

How to talk to young children about the Black Lives Matter

Guiding Principles By Laleña Garcia

As we think about discussing big ideas with little people, we consider age-appropriate language so that our students or children can grasp the concepts we're introducing and incorporate these ideas and language into their own thinking and conversation.

While adults can obviously talk about any of the principles (and many of us already do) without mentioning the Black Lives Matter movement, we can also mention the movement as a group of people who want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly, regardless of the color of their skin. We can say something along the lines of, "The Civil Rights Movement, with people we know about, like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, worked to change laws that were unfair. The Black Lives Matter movement is made up of people who want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly, because, even though many of those laws were changed many years ago, some people are still not being treated fairly." The idea of police violence is frightening to young children, and the same way we don't discuss the violence which met Civil Rights activists, I would not discuss this kind of violence with our youngest children.

After each principle, I've suggested some language you might want to use when talking to young children. Whenever possible, make connections to children's lived experience, in your classroom, your home, or out in the world.

Restorative Justice is the commitment to build a beloved and loving community that is sustainable and growing.

"We know that if you knock down someone's block building, you have to help them rebuild it, you can't just say, "Sorry," and walk away. Another way to say that is restorative justice, and it's the idea that we have to help people when something happens to them, even if it was by accident."

Empathy is one's ability to connect with others by building relationships built on mutual trust and understanding.

"It's so important to think about how other people feel, because different people have different feelings. Sometimes it helps to think about how you would feel if the same thing that happened to your friend happened to you. Another way to say that is empathy."

Loving Engagement is the commitment to practice justice, liberation and peace.

"It's so important to make sure that we are always trying to be fair and peaceful. We have to keep practicing this so that we can get better and better at it. Another way to say that is loving engagement."

Diversity is the celebration and acknowledgment of differences and commonalities across cultures.

"Different people do different things and have different feelings. It's so important that we have lots of different kinds of people in our community and that everyone feels safe. Another way to say that is diversity."