

Astronauts Look Like Us

Learning Activity – Celebrating Diversity from Space Association of Space Explorers

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Description

This lesson emphasizes that space exploration, like the world we live in, is diverse and that anyone, regardless of their background, can be an astronaut. It encourages students to see diversity as an asset and an important part of working together, both on Earth and in space.

Grade Level

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Duration

45 minutes

Materials

- Picture book(s) or videos of diverse astronauts and space missions
- A large world map or globe
- Printable coloring sheets of astronauts in space
- Crayons or markers
- Stickers (space-themed or planet stickers)

- Construction paper
- Space-themed songs or music (optional)
- Simple handouts with pictures of astronauts and space-related items
- A model or toy astronaut figure (optional)

Learning Goals

- Introduce students to the concept of diversity in space exploration, focusing on astronauts from various backgrounds.
- Help students understand that space is for everyone, and astronauts come from all walks of life.
- Encourage appreciation for differences and the role diversity plays in space missions.

Lesson Activities

1. Introduction (5-10 minutes) - Set the stage for understanding diversity in space exploration.

- Discussion:
 - Start by asking, "What is space?" and "What do astronauts do?" Encourage answers from students.
 - Introduce the concept that astronauts come from all around the world. Show pictures of astronauts from different countries and backgrounds (e.g., astronauts of different races, genders, and abilities).
 - Ask, "What do you think makes someone a good astronaut?" Lead the discussion towards the idea that astronauts are special because they work together, learn, and explore, no matter where they are from.
- Show and Tell:
 - Play the first two minutes of the Earth Music Theater video of the International Space Station (ISS). Call on students to answer individually about what they notice. Let the students know that they all have different responses just as astronauts bring different skills, stories, and experiences to their missions.

2. Story Time (10 minutes) - Use a story to make the concept of diversity relatable.

- Read aloud a picture book like "A Picture Book of Astronauts" or "The First Woman on the Moon" (or another story that showcases diverse astronauts and their missions).
- Highlight the differences in the astronauts' backgrounds and how their unique perspectives helped them succeed in space exploration.
- Pause throughout to point out diversity in the illustrations and discuss the different astronauts.

3. Create Your Own Astronaut (15 minutes) - engage students in a hands-on activity that helps them express their own identity and imagination while exploring diversity.

- Instructions:
 - Continue the Earth Music Theater video of the ISS (decide if music background should be on or not).
 - Provide each student with a coloring sheet or a simple outline of an astronaut.
 - Ask the children to color and decorate their astronauts. Encourage them to make the astronaut look like themselves or someone they know, using a variety of colors for skin tone, clothing, and accessories.
 - Add fun details like helmets, flags, and planets. You could also give stickers or let them draw items that show diversity, like flags from different countries, different tools, and diverse space gear.
 - Ask the children to explain to their table partner(s) who their astronaut is and what makes them unique.

4. Group Discussion (5 minutes) - Reinforce the lesson about diversity in space exploration and astronauts.

- Ask a couple of students to share their astronaut and describe why their astronaut is special. Emphasize that there is no one way to be an astronaut—anyone, no matter their background, can become one if they work hard and dream big.
- Point out the different astronauts on the world map. Show how astronauts have traveled from many different countries.
- If time permits, continue to have students share about their astronaut to the whole group.

5. Wrap-up and Reflection (5 minutes) - Conclude the lesson and encourage students to think about diversity beyond the classroom.

- Review the key points:
 - Space is a place where people from all around the world work together.
 - Diversity helps astronauts solve problems and learn new things in space.
 - Everyone is special and can be an astronaut someday!

Final Activity:

Sing a simple space-themed song about astronauts or space exploration (e.g., “Zoom, Zoom, Zoom, We’re Going to the Moon”). You can also ask students to join in and make up their own “astronaut dance” or “rocket countdown” to make it interactive.

Extension Activities (Optional)

- Astronaut Interview: Invite a local community member (or even a virtual guest speaker) who works in a STEM field or has knowledge about space to talk to the students about the importance of diversity in space careers.
- Space-Themed Art Project: Have students create a mural or collage of space, planets, and astronauts using cut-out pictures and stickers. Encourage them to depict astronauts from different countries or different abilities.

Assessment:

- Observation: Assess how well students engage with the discussion and activities. Are they able to identify the diversity of astronauts and explain their own astronaut creations?
- Participation: Evaluate how well students express their understanding through their astronaut artwork and explanations.