peace and justice!**



Design your own superhero
character who is on the side
of peace and justice.



RESOURCES:

1. Paper
2. Writing/Coloring Materials
3. Other Fun Art Materials

LET'S SHARE!

Don't forget to share your
amazing photos of your
superheroes of justice to
children@onearthpeace.org

We would love to
share them on
our social media!



TAKE AWAY AND EXPLORE MORE

**Reminder to work towards a
future you believe is possible!**

Learn about how your faith refers to
the future.

What does your religion say about peace
and justice in the future.



LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE

By Maree Iboaya

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Situation #1:

Imagine you're playing soccer during recess. A new classmate joins the game, and someone jokes, **"I bet they're fast because they're from Mexico."** You notice your new friend looks uncomfortable. **What do you do?**

1. Nod in agreement, after all you've heard this same thing said a hundred times before.

3. Ignore them and say nothing, because it's not your fight or your business.

2. Tell them that whether "good" or "bad" stereotypes are never okay.

Situation #2:

At lunch, someone compliments your friend's braids, saying, **"Your hair looks so cool! I wish I could do mine like that."** But then they add, **"Isn't it kind of weird to wear your hair like that to school?"** Your friend smiles awkwardly but doesn't say much. Later, they tell you the comment felt strange and made them feel judged. **What do you do?**

1. Explain that the person didn't mean any harm and was just complimenting them.

3. Ask them to explain how those comments made them feel and how you can stand up for them in the future.

2. Tell them they're being too sensitive and that they should be proud of their hair.

Find the answers at the bottom of this page!

Moments like this are more common than you might think. They show us why learning about race and respect is so important. **It's small moments like these that teach us how words can affect others—sometimes without us realizing it.**

LET'S TALK ABOUT RACE

What Does Race Mean?

Race is a man-made concept created to group people based on physical traits, like skin color, hair texture, or facial features. It's very connected throughout history and culture. However, race does not truly exist in nature, race is not biological.

It's important to remember that race is just one part of who someone is—it doesn't define everything about them. However, race impacts people's lives on a daily basis.

What Is DEI?

DEI stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion. We also like to add "belonging" to this list.

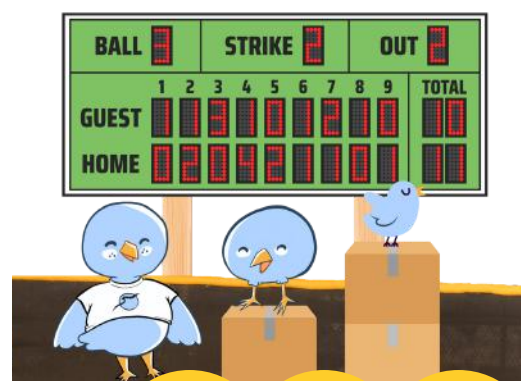
These are big ideas that mean:

- **Diversity:** Recognizing that everyone is different and making sure everyone feels welcome.
- **Equity:** Giving everyone what they need to succeed, even if that looks different for each person.
- **Inclusion:** Celebrating- not just tolerating- what makes us different. This includes valuing each person's unique identity.
- **Belonging:** This is your community and knowing and feeling that a place/ situation was made for you. You are meant to be here and a beloved part of it.

Equity vs. Equality

Equality means treating everyone exactly the same. **Equity means recognizing that people have different starting points and giving them the support they need to succeed.**

- For example, imagine everyone trying to watch a game over a tall fence. Equality would give everyone the same-sized box to stand on, but equity would give shorter people taller boxes so everyone can see.



WHAT ARE MICROAGGRESSIONS AND WHY DO THEY MATTER?

Microaggressions are small actions or comments that might seem small and harmless but actually have the great potential to hurt and exclude someone. Even though often unintentional, microaggressions can make people feel ashamed of their identity and unwelcome in their community. This is why learning about microaggressions is so important.

Examples of Microaggressions:

- Saying, "You're so well-spoken!" to someone from a minority group, as if it's surprising. **WHY: Assumes that the other person is not from the U.S.**
- Asking, "Where are you REALLY from?" when someone says they're from your city. **WHY: Can make the other person often feel like they don't belong in the U.S.**
- Making jokes about stereotypes like:
 - White people can't dance
 - Black people are good at sports
 - Asian people are all smart
 - Hispanic people can't speak english very well
 - **WHY: Assumes that the other person is not talented or intelligent naturally.**



Why Do They Matter?

Imagine getting a paper cut. One doesn't hurt too much, but if you got paper cuts every day, it would start to really sting. **Microaggressions are like that—they build up and make people feel judged for things they can not control.**

RACISM: MYTH OR FACT?

Have you ever seen a picture of Martin Luther King Jr. in school?

Think back- was that picture in black and white or in color? While a lot of the pictures we see of the civil rights movement are in black/white, the original pictures were actually in full color. These changes were made to make some people believe all those things were a thing of the past (Curious to learn more? See our citation page!).

A lot of people believe racism ended with Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Movement, or even the end of slavery. **But racism didn't just vanish—it changed.**

Myth: Racism is a thing of the past.

Fact: Racism still exists today. It shows up in unfair systems, like who has access to the best schools or healthcare, and in everyday moments, like microaggressions.

Knowing this doesn't mean we should feel hopeless—it means we can work together to create change.

FRAMEWORK FOR STANDING UP AGAINST MICROAGGRESSIONS & HOW TO AVOID USING THEM

How to Stand Up:

- 1. Notice:** Pay attention to comments or actions that might hurt someone.
- 2. Speak Up:** Say something like, “Hey, that comment might come off as unkind. Let’s think about how we can be more inclusive.”
- 3. Support:** Check in with the person who was affected and ask how they’re feeling.

How to Avoid Using Microaggressions:

- **Think Before You Speak:** Ask yourself, “Could this comment make someone feel uncomfortable or excluded?”
- **Be Open to Feedback:** If someone tells you your words hurt them, don’t get defensive. Instead, thank them for letting you know and learn from it.



CONCLUSION

You don't have to be a grown-up to make a difference. Every time you choose kindness, stand up against unfairness, or learn something new about someone's culture, you're helping to build a better world.

Remember, change starts with small steps—like choosing your words carefully or being brave enough to stand up for what's right. Together, we can create a world where everyone feels seen, valued, and respected. A world where we all belong.

So, let's talk about race—not to divide us, but to bring us closer together.

MEET THE AUTHORS



Prisca Afantchao, Written Communications Organizer

Hi, I'm Prisca Afantchao and I'm the current Written Communications Organizer. I'm based in Connecticut. The Agape Magazine series has taught me how important it is to understand your emotions and their functions in order to take more effective action for the causes you care about.



Beth Gaver, Former Written Communications Organizer

Hi I'm Beth Gaver, and I am currently based in Gunma Prefecture, Japan. I am the former Written Communications Organizer. I've learned how to better communicate complex ideas and feelings to younger audiences -- a skill I've found helpful as an elementary school teacher!



Nathan Dick, Kingian Nonviolence Organizer

Hello! My name is Nathan Dick, and I am from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I am currently a KNV fellow. I learned that safe spaces can take many different shapes, and depends on where you are. It is so cool to see how different phrases can take on different shapes all depending on the lens you use to view it.



SAFE SPACE

By Nathan Dick

LGBTQ+ IS AN ACRONYM:

L for Lesbian
G for Gay
B for Bisexual
T for Transgender
Q for Queer/
Questioning
+ for many more
identities.

WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?

I am sure you have often heard of the term “safe spaces” used around you, but it can mean something different for each person. I define a safe space as **a space where you can be your true self, who you want to be, without being scared.**

We are going to explore safe spaces for LGBTQ+ people using a classroom setting. But remember, **safe spaces are needed for everyone, everywhere.**

Classrooms are cold, dark, and rigid. Most classrooms have a few posters on the wall, maybe showing a math equation, president, or chemistry flask, but teachers rarely have a poster that says “I accept all my students no matter who they are.”

It would make everyone's life easier if there was a big neon sign that said “LGBTQ+ Welcome and Safe Space”, but it proves to be harder than that.

Teachers cannot put neon signs in their classrooms, (some people say it could cause a fire) but more importantly they typically are in schools that do not allow those types of posters. **Instead, teachers will create an atmosphere that acts as that neon sign.**

Does your school have restrictions like this? We encourage you to find out!



SAFE SPACES FOR EVERYONE!

Most teachers will make sure a student feels safe to be themselves, but **it is still important to know who you can go to if you ever need help.** When I was in school, I would look for the subtle rainbow, and once I spotted that, I would look for other clues, almost like I was a detective.

THESE WERE THE STEPS I FOLLOWED:

1. Look for visual clues around the classroom (ex: rainbows, posters including people that look like you, posters with inclusive language)

2. Listen to how a teacher talks.

- Does the teacher use inclusive language?
 - Ex: partner instead of wife/husband, using they/them pronouns for people they do not know (never assume someone's gender!), asking for your pronouns and using them, or talking about other sexualities in a positive manner

3. Watch how the teacher reacts to anti-LGBTQ issues in the classroom.

- Does the teacher defend or back up LGBTQ+ topics or do they remain silent?

I look at these three tips and use my detective skills to think how comfortable I am. If they are doing two of those three points I usually think it is a safe space. To me, these three tips are my **neon signs**.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS TO FIND A SUPPORTIVE TEACHER OR ADULT WHO CAN HELP YOU IF YOU HAVE AN ISSUE.

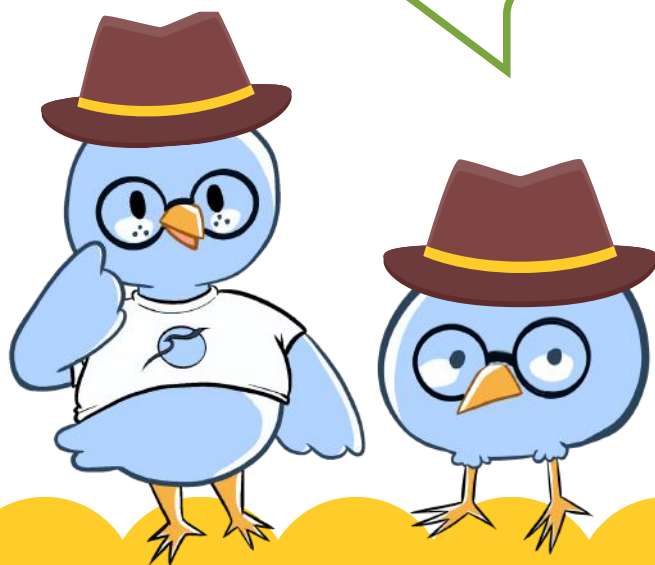
Look at each of your classrooms through these three points and think, *if I needed to talk to one of them, who would I feel comfortable with and want to talk to?* It is important to have support for you in school!

Also, remember that most times, teachers will always help you. Even if a teacher does not seem the most supportive, they are a teacher because they care about students and want to help you in any way they can.

Remember that safe spaces need to be created for everyone, everywhere!

Consider both the neon sign and the detective clues as you think about building inclusive spaces for people of color, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, etc.

- **What are the visual clues that show people are safe?**
- **What language is used to show they are included?**
- **How do we react when microaggressions or oppressive behaviors occur?**



I SPY

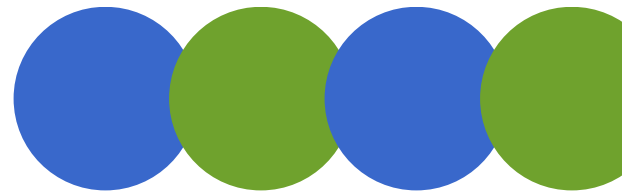
These are some symbols that show that a space is safe for people with different identities and abilities. **Can you spot the different symbols in this picture?** Check out page 33 for the full list of symbols.



PRIVILEGE & THE ANTIDOTE

By Sandia, Guest Contributor

This article is geared towards 10-12 year olds and it might be helpful to read with an adult.



Thank Sandia for this amazing article! I'm ready to start learning! Do you have your notebook ready?



Hola! My name is Sandia and I am here to walk with you while we talk about privilege and the antidote, or cure: The Tloke Nawake Rainbow, which represents how we are all connected and apart at the same time.

I can already hear your brain gears starting to move with curiosity. Yay! Make sure your heart gears are activated. Our hearts are also an essential part of this journey.

I am part indigenous, which means my ancestors were living on the land we now call The United States of America before it actually became the U.S.

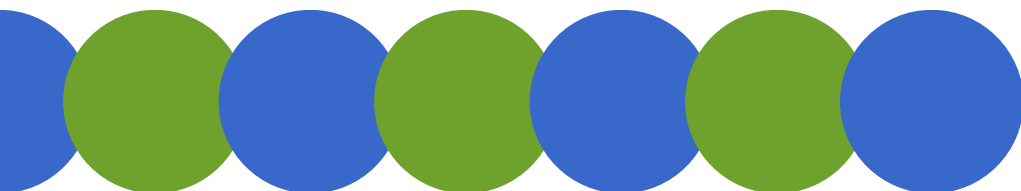
I want to begin this story by acknowledging the land I am writing this on. I live in the greater Chicagoland area. This the land of The Council of The Three Fires: The Ojibwe, The Odawa, and The Potawatomi. This land served as a port for trade, reunions, and ceremonies.

I am part indigenous from the south of the Rio Grande. We are known for sharing stories and learning through nature. I am also part European among other nations. I am glad you are here to read this. Thank you. Tlazocamati.

LET'S PRACTICE ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND WE LIVE ON!

Find out the name of the indigenous people who live where you do and learn a new fact about them to share with your family, friends, and other people in your community to spread awareness and learning.

Recognizing that this land we live on belonged to indigenous peoples and was forcefully taken away from them is a crucial FIRST step to understanding our privilege and pursuing justice.



PRIVILEGE

Let's start by understanding what privilege is. **Privilege is an advantage, a special right, something that one can have that others don't have access to.**

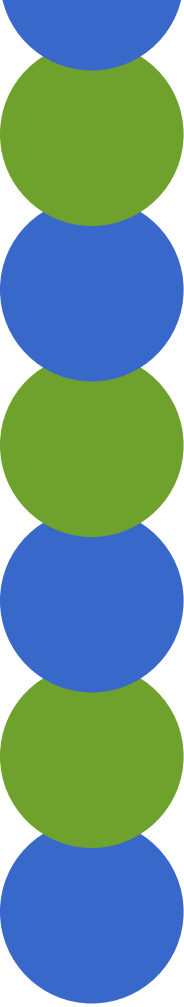
Imagine you are running a race, but instead of everyone starting at the starting line, some people get to start a few steps closer to the finish line. Others get to start in the middle of the race course.

Some have crocodiles on their path, some run with blindfolds on, some have scooters to go faster, while some have to walk. Others don't even have to run, as they already won without even participating.

Participants who have to begin the race at the original starting line or even some blocks away from it often see more clearly how unfair this race and the other systems in our world are.

However, the people with the privilege (those who start closer to the finish line, have a scooter, or win without even running) tend to not hear the calls for help or even notice because of their focus on winning.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED IN THE RACE DO NOT CHOOSE TO START BEHIND EVERYONE ELSE—EVERYONE WANTS TO WIN, BUT SOME ARE PUSHED BEHIND BECAUSE OF UNFAIR SYSTEMS IN OUR WORLD THAT MAKE IT HARDER FOR SOME PEOPLE TO WIN.



“

- WHICH PARTICIPANT ARE YOU?
- WHICH PARTICIPANT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE?
- WHAT PRIVILEGES WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE?
- WOULD YOU SHARE THE SCOOTER IF YOU HAD ACCESS TO IT?

”



Privileged participants who work to keep the game set up unfairly without sharing resources, like the scooter, are **“the keepers of the status quo** (the way things are that create and support a privileged group).”

You might hear them say things like, “we don't need to change things” or “it has always been this way; this is the right way and nothing needs to change.”

BUT WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IN RECOGNIZING PRIVILEGE IS TO USE OR EVEN SACRIFICE OUR PRIVILEGE TO HELP OTHERS.

This could look like noticing that there are people behind you on the racetrack, doing something yourself to change the race (like sharing the scooter), and asking race officials to reorganize the race to make it more fair (remember what we learned about equity- see page 10).



The race is a metaphor for how the systems we have created in our everyday lives work. Society has invented stories to keep some people down so some of us could win more easily.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY: IF YOU MAKE THE RULES AND YOUR OBJECTIVE IS TO WIN, THEN YOU'LL LIKELY MAKE THE RULES IN A WAY THAT FAVORS YOU WINNING.

It can be hard to realize the privileges that we have, but we need to learn to see it as a **blessing to share**.

There are different types of privilege. For example, if you were born in an area with access to running water, free education, and safe neighborhoods, you might have more opportunities than kids in other areas (like better schools, more opportunities to play outside, better sports teams and clubs).

If you're white in a society where being white is favored, you might have privilege (for example, having a lot of people who look like you in school and represented in books and having your culture be the normal culture and traditions celebrated in school).

If you're a boy in a place where males are treated better than females and people who are nonbinary, you might also have privilege.

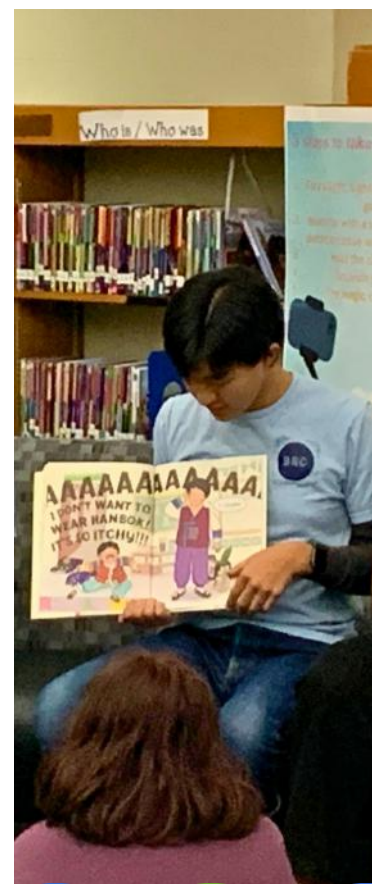
While you might have privilege, **we are not trying to make you feel guilty—it's about understanding the world around you and helping make it fairer. Having privilege gives you a unique power to help others who don't have that same privilege.**

That is why reading and sharing stories of privilege is important. Hang in there. This may feel sad or uncomfortable, and that is ok. We also have good news as well! It's not just you, we all have privileges, so we can all contribute! Indigenous peoples call these privileges "blessings."

THE FIRST STEP TO USING YOUR PRIVILEGE TO HELP OTHERS IS BEING ABLE TO IDENTIFY YOUR PRIVILEGES OR BLESSINGS. WE CAN TRAIN OUR EYES TO IDENTIFY BLESSINGS IN OURSELVES AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES, SO WE CAN START TO THINK ABOUT HOW WE CAN USE OUR BLESSINGS TO HELP.

Identifying your privileges and sharing them is something we have to do every day. You will notice that when you start seeing and working on sharing your privileges and blessings to make things fair, friends and workers for social justice start to show up in your life to join forces!

This is where the Tloke Nawake Rainbow comes in.



THE TLOKE NAWAKE RAINBOW: A MAGICAL TOOL

The Tloke Nawake Rainbow is a super powerful magical tool. This is a treasure that came from my Nahua ancestors. I am going to share this tool with you now.

The Nahua people believe in a force called The Tloke Nawake. **Tloke Nawake is the force that keeps us together.** It is the invisible glue that keeps us close to one another and separate at the same time.

Think of what is close to you Who is close to you? What body of water is close by? What plants go in your stomach to become part of you? What animal relatives live in your area?

TLOKE NAWAKE IS WHAT KEEPS EVERYTHING INSIDE OUR CIRCLE, LIKE A RING YOU DO NOT SEE. IT IS CREATION AND TOGETHERNESS. AT THE SAME TIME, TLOKE NAWAKE IS THE INVISIBLE FORCE THAT KEEPS US APART AS UNIQUE BEINGS.

For example, just because I live with two cats, doesn't mean I speak meow or have whiskers! They are cats! However, we share a home and love each other.

**DIFFERENT CULTURES
HAVE DIFFERENT
WAYS OF EXPRESSING
THIS IDEA OF
INTERCONNECTEDNESS
AND INDIVIDUALITY!**

**IN YOUR CULTURE,
HOW DOES YOUR
COMMUNITY AND
FAMILY CELEBRATE
AND EXPRESS
TOGETHERNESS,
CREATION, AND
INDIVIDUALITY?**



EVERY COLOR IS A BLESSING

Look at the illustration of the Tloke Nawake Rainbow. Every color has a line where it begins and it ends.

EVERY COLOR HAS A PRIVILEGE. EVERY COLOR IS A BLESSING. EVERY COLOR SHARES A SPACE ON THE PAGE AND EVERY COLOR RESPECTS THE LINE OF THE OTHER COLORS.

If the colors did not respect the lines, the rainbow would be a mess! This is fair. Injustice and oppression are not fair. That is why it gets messy when we do not respect and help each other by sharing the blessings we've been given.

That is why the Tloke Nawake Rainbow is a magical tool to keep in our hearts. It is a reminder that we need to be strong together. At the same time, it is also a reminder that we must respect each other as we are.

The Tloke Nawake brings back the balance that we need with ourselves, our families, our community, nature, and the whole world. **The Tloke Nawake helps us understand how we are all connected, even if we are different.**

BE THE CHANGE

The Tloke Nawake reminds us to use our privilege to help those without it. Whether you're speaking up for justice or organizing your friends to help neighbors, you can be part of the solution.

You now have the Tloke Nawake force to help you keep things in place. Use your privilege to defend life, nature, and joy. Keep the Tloke Nawake force in your heart when things get difficult.

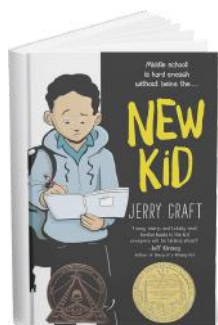
Remember the Tloke Nawake when you are happy! Remember that we are all connected. When you see something that is not fair, bring out your Tloke Nawake force to help you find the path to make things balanced again. **We can all be justice advocates!**

MAY WE ALL WORK TO USE OUR PRIVILEGE TO BRING BALANCE TO OUR COMMUNITIES. ENJOY THE JOURNEY!





BOOKNOOK



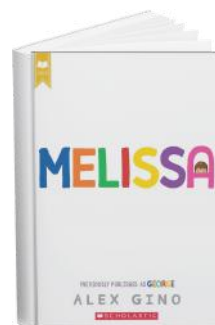
New Kid

by Jerry Craft



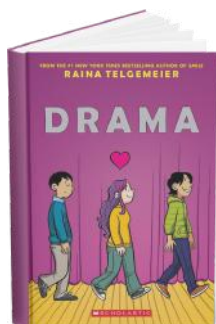
The Breakaways

by Cathy Johnson



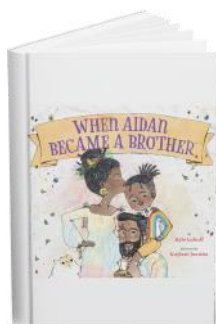
Melissa

by Alex Gino



Drama

by Raina Telgemeier



When Aidan Became a Brother

by Kyle Lukoff



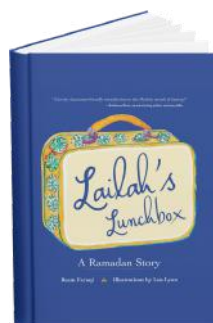
Front Desk

by Kelly Yang



When Stars Are Scattered

by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed



Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story

by Reem Faruqi



GROW YOUR MIND WITH BANNED BOOKS

By Sydney Goldsborough

IDENTITY + UNIQUENESS = YOU:

Think of 3 things that make you unique! (Can't think of anything? Trust me, there's something special about everyone!)

Everyone is unique in their own way, and that uniqueness is a big part of who you are—identity. In the last issue of *Agape Magazine*, we explored the idea of identity in “How Do You Handle C-O-N-F-L-I-C-T?”

Identity is the mix of everything that makes you you—how you see yourself, how others see you, and how you describe yourself.

Your identity grows and changes throughout your life, shaped by what you are born with, the challenges you face, and the things you discover as you grow older.



THE POWER OF REPRESENTATION

When you see yourself in/explore your identity in books, TV shows, or other media, it is called **representation**. Imagine spotting a character in a movie or story who looks like you or has experiences similar to yours, it feels amazing right?

Representation can bring a sense of joy, showing you that your uniqueness matters. Also, representation opens minds, inspires dreams, and helps us build a more diverse and understanding world. It shows us the beauty in differences and helps us learn about people who might not look, act, or think like we do.

But what happens when there is no representation?

Without it, you might feel invisible or like you do not belong/your uniqueness is hidden from the world. It could make you feel sad or even ashamed of being yourself. **But here's the truth: no one should ever feel that way.** Your uniqueness deserves to be seen and celebrated!

Sadly, there are some people who do not understand the importance of representation. They have even gone so far to limit showing diverse identities and experiences by **banning books**.





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BAN BOOKS?

Imagine wanting to read a book about a character who is just like you or learning about a new perspective that opens your mind, only to find out the book has been removed. **That is what happens when books are banned.**

Banning books means taking action to restrict or remove a book based on its content. This might involve preventing people from reading it in schools, libraries, or even bookstores.

These book bans can be organized by parents, school boards, government officials, and other community members.

WHY ARE BOOKS BANNED?

You might wonder, *why would anyone want to ban a book in the first place?* There are a few common reasons:

1. Books About Identity: Many banned books include stories about LGBTQ+ characters and themes, people of color, or topics like racism.

- These books help us learn about ourselves and others, yet they are often targeted.
- **But, you have the right to read about identities like yours— or different from yours— and explore social justice issues shaping our world.**

2. Books about Tough Topics: Books discussing mental health or violence are sometimes banned because people think they are too difficult to talk about.

- But these stories can offer support and understanding to someone feeling scared or alone.
- Even if these topics do not affect you right now, they might in the future or help you be a better friend to someone else.

Some believe certain books are not suitable for kids your age or classrooms, but **teachers and librarians choose books that can inspire learning and encourage important conversations.**



BOOK BANS DON'T JUST AFFECT ONE READER- THEY HURT COMMUNITIES OF READERS AND EDUCATORS.

- **Fewer diverse stories:** Bookstores and libraries might stop offering books about identity out of fear of conflicts. This means some people will have less access to books where they can see themselves represented.
- **Silenced authors:** Writers may feel afraid to tell stories about their own experiences.
- **Limited points of view:** Publishers might avoid printing important books to avoid bans. Self-silencing or limiting voices and perspectives often happens before there is even a rule to do so.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP BOOK BANS?:

It's easy to feel like you can't make a difference, but *you have more power than you think!* Every small action helps:



Educate Yourself:

Learn about why books are banned (just like today!) and what topics they cover.

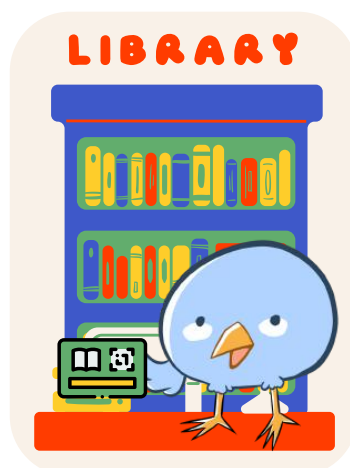
Read Banned Books:

Check out books that have been challenged.



Start a Banned Book

Club: Gather friends to read and discuss banned books together. Good Books Young Troublemakers is a great place to start for inspiration.



Get a Library Card:

Show your support for libraries and borrow books.

Celebrate Banned

Books Week: Join events that highlight the importance of freedom to read.

**KEEP READING, KEEP LEARNING, AND KEEP FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT
TO READ. YOUR IDENTITY IS A GIFT TO THE WORLD, AND YOUR STORY
MATTERS. LET NO ONE TAKE THAT AWAY FROM YOU!**

MOVING THROUGH FEAR

By Prisca Afantchao

Do you ever get scared to stand up for yourself or others? It is completely natural to feel fear, especially in situations where there is conflict, or risk of being criticized, or even yelled at.

BUT THE GOOD THING IS PRACTICE AND POWER OF KNOWLEDGE WILL HELPS US FEEL MORE SUPPORTED AND CAPABLE.

In the previous issue of Agape, Emi talked a lot about how to identify and understand our different emotions. She let us know that **“fear protects us from dangerous things, people, or situations,”** and it can come in the form of anxiety, insecurity, and other feelings.

As a kid, I was often scared to stand up for myself and others. I would think, “What if saying something to this bully only makes them make fun of me more?” or “What if I make things worse for this other person?”

We are urged to move past fear in favor of things we value, like love and justice.

Sometimes, we have to listen to our love for others and our compassion for those suffering more than we listen to our fears. Stop and ask, “Is this an act of love or is it a response to fear?”



I’ve also asked myself questions like, **“What if standing up for this person now will prevent things from escalating and causing more harm in the future?”** or **“What if this person really needs someone to show they care right now?”**

Sticking up for others often reminds people that they matter and that the harm they are experiencing is not okay—

IT’S A COURAGEOUS ACT OF LOVE THAT HELPS MAKE SOMEONE ELSE’S WORLD A MORE LOVING PLACE.

Next time you feel scared in a conflict, if it’s safe, think about how you can use love to face conflict and pursue justice instead of letting your fear take over!



Journal Entry Date:

Think of a time when you showed love, even when you were scared. Write it here.

What do I do when I act out of love? How does it feel?

Who can support me when I am afraid?

ASK EMI:

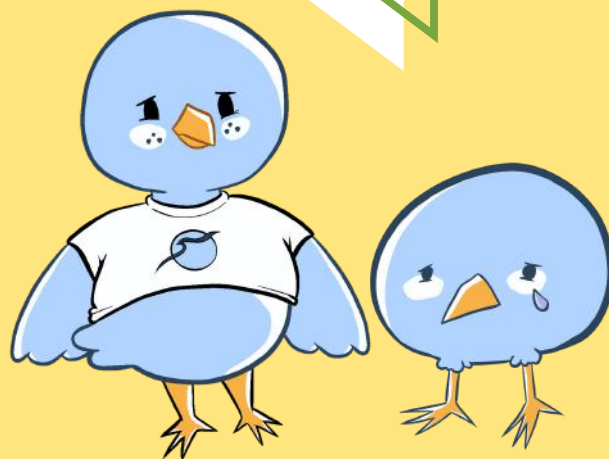
Hi friend!

First, I want to acknowledge that this is hard. Guilt is a really hard feeling.

Let's say you said an insensitive joke to a friend relating to their identity.

"I felt really hurt when you made that joke about my food smelling bad and looking gross. It's my favorite dish from my culture and you saying that made me sad and not want to eat it. I felt like you were making fun of my culture and race."

"HOW DO I SAY SORRY WHEN I ACTED OUT OF MY PRIVILEGE AND HURT SOMEONE?"



You might not have known that your actions were wrong and hurt your friend at that moment. But, your intent behind the action should not be the focus of this conversation. **What's important is the fact that you've really hurt your friend's feelings with what you said and made them feel ashamed of their identity.**

HOW SHOULD YOU APOLOGIZE? LET'S WALK THROUGH IT TOGETHER:

1. LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND, NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD OR DEFEND

What is your friend trying to tell you? Sometimes, telling someone how they've upset you can be very difficult. So make sure you honor this by putting your best effort towards understanding your friend.

When done right, apologies can be a really good opportunity to strengthen your relationship with that person by establishing trust. But to do this, you need to focus on repairing! The first step to do this is **listening to understand**.

Just listening to your friend is not enough—you **have to make sure you're listening and understanding what your friend is saying**. If you don't understand, ask follow up questions so you do! Apologizing without knowing what you are apologizing for is a meaningless apology.

Remember, an apology isn't an opportunity to defend yourself. **It is an opportunity for you to learn.**

Before you apologize, you should understand the answers to these questions:

- What did you do?
- How did that make the other person feel and think?
- How have your actions impacted the other person?
- What do you need to change? What will you do to make sure this doesn't happen again?

2. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ACTION

Responsibility means understanding and showing that what you did was your fault and something you shouldn't have done.

Make sure that you apologize by using "I." Just saying "sorry" doesn't show that you are sorry. By saying **"I'm sorry I..."** it shows acknowledgement that you feel **responsible for your actions** and are **taking ownership** for the harm you caused.

- **NO "BUTS" OR ANY EXCUSES:**

- By saying "but," you are taking away the responsibility from you doing the action. Again, whether you meant to or not is not the focus when you're first apologizing!

What NOT To Say:

"I'm sorry I hurt you, but I didn't mean it"

- **NO "IFS":**

- "If" takes away responsibility by reducing the reality of the situation. This is not a "what if" situation because the harm from your action already happened

What NOT To Say:

"I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings."

- **NO BLAMING:**

- Regardless of if someone else did it, you were the one who hurt your friend!

What NOT To Say:

"I'm sorry I said it because I saw another person make the joke too."

Responsibility is a big word for Orby!



3. ACKNOWLEDGE THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY

“I’m sorry that I said that joke.”

Even though this is how we’re often taught to apologize in school, this is only the first step to a true apology. This is only you admitting that you feel guilty for your action.

It’s missing a crucial part that makes the apology connect and feel genuine to the person who you’ve hurt—**accountability**.

Accountability is acknowledging that you’ve done something wrong by understanding the connection between your actions and the impact that it had on the other person. Without accountability, you cannot have a true and sincere apology.

How did you make your friend feel when you made that joke? What was your impact? Include these answers in your apology.

“I realize that __ (what I did) __ hurt you and I am sorry for making you feel ____.”

This is a good apology because it shows accountability and acknowledgement of why your action was wrong, not just *what* you did.

4. OFFER AMENDS

An important thing to remember is that you can’t expect immediate forgiveness from someone because you’ve apologized.

Apologizing is like a bandaid, it doesn’t fix or undo the impact and harm that you caused the other person. It simply covers the wound with acknowledgement. Sometimes, feelings take time to heal and be back to normal.

What we can do is use our mistakes as an opportunity to learn. In apologies, words can do a lot, but actions often speak louder. Because of this, we should always offer ways that we can repair—which means promising to take actions that will make things right.

You can do this by:

- Making a commitment to do better next time
 - Educate yourself on your friend’s culture, the food that they were eating, what microaggressions are
- Ask, “What could I do to make this better?”

Always make sure to follow through with what you promised!

Apologizing takes practice and it’s always something we can get better at. It’s a hard thing to do, but always remember that good apologies make relationships stronger! You got this!

MEET THE AUTHORS



Emi Kawamura, Children and Youth Peace Formation Organizer

Hi! I'm Emi and I'm from Findlay, Ohio!! Through writing for Ask Emi and our journey with Agape, I learned that the most important quality in great peacemakers is bravery. Feeling intense emotions, having to resolve conflict, talk to people with different opinions, and apologizing are all hard things, but are all things that you can tackle if you have the bravery to face them (which you, dear reader, definitely can do!!)



Sydney Goldsborough, Communications Fellow

Hello! I'm Sydney and I'm the Communications Fellow (previously Social Media organizer). I'm from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I've learned so much about how everyone, no matter our age, can help make our communities better and solve problems together! Every one of us has the power to make the world a brighter place! Remember, you've got this!



Marie Rhoades- Benner, Co- Executive Director with Morgaine Benner, Child Editor

As a co-director and a parent, I enjoy sharing the Agape Magazine with others! Personally, I've really appreciated the opportunity to have conversations with my kids based on the magazine articles and I always love book recommendations.

Morgaine, age 11, is our child editor. Her favorite part of the magazine is Orby & Sib!

Thank you so much to
all our contributors!
And to you,
dear reader!



A special thank you to
the creator of our dove
hosts: Elizabeth Gaver!

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I SPY CHECKLIST

Find these I Spy symbols as you walk around your community.

- What symbols do you see?
- Which are missing?
- Who might feel welcome? Who might not?

Share what you find with trusted adults and think together about how to make your community more welcoming to people of all abilities and identities!



Safe Spaces



Disability Inclusion



LGBTQ+



You Matter



Autism Awareness



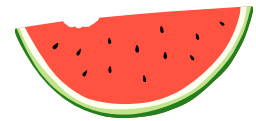
Dove with Olive Branch



Sign Language



Protect the Environment



Palestine Justice



Racial Justice



Neurodiversity



Kindness Matters



Raised Fist of Solidarity



Diversity + Inclusion



Web Accessibility

AGAPE

A PEACEMAKING GUIDE FOR KIDS



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