

FROM THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA



PLAYING FAIR

A series of discussion-starters about racism,
respect and equality, for children 7 to 12.

MELA'S LUNCH



PLAYING FAIR

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LUNCH



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PLAYING FAIR

Playing Fair is a series of four dramas for 7- to 12-year-olds. Their aim is to spark discussion and thought about racism, as well as respect and equality for all children.

Central to each drama is a conflict which illustrates the exclusion, inequality, namecalling, and taunting experienced by racial minority and Aboriginal children. The stories also reveal that such incidents have an impact on all children.

The content and objectives of the **Playing Fair** series are consistent with school board, Ministry of Education, and government policies and initiatives on multiculturalism, anti-racism, and human rights education across the country. The series is a tool to facilitate the complex task of reducing prejudice. Educators, however, will need other resources, as well as the support of school administrators, curriculum developers and parents, if they are to effectively combat racism.

SERIES OBJECTIVES

It is the role of educators, parents and adults to prepare all children for membership in a pluralistic society. Children can develop positive relations in our multicultural/multiracial schools, and society in general, if and when they understand issues of equity and learn how to confront the problem of racism.

The **Playing Fair** series is focused specifically on 7- to 12-year-olds because, at this age, a child's attitudes and behaviour can be significantly influenced by thoughtful and appropriate guidance and discussion. While questions of racism and prejudice should be addressed whenever they arise, this series should be used pro-actively and not only when an incident occurs.

The series can also be empowering for children. By confronting the problems of racism, we help children to:

- value their differences and similarities;
- learn compassion and empathy for others;
- develop self-esteem and pride in their heritage;
- understand issues of equity and access to opportunity;
- discover how fairness leads to equity;
- practise improved interactional skills.



Pull out video jacket for follow-up activities.

MELA'S LUNCH

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SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

Near the end of each drama is a **PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION** which allows children the time to exchange ideas and formulate opinions about what has happened, and what may happen, before seeing the story end.

In this video jacket are **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** which may help you, the educator, to stimulate discussion during the Pause and at the Conclusion of the drama.

The **ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR** in this discussion is to:

- create an accepting and comfortable environment in which children feel free to share their opinions;
- provide a setting in which controversial discussion can take place.

The educator can also be a source of inspiration for the children by setting a positive example.

TEACHING POINTS

- Challenging stereotypes.
- Discussing what friendship means.
- Appreciating individuality and racial and cultural differences.
- Valuing one's own identity and culture.
- Examining peer pressure and the desire to belong to the group.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

At the Pause

- What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think should happen?
- Why does Peter tell Mela she can't sit at the table?
- Should Mela stick up for herself? Why or why not?
- How does Allison try to be friends with Mela? What do you think of her approach?
- Why can't Mela go to the Special Place?
- Why is Peter able to control the group?
- Why does Mela change her hair and her clothes?
- In what ways is Mela different from the others? In what ways is she the same?
- Why does Mela conceal her changed self from her mother?
- Have you been excluded by others? How did it make you feel?
- Have you done anything like this to someone? If so, why?
- Where do Peter's ideas about Mela come from?

At the Conclusion

- Why did Mela decide to be herself?
- How has Allison changed?
- What lesson did Peter learn? The others?
- What did you learn?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Terminology Exercise

Engage students in exploring definitions and meanings of terms such as: stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, racism, multiculturalism, equity, etc.

Imaging/Visioning

Use imaging or creative visualization to encourage students to think about the kind of school, community, country and world they want to live in.

Collage Making

Involve students in acknowledging their similarities, uniqueness and differences, as well as appreciating diversity.

Storytelling/Literature Study

Share stories to enable students to value themselves and others.

Media Analysis

Involve students in examining the power of words, depiction and representation of racial minority and Aboriginal peoples in newspapers, television, advertising, magazines, etc.

Roleplaying and Drama

Give students an opportunity to express their own experiences, as well as participate in the experiences of others.

Projects

Have students work on essays, presentations and displays which show contributions made to Canada by various immigrant groups, and examine current events related to prejudice, discrimination and racism.

Community Involvement

Incorporate visits, activities and guest speakers into the curriculum.

Note to the Educator

Change requires time and practice which is critical to the students' absorption of new understanding. Therefore, do not hesitate to repeat the activities or show the videos for a second time. Making learning enjoyable will only enhance your students' understanding of the issues. The resource list provided will help you to create additional follow-up activities.

RESOURCE LIST

- Aboud, Frances. *Children and Prejudice*, (A Note to Educators, p. 128-133). New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1988.
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- Chud, Gyda and Ruth Fahlman. *Early Childhood Education for a Multicultural Society*. British Columbia: Western Education Development Group, 1985.
- Cohen, Elizabeth. *Designing Groupwork*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1986.
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- Hill, Susan & Tim Hill. *The Collaborative Classroom*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1990.
- Kreidler, William. *Creative Conflict Resolution*. Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1984.
- Lee, Enid. *Letters to Marcia*. Toronto: Cross Cultural Communication Centre, 1985.
- "Racism in the English Language." *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, 7, 5 (1976): 3-5

This guide was written by Wendy McDonell and Sabera Desai.

Wendy McDonell is Coordinator of the ESL/D Programs for the Etobicoke Board of Education. She has been working in the field of education for 23 years and is the author of several articles related to Multicultural Anti-Racist Education. Wendy is a teacher educator and parent who is committed to the issues of access and equity for all.

Sabera Desai is presently on a leave of absence from the Etobicoke Board of Education while she pursues studies in Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education. She is a Human Rights, Multicultural Anti-Racist educator committed to issues of children's rights, human rights and equity. Sabera focuses both on individual change as well as organizational change and development.

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Color

14 minutes 23 seconds

Series order number: C 9191 131 (4 videos)

Mela's Lunch order number: C 9191 105



PLAYING FAIR

Mela's Lunch is the story of the unsteady beginnings of a friendship between Mela and Allison. Having just immigrated to Canada from India, Mela is trying hard to make friends and get used to her new surroundings. Peter and other classmates make her feel unwelcome and out of place. At first, Allison goes along with the group.

Mela's Lunch shows that differences in skin colour and country of origin need not be an obstacle to friendship or self-esteem.

Written by: Sugith Varughese, from an original story
by Nilambri Singh Ghai

Directed by: Sugith Varughese

Produced by: Penny Ritco and Wolf Koenig

14 minutes 23 seconds

Educators are encouraged to
preview the series before
use and choose the dramas
most age-appropriate for
their students.

Other titles in *Playing Fair*:

Carol's Mirror

A group of students produce a school play and, in the process, have to come to terms with racism.

Hey, Kelly!

While playing a schoolyard game, Robert calls Kelly a racist name and a fight ensues. During their detention, they find out they're not so different after all.

Walker

Walker is an Aboriginal foster child whose only playmate is his dog. Walker would like to make friends with Jamie, but Jamie is afraid of him... and his dog.

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of hearing. A decoder is required.

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