

# I CAN CHOOSE!

Children have the right to their own thoughts and beliefs, and to practice their religion, as long as they do not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

*The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 14*

## ★ Learning Points

1. We should show respect for other religions and beliefs while exercising our own religion or belief.
2. A **stereotype** is a commonly held belief about a religion, group or individual that is mostly untrue and **often harmful**.
3. We are all different, and we have a right to our own beliefs as long as we let others have their own beliefs, too.

*Display Class Rules and mini-posters.*

**WELCOME** (10 minutes)

**Song, “Be Our Best,”** chant and verse 1

**REVIEW** (5 minutes)

Would someone share what you learned from your family or another person who has a different belief or religion than yours?

**Song or poem, “We Are Different”**

*Link and Instructions found at end of lesson.*

## INTRODUCTION

Write the word “STEREOTYPE” on the board.

*Question:* Who can tell us what the word “stereotype” means?

**A stereotype is a commonly held belief or idea about what a person or group of people is like.** The words may or may not be correct or true. When they are not correct, they can be hurtful. People are often stereotyped because of their religion, race, sex or appearance.

**DEVELOPMENT** (10 minutes)

**Activity: Charades** (*Instructions at the back*)

*Questions* after each group has had a turn:

- Is it fair to say that all boys are tall and all girls are short?
- Are you happy with your lists?
- What actions might fit under both headings?

Explain that the word “STEREOTYPE” can be applied to girls and boys, AND that it can also be applied to religions and beliefs.

Read or have a child read **CRC Article 14**.

Point to the **RELIGION mini-poster**.

- How would we apply the word “stereotype” to religion or belief?
- Are people in different religions all the same?

*True or False*

- All religious people are Christians.
- All Muslim women wear hijabs or headscarves.
- All Hindus live in India.
- All those of the Jewish faith are rich.
- All Buddhists are vegetarians.
- No one has the right to be an atheist.

**CONCLUSION** (5 minutes)

Stereotypes can hurt people.

- Do we all need to believe the same thing or have the same religion?
- Who has the right to choose their own religion or belief?
- Who has the responsibility to allow others to choose a religion or belief, even if they choose something different than your own?
- What are some good ways to break stereotypes?

Guide the children to the following examples:

- Try to understand what other people think by asking questions.
- We should speak out against jokes or slurs that target people or religions. We can say, “Stop it” or “That’s mean” or “It’s not funny.”
- **It is not enough to refuse to laugh.** Silence sends a message that you are in agreement with the stereotype even if you don’t laugh or say anything.

## CHALLENGE

1. Teach your family, “We Are Different.”
2. Talk to your family and friends about the word “stereotype,” what it means, and how it applies to worship and what we believe.
3. Watch for stereotypes and do what you can to break them.

## CHARADES

1. Divide students into 2 or 3 groups, depending on size of the class. For suggestions on dividing groups so that they are not always with the same children, refer to the **TOOLKIT** at back of the manual, in the section on “Teaching Methods,” *Assigning and Creating Groups*.
2. Ask the children for actions or words that could describe both boys and girls. Write their suggestions on the chalkboard (such as: playing a sport, driving a big truck, caring for a baby, cooking, washing clothes, planting seeds, teaching school, playing video games).
3. Each group chooses one action from the list that they will pantomime for the class to guess.
4. While children are working in their groups, draw two columns on the chalkboard or flipchart, labelling one “GIRLS” and the other “BOYS.”
5. Have the groups take turns demonstrating the action they chose, while class guesses what it is.
6. Have them decide in which column the action belongs, and write it there.

(Adapted from *First Steps: A Manual for Starting Human Rights Education*. Amnesty International, Peer Education Edition, January 2001, p. 63.

### *Article 14*

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*The Convention on the Rights of the Child*

## WE ARE DIFFERENT

1. I know you, and you know me.  
We are as different as the sun and the sea.  
I know you, and you know me,  
And that’s the way that it’s supposed to be.
2. I help you, and you help me.  
We learn from problems, and we’re starting to see.  
I help you, and you help me,  
And that’s the way that it’s supposed to be.

3. I love you, and you love me.  
We reach together for the best we can be.  
I love you, and you love me,  
And that’s the way that it’s supposed to be.

*To hear the music:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dbQZQMkpQE&list=PL1p11ICKMm7vUppyDMd39yUSVUUwUJ-Wa5&index=5>

**Instructions:** Line the children up in two rows facing each other.

- Sing the song or read the poem, “We Are Different,” all the way through, or one that is familiar to the children with the same message. You can vary the way the game is played.
- Have the sides take turns singing or saying the lines back and forth to each other.
- Facilitator sings or says the first line, and then the first side repeats the first line.
- Sing or say the second line and the **other** side repeats the second line.
- Sing or say the first line of the second stanza, and the first side repeats it. Sing or say the second line and the **other** side repeats it. And so on to the end of the poem.
- Have the children sing or say the entire verse before continuing.
- Switch sides and do the next verse, so that each row is now repeating the opposite line from before. See if the children can do this with just a little prompting from the facilitator.

**VARIATION:** Have the children clap their hands in rhythm or come up with actions.