

What's the Difference?

(Target audience: students in middle school and high school)

This is a 8-minute video designed to support teens with physical differences and educate their peers. It focuses on differences rather than handicaps or disabilities.

“What’s the Difference?” features children and adolescents with cerebral palsy, neuromuscular conditions, spina bifida, amputations, cleft lip and palate, and burn scars. It shows them enjoying all types of activities and sports, such as kayaking, hockey, skiing and shopping. The teens talk openly about their lives and their differences.

Goals

- To increase awareness and understanding of teens with physical differences.
- To increase acceptance of teens with physical differences.

How to prepare a class or group to view the video

Explain that the video shows teens with physical differences caused by illness, injury or problems prior to birth. It shows them enjoying the same activities and sports that many teens like. Mention that these types of differences don't matter much when you realize that we all have our differences, but much more in common.

Important learning concepts

- We are all different in some ways.
- We are all alike in many ways.
- We are all more alike than different.

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- We are all different in some ways.
- We are all alike in many ways.
- We are all more alike than different.

- Even though we look different, we have the same feelings and enjoy the same things.
- It is okay to be different. Differences make us who we are.

Suggested discussion questions

- How are you different from teens in the video?
- What do you have in common with the teens in the video?
- What is your first reaction when you see or meet a peer who is different in some way?
- How do you think your peers with differences would like to be treated?
- Why is it good that each of us is different?
- When is it okay to ask others about their differences?

Vocabulary

Amputation: the loss of a leg or arm due to an accident, illness or condition present at birth.

Cerebral palsy: an injury to a developing brain that causes problems with muscle control, movement and posture.

Cleft lip and palate: sections of the lip and/or roof of the mouth fail to grow together normally prior to birth, causing possible scarring and speech or dental problems.

Orthotic: a brace used to stabilize a weak limb or joint.

Prosthesis: an artificial limb, or part of a limb, which replaces a missing arm or leg.

Spina bifida: the spinal cord fails to perform normally before birth, causing problems with bones, muscles and the brain.

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