

Activity 1: UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE: What it Is ... *and What it Isn't*

Tolerance is regarded as a positive value.
We support it. We encourage it in others. We aspire to live it.
But what is it?

We can learn something about the meaning of 'tolerance' from a variety of sources...

Build your own idea of tolerance by writing notes, synonyms or ideas about tolerance from the source which you are assigned. Single words are fine!

As you complete each piece, transfer your notes to the group's WORDWALL, adding your words and ideas to the correct category, 'What it Is' or 'What it Isn't'.

- **FROM THE DICTIONARY**

tol·er·ance

Among the meanings we find in the dictionary is:

... (a): *sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own*(b): *the act of allowing something*

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/tolerance>

NOTES: _____

- **FROM JEWISH TRADITION**

The Hebrew word for tolerance, _____, shares the root _____ with the word

'patience'. The root tells us that suffering or bearing a load is part of the word's meaning.

NOTES: What ideas about tolerance can you derive from the Hebrew root?

- **FROM THE UNITED NATIONS**

In 1995 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the UN Year for Tolerance.

UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the lead agency for the Year of Tolerance, adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance.

The following comes from the Declaration:

Article 1 - Meaning of tolerance

1.1 Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement. Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.

1.2 Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. In no circumstance can it be used to justify infringements of these fundamental values. Tolerance is to be exercised by individuals, groups and States.

1.3 Tolerance is the responsibility that upholds human rights, pluralism (including cultural pluralism), democracy and the rule of law. It involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments.

1.4 Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one's convictions. It means that one is free to adhere to one's own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs. It means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. It also means that one's views are not to be imposed on others.

What key words or phrases do you find in the Declaration?

NOTES: _____