

OUR CURRICULUM



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All of our programs emphasize building self-esteem and community as well as empowering students to create a peaceful future. In particular, we focus on four themes:

- 1) The celebration of diversity and awareness of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination
- 2) Respect for and appreciation of self and others
- 3) Teamwork and cooperation
- 4) Communication and nonviolent conflict resolution
(including listening skills, expressing feelings productively, standing up to bullying and teasing, and empathy)

Our innovative curriculum is experiential. Learning at Mosaic becomes a magical adventure as the curriculum comes to life through hands-on activities, art projects, playful games, interactive theatre, role-plays, discussions, stories, and, perhaps most importantly, original songs. Our musical curriculum has received rave reviews and is available on CD. (The CD has won both a Children's Music Web 2004 Award and a Parents' Choice 2004 Approved Award, has been featured in the Teaching Tolerance magazine, and has been played on the popular Bay Area radio stations, KFOG and KPFA.)

Our curriculum is based on research in child development, education, and methods of combating prejudice. Many of our exercises are based on successful techniques used in adult diversity trainings and are modified for age appropriateness. We also have developed our own techniques for working with nine to eleven year olds that capitalize on the children's imaginations, natural openness, and willingness to play. Laughter and fun are a major part of the learning process, helping our students enter wholeheartedly into a setting that is equally unfamiliar to all and is likely the most demographically diverse they have ever encountered. Direct, skill-building experiences with different groups empower children to overcome natural anxieties and interact with others confidently and justly.

Every part of each highly structured day is infused with Mosaic's infectious creativity and imagination as well as with thought-provoking learning opportunities. For example, breakfast each morning includes a visit from the "Future People," imaginary descendents of a few staff members who arrive in costume representing alternative future societies. Each day the "Future People" present a problem in their society that the children solve together using tools relating to the four themes. During the campfire each night, students share what they learned during the day and sing our original songs, also pertaining to the four themes.

Exciting surprises are balanced with routine. Students and staff are assigned to diverse, yet small, cabin groups and learning groups for the entire week. Many activities take place in these small groups, helping the students to feel noticed, well cared for, and safe. We work to build community within these small groups as well as within the largest group. By the end of the week, the children have simultaneously experienced diversity and unity.

When the students first arrive at the residential session, they are introduced to The Mosaic Project's values:

M is for mutual respect

O is for open mindedness

S is for self respect

A is for attitude (a positive attitude)

I is for individuality

C is for community

These values are reinforced by everything we do, even by the way in which we discipline the students. They are the core of our theme song, which the students love and remember well

The Mosaic Project
works towards a peaceful
future by uniting children
of diverse backgrounds,
addressing issues
of difference,
and building self-esteem
and community in our
unique human-relations
outdoor school.

after the program has ended – in fact many siblings of Mosaic participants know this song well. We also use a fun tool, called the “buzz ring,” to play a game which teaches these values.

The following are other examples of activities we consider to be essential to our program:

- ***Seat Switching***: A game in which players discover ways in which they can help everyone in a group to feel welcome.
- ***Differences***: An activity in which participants celebrate differences and then identify how and why people use these differences to hurt others.
- ***Dots***: A game in which players are encouraged to consider the process by which people identify themselves and others.
- ***Put Myself in Your Shoes***: An empathy role-play game that inspires the children to put themselves in someone else’s shoes, both literally and figuratively.
- ***Numerous Group Challenges***: Games in which a group of students must work together to solve a problem or accomplish a task.