



Sport of the Month



September

This month's theme: **acceptance**

Goals:

- Help students understand the consequences of judging another person or being judged by another person.
- Help students understand the difficulties of standing up for what is right, even standing up to their own friends, and how to develop leadership qualities to take a stand.
- Help students understand that they can be responsible for reversing intolerant behavior in their school and community and how to do it by becoming community leaders.

Cycling in Special Olympics

Cycling requires good physical condition, balance, endurance, and tactical thinking. Special Olympics includes time trial and road race events in different distances.

How do these activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

"The most significant change is that there is now awareness that every student, those with or without disabilities, has a voice and contributes to school programs."

Week 1:

Students can take a leadership role in the classroom and school community by effectively challenging intolerant and judgmental behavior. While this is not an easy thing for students to do, such a leadership role prepares young people to understand their civic responsibilities.

Display the following quote for all your students to see:

"He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it."—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In their journals or on separate sheets of paper, have students respond to the quote, answering the following questions (provide more guidance as needed):

- ▶ What does this quote mean to you?
- ▶ What are some types of evil, both large and small, this quote might refer to?
- ▶ Do you agree or disagree with the quote?
- ▶ How does this quote relate to experiences in your own life?
- ▶ Have you ever had to stand up for what is right, even when your friends didn't agree with you?
- ▶ Have you ever lost a friendship because you disagreed with someone over doing what was right?

Encourage your students to share their responses either in small groups or with the entire class. As an alternative, collect students' answers and read them aloud yourself, keeping each writer anonymous. This approach may result in further discussion of the topic.

—adapted from *Get Into It*, Grades 9–12



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Take Action!

● **Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day (September 24) honors the founder of Special Olympics.** Plan and host a Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day event at your school to get staff and students excited and educated about the amazing opportunities that inclusion can bring! Visit <http://specialolympics.org/educators/> for more information.

● **Start a Unified Sports Team with local Special Olympics athletes and partners from your school.** Unified Sports Teams include athletes with and without intellectual disabilities. Contact your local Special Olympics Program to see what Unified Sports they offer; then get started recruiting a coach and scheduling practices. Visit <http://specialolympics.org/educators/> to find contact information for your local programs.

September events:

● **Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day, September 22**



Week 2:

Revisit the activity results from Week 1. Pay particular attention to discussing the ways in which students felt they may have been the victims of intolerance or judgmental behavior. Also, ask students if they have noted intolerance in television shows, movies, or music.

Next, ask students if they have heard of the R-word. Explain that the R-word is the word *retard* and that this term is demeaning to those with intellectual disabilities. Discuss the use of the R-word in popular culture, and ask students if they have heard friends, celebrities, and others use the R-word. Then ask students if they think it is possible to reverse the trends of intolerance related to intellectual abilities. Write down student responses where your entire class can see them and ask your students if they think their generation shares a responsibility to reverse the trends.

Finally, have students write responses to the following prompt:

In order for my generation to help reverse stereotypes against those with intellectual disabilities...

For additional resources that will help you discuss the R-word, visit <http://specialolympics.org/educators/>

Week 3:

Revisit the activity from Week 2. This week, however, assign your students to groups of three or four. Have them review each others' responses to the writing prompt. Next, have the groups brainstorm ways in which they can influence larger groups of their peers to reverse intolerant behaviors toward persons with intellectual disabilities. Finally, ask the groups to put together a promotional ad—either a print ad or script for a television ad—that advocates for persons with intellectual disabilities and against intolerant behavior. Take this as an opportunity to encourage students to find leadership qualities among the members of their groups and elect one person from the group to act in a leadership role.





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Week 4:

Using resources available at <http://specialolympics.org/educators/>, gather your students once more into their small groups and have them review the R-word fact sheet, event and activation ideas, and the R-word pledge. Print copies of the pledge for your students to review.

Take action! Encourage your students to start planning a “Spread the Word to End the Word” campaign to be held in March using resources found at <http://specialolympics.org/educators/>. Brainstorm ways the group can take the lead in making the pledge meaningful.

Program Spotlight: Get Into It®

Get Into It® is a free web-based, interactive curriculum for children in grades K–12. Part of Special Olympics Project UNIFY®, this unique program delivers online resources that include lessons, activities, videos, athlete stories, and supplemental materials designed to be used in general classrooms.

Get Into It is designed to:

- ▶ Educate students in how they can become change agents in their communities
- ▶ Motivate young people to use their creative energy in leadership roles
- ▶ Teach students to accept, respect, and advocate with and for persons with intellectual disabilities
- ▶ Activate young people with new approaches for sharing experiences, engaging in community action, and making a difference

To request your free copy of the Get Into It activities and lessons, email getintoit@specialolympics.org.

**SPREAD THE WORD
TO END THE WORD.**

