



‘Ireland upholds a policy of equality for all members of our communities. Equality legislation provides a framework for people to challenge discrimination.’

Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004

The Irish government is working to promote intercultural practices in Ireland, including developing a National Action Plan Against Racism 2005-2008.

A multi-ethnic classroom reflects a multi-ethnic society

The many cultural celebrations taking place around Ireland present an opportunity to explore and raise awareness of the home culture of the children in our classrooms and of many children around the world.

There are currently approximately 170 languages spoken in Ireland.

Ireland has always had linguistic as well as cultural diversity.



THE MEMORY BOX

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

IDEAS AND ISSUES TO EXPLORE WITH YOUR CLASS

CHINESE NEW YEAR

- Listen and respond to the story of Chinese New Year.
www.topmarks.co.uk/ChineseNewYear/ZodiacStory.aspx

Children research the Chinese calendar. Which animal represents their birth year? What qualities does the animal represent, eg 1998 was the Year of the Ox, people born then are said to be loyal and dependable.

www.topmarks.co.uk/ChineseNewYear

- Research the customs of Chinese New Year: families get together to celebrate; it is a special time to remember members of the family who have died; every family buys presents, decorations, food, new clothes and people have their hair cut; houses are cleaned – the aim is to sweep out any bad luck from the old year and clear the way for good luck, but it is bad luck to clean on New Year's Day itself.

www.topmarks.co.uk/ChineseNewYear/Customs.aspx

- Learn some Chinese words phonetically. Invite family members of the Chinese community in your school to visit your classroom to help out.

–*Gung Hay Fat Choy* = Happy New Year (Cantonese)

–*Xin Nian Kuai Le* = Happy New Year (Mandarin)

- Make Chinese lanterns to hang in your classrooms.

WORLD RELIGIONS

- Explore the six major world religions: Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism. www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/
- Celebrate/research the major feasts and festivals, eg Christmas (Christianity), Rosh Hashanah (Judaism), Ramadan (Islam), Divali (Hinduism/Sikhism).
- Visit the temples associated with the world religions where possible. See 'Useful Links and Contacts' for further information.

THE WORLD IN MY LUNCHBOX

- Research project on food around the world.
- Create a world cookbook and include menus contributed by families/children from the various countries represented in the classroom/school.

WORLD ART

Look at and discuss world art, eg Aboriginal art, Native American art, Chinese silk painting, African art.

www.dickblick.com/multicultural/lessonplans/

WORLD MUSIC

Explore world music by listening and responding to a variety of music from traditions across the globe, eg Putamayo World Music www.putamayo.com

EXPLORING DIVERSITY

Some of the following and further suggested activities can be found at www.nccri.ie/sch-pack.html

- Research the lives of those who have made a difference, eg Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Chico Mendes.
- Make up a song or change the words of an existing song to celebrate diversity.
- Have a multi-cultural table or display corner in the classroom where children bring in something that reflects cultural diversity.
- Ensure that the class library contains books showing children of diverse cultures, and portrays people in dignified and respectful situations, including people from ethnic minorities in positions of authority.
- Use pictures, postage stamps, currency notes, front pages of newspapers etc to create a display on countries represented within the classroom/school.
- When celebrating Irish festivals (eg St Patrick's Day, St Brigid's Day, Hallowe'en), design and make posters/signs/greeting cards in the various languages represented in the school.
- Draw a mural or make a quilt representing cultural/ethnic diversity.
- Do a project on 'Languages of Ireland'.
- Research children's family members who have emigrated: where they travelled, how they got there and why they emigrated.
- Brainstorm the main reasons why people have to migrate from one country to another, for example: persecution, poverty, unemployment, seeking a better life, conflict, famine, choice. Group the reasons as 'push' or 'pull' factors.

