

# Templates for Emails for Families

Be sure to include photos!

## MONDAY

Dear Families,

Your children are already having a great time and making friends at Mosaic. You will receive an email with details starting tomorrow, but I will periodically upload photos to our Update Doc. Enjoy!

## TUESDAY

Dear Families,

It was another meaningful and beautiful day at Mosaic. The day's theme was a celebration of diversity. After a hearty breakfast, we had an unusual visit from the "Future People," who shared that everyone in the future is exactly the same. You can see them pictured in identical plastic costumes. In order to help change this, we celebrated differences and diversity in ourselves and the people around us throughout the day, including with a Diversity Festival, where children had an opportunity to participate in a number of different stations, including hair and face painting, Put-Up Battles (instead of put-downs), Fairy House Building, open mic singing and improv, dancing, live drumming, and more. The kids also got a taste of their first Down Time of the week, where they could just enjoy some good old-fashioned play, including basketball, a coloring and art station, making peace bracelets, playing volleyball, hiking, or simply lounging around with new and old friends.

Later we brainstormed all of the things that make us different and unique. The list included everything from skin color and age to style choices and favorite foods. Then we recognized together that all of these things that we celebrated today – the things that make us different – are the same things that people use to hurt each other and put each other down. Children explored the ideas of stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination in a large group discussion then broke out into groups and shared some of their personal experiences to help make these general understandings more specific.

The capstone activity (or changetivity in Mosaic language) was called "Stand with Me." For some of the students, it was an emotional experience, as it revealed that all of us have either been hurt or have intentionally hurt others with our words and actions. Most often, we found that we had been on both sides.

The staff skillfully led a conversation among students in pairs and in a large group about the experience. Students were guided forward with a new perspective that will help them choose to create peace in difficult situations. Tomorrow, we will start to learn the tools and skills that will make our vision and our ideas for peace into real-world opportunities for action.

The indoor “campfire” was highlighted with singing and dancing, and after one final good night story together, a beautiful song from the staff sent the kids off to bed and ended a day filled with growth.

A good night to all!

## WEDNESDAY

Dear Families,

After spending yesterday exploring the differences that make us unique, today focused on connections, inspired by a quote by John Muir: “When you tug on any one thing, you’ll find it is hitched to everything else in the universe.” We spent the day exploring this concept of interconnectedness, and the kids spent most of this morning exploring their connections to the natural world. How appropriate that a deer walked right next to our group during “Teacher Time” with me.

The afternoon curriculum focused on the difference between being passive, aggressive and assertive in confrontational situations. This is perhaps one of the most important and difficult learning opportunities of the week. While it is easy to understand the idea of assertiveness (being strong without being mean), it is very difficult in practice for both children and adults. When you feel the winds of aggression blowing in your face, it is hard to avoid either shrinking away from it (passive) or meeting it with like violence (aggression). We will continue to practice this skill throughout the year because being assertive in difficult situations really is the key to peace (Jingle, Jingle Baby!). Ask your child what that parenthetical phrase means. 😊

We had a “Very Unusual Dinner” tonight that challenged the kids to work together to create the world they wanted to see. The dining hall was intentionally set up to get them thinking about inequality. The kids really enjoyed it and came up with some thoughtful ways to improve their community in the process. It was inspiring to see them working together and creating opportunities for others in this metaphorical exploration of inequity.

We ended the day with a raucous outdoor campfire and an ingeniously acted retelling of the story of B.B. Wolf, which we learned actually stands for “Beautiful Brandon”, not “Big Bad” as we have all been led to believe through some unfortunate prejudice and discrimination on the part of the townspeople. The empathy and care the kids all showed for this grossly misunderstood character were genuinely endearing.

The student’s willingness to take risks has been truly impressive. They are stretching by sharing their ideas in front of the whole camp, discussing emotions with a sharing group, trying an activity wholeheartedly, simply sitting next to someone they don’t know, or trying something that is new and out of their comfort zones. I am amazed by your children and look forward to watching them help spread peace in our little community and beyond.

## THURSDAY

By this evening, it was clear that many children from different schools and different backgrounds are feeling genuinely comfortable with each other, laughing, having fun and working together to solve problems. I see many budding friendships across the Bay.

This morning, children learned that during their last full day here, they would be attending college. As an added bonus, each student was awarded a Free Ninety-nine scholarship with a 99-cent discount! Throughout the late morning and early afternoon, students attended "Conflict Resolution College", where their coursework centered on learning the five required actions in order to resolve conflicts peacefully (stop, listen, talk, empathize, and make a plan). They were also asked to shift their perspectives. Instead of seeing conflict as you against me, they were challenged to embrace the idea that it's really us against the problem. I am happy to report that our students received their diplomas and were awarded a doctorate in Conflict Resolution. They may now add to their bylines and resumes the prestigious title of Cr.D!

The afternoon brought on a culminating team challenge, grotesquely titled, Peanut-butterbooger-fire-snot River. In order to accomplish the goal of crossing to the other side, they had to find a way to make an ally out of the disgusting, peace-blocking, Booger Monsters. As you can imagine, it was a hilarious and fun-filled afternoon, but teams had to work together to accomplish what was actually a pretty difficult task. I admit it was really touching to see the kids wade back into the dreaded river to rescue their adversary. Yes, I have video-evidence of this moment.

After dinner, children participated in a "time travel" experiment by writing a letter to their 15-year-old selves. The Mosaic Project will send these letters to your children the summer they turn 15. These letters are intended to be a time capsule of memories from their time here, and a reminder that they have the opportunity to come back as cabin leaders in high school and continue helping the MOSAIC Project spread peace to future 4th and 5th graders.

This evening, we gathered for our final campfire. We sang together under the moon-lit night sky one last time, cheered, and laughed. The night ended with a special ceremony around a huge candlelight peace sign laid out on the ball field. After a few more songs and stories, each child completed a candlelit solo walk, signifying that while they leave Mosaic as individuals, they are now part of a family – or a mosaic – of people working together to create peace.

The children are excited to see you all back at school and home tomorrow and to share more stories!