FAMILY ACTIVITY: DESIGN ALOHA GESTURES

In this activity, youth will reflect on what makes them feel welcome, or a sense of belonging, and design a welcoming gesture for other youth that conveys the Aloha Spirit. According to the Hawai‘i Law of the Aloha Spirit, "‘Aloha’ is more than a word of greeting or farewell or a salutation. ‘Aloha’ means mutual regard and affection and extends warmth in caring with no obligation in return. ‘Aloha’ is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence.” To embody the Aloha Spirit, “each person must think and emote good feelings to others.” How can youth communicate these “good feelings” to other youth?

This activity plan will facilitate youth to create coloring book pages that can be used by other youth—maybe siblings or friends. Youth will brainstorm multiple ideas of how to communicate a welcoming message before designing coloring book pages. Youth will take satisfaction in seeing their work extend beyond the activity in a concrete way.

MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Materials
- Brainstorming Template (optional) see end of session plan - can be done on an additional piece of blank paper with verbal instructions
- Paper - one sheet computer paper/person, plus a few extra
- Pencils
- Black Sharpies
- Erasers - can be the ones on the pencils
- Exemplar/Examples

Instructions

1. Brainstorm
   a. What makes you feel welcome in a place?
   b. What things might make you feel more welcome?
   c. What do you think the word “aloha” means?

   ● Depending upon whether you have completed other Aloha activities, youth might have been asked this question a few times. If they’ve done other themed activities, prompt them to share ways they’ve explored the meaning of aloha.

   d. share information about what aloha means

   The word “aloha” can be used to say “hi,” or “bye,” but aloha is even more powerful than that! Aloha means that we’re all important, and we care for everyone, even if we don’t know them.

   e. Distribute brainstorming template or blank sheets of paper and have pencils available
   f. Explain the activity
      ● On our papers, we’re going to come up with some different ways we can share Aloha Spirit with others.
      ● Think about pictures and words that will tell someone that they’re important, and are welcome!
      ● We’re going to do four really quick drawings. These are just ideas, don’t worry about if they’re good or not. Use the back if you have more ideas!
2. Create
   a. Show a sample coloring book page
   b. Ask what they notice about the style of the coloring book drawing
   c. Explain the activity
      - Using our brainstorming ideas--or maybe new ones we hadn’t thought of then--we’re going to draw one final coloring book picture that will share your Aloha Spirit with others!
      - When we create coloring book pictures, first we draw in just pencil, so we can make mistakes.
      - When we have finished picture, we’re going to trace over our lines with marker, and then erase all over to get rid of our pencil.
      - Then, I’m going to make lots of copies of your picture to share your Aloha Spirit with others.
   d. Distribute blank paper
   e. Support the activity

   You can have a sample showing the three stages (pencil, Sharpie, erased), even just on a line drawing of a simple shape. Or, demonstrate the process.

As youth work, participate alongside them, provide extra support as needed, and give positive feedback on their creative process.

When giving positive feedback on their creative work, be specific and ‘praise the process, not the person.’ DO NOT say “you are so creative/talented/a good artist” – this reinforces the myth that creative and artistic skills are fixed, when they actually can be developed through practice. Try, “I like the way you’ve shown your creativity by doing...”

If youth need help drawing something, it is not recommended that you draw it for them. You can model the drawing on a separate sheet of paper, show a sample image, or provide verbal support.
QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

Reflect on family member’s coloring page designs:

- When I say [word of your choice], everyone sit in front of an artwork that is not yours
- Move around the circle and ask each person to share one good thing about the artwork in front of them (not the person who made it)

Encourage everyone to be specific in their feedback language, modeling if necessary. If a someone says something like “it’s pretty,” follow up by asking them to explain why they think so. This encourages stronger communication and observational skills, and to support their claims with visual evidence (things they can see).

IDEAS TO INCLUDE YOUNGER SIBLINGS! (ADAPTATIONS FOR 0-5 YEAR OLDS)

- Suggest inviting younger children to play alongside older kids with paper and crayons. Stay close and talk with them about the colors they use – pointing out where you see them elsewhere in the room (is she using red, and does she have red stripes on her shirt?)
- Notice how a little one holds their crayon. Don’t worry or try to change it – just notice – and see also how she makes marks on the page. You’ll see how eventually that grasp will change as fine motor skills develop. What do the marks on the page look like? Are they close together? Do they cover the entire page? Are there similarities in the shapes? Bring language to your interaction by describing what you see in as much detail as possible.
- Preschoolers make marks with a purpose. Objects that they draw are more easily identified as people and things that are important to their lives (such as friends, family members and pets). They should be able to tell you what their drawing is about and love it when you take dictation – and add their words to the picture.

REFERENCES, MODIFICATIONS, & EXTENSIONS

Modifications

Materials

- The materials in this activity are flexible, depending on what you have available! The form of the welcoming gesture does not need to be a coloring book page, and could vary considerably. For example, the form could be a song/cheer, poster, secret handshake, bracelet, or food experience. If it’s possible within your own limitations (time, materials, comfort with facilitating collaboration), let youth decide the form. The overall point is that youth are facilitated to think empathetically and creatively, and to create a product that will be shared. Decide in advance how open-ended or limited the format will be, and be prepared with the requisite materials.

Drawing Techniques

- Encourage older youth to experiment with more advanced drawing techniques
  - A variety of line weights (thicknesses) will create a more dynamic design.
  - Shading can be done with lines for a coloring book image, as another way to add the illusion of depth and dimension, or just detail.

Feedback on One Another’s Work

- Engage youth ages 11+ to create a “sandwich critique” about someone else’s work. To create a sandwich critique, youth will say something they link about the work, something that could be improved, and one other thing that they liked about the work.
Extensions

- Encourage a friend and their family to create a set of coloring pages as well, then exchange them to color and share the finished product.