

# TEACHING TOLERANCE



A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER  
TOLERANCE.ORG

## TOOLKIT

# Activities to Do Outdoors

*(Note: Please be sure to follow your school's safety protocols for leaving the building. Make sure to have an appropriate adult-to-child ratio, and let your administration know where your class is going.)*

### 1. NATURE WALK

It seems so basic, but kids often don't have time to notice what is around them on their ways to and from school. A nature walk can happen even in the most tightly populated urban environment. Take your students for a 10-minute walk and tell them their only job is to use their eyes and ears to observe things. What do they see and hear around them? What in your school surrounding is natural? What do the trees look like, or the sky? Reconvene and talk about what they noticed and how it impacts the way they think about their school environment.

### 2. GET PHYSICAL

The recess yard is a great place to be! No matter how much space you have, kids rarely have enough time during recess to get out enough energy and let off steam. Before starting a challenging academic activity, allot a mere 10 to 15 minutes to spend time running around. When you get outside, give students one simple instruction: "You can't stop moving!" You will learn more about your students' personalities, styles and preferences than you might think. Also, make sure you get moving alongside them. You might be surprised at how much energy they have to devote to academics once you get back inside.

### 3. RUBBINGS AND NATURE ART

Take peeled crayons, paper, colored pencils and clipboards with you and find an outdoor area where you can settle. Show students how to make rubbings of trees, rocks or the ground by putting paper on the object and rubbing the peeled crayon over it. They will notice interesting things about nature's different textures this way. Then, encourage each student or pair of students to settle in one particular place and make a sketch of what they see. They should use their powers of observation, drawing leaves how they actually look instead of how an idealized image of a leaf might look to them. Once back inside, give students an opportunity to share their artwork. You can even have a nature gallery show.

### 4. MAPPING

Spend 10 minutes taking a silent walk with your students around the school ground. Then, give each student a paper, pencil and clipboard and challenge each to draw a map showing the route you just took. Have them compare their results. Are they accurate? Could a visitor follow their maps? Encourage them to add landmarks, street names, a key and a compass to make their maps as detailed as possible.

### 5. OUTDOOR MEASUREMENTS

Take your math curriculum outside by heading outdoor with paper, clipboards, pencils, rulers, yardsticks and protractors. Pair students up and assign each pair one aspect of your school or recess yard to measure. Some possibilities include: the dimensions (area and perimeter) of doors and windows, the angles of play structure bars, the height of plants or even grass, the number and size of bricks on your school building and so on. Choose assignments appropriate to your specific building and your students' mathematical knowledge. After they conduct their measurements, gather students to share their findings and discuss what is challenging about taking measurements outdoors.