



MIX IT UP

STARTER GUIDE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
FAQs	3
Getting Started Six essential steps Planning checklist	4
Activities Before Mix It Up During Mix It Up After Mix It Up	7
Posters	14





Introduction

Mix It Up at Lunch Day encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Schools can host a Mix It Up event on any day of the year!

Students consistently identify the cafeteria as a place in their school where divisions are clearly—and harshly—drawn. So we ask students to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch. It's a simple act with profound implications that we encourage educators to include in year-round efforts to promote healthy, welcoming school environments. Studies have shown that interactions across group lines can help reduce prejudice. When students interact with those who are different from them, biases and misperceptions can fall away.





FAQS

What is Mix It Up at Lunch Day?

It's a simple call to action for all grade levels: Take a new seat in the cafeteria. By taking a risk, students can cross the lines of division in a safe, supported environment, meet new people and help build an inclusive and welcoming school community.

Learning for Justice, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, launched Mix It Up in 2001. Schools can organize a Mix It Up at Lunch Day any time during the school year.

Can Mix It Up at Lunch Day really help my school?

Research shows that Mix It Up programming works. According to a survey of Mix organizers, the program produces powerful results:

- 97% said students' interactions were positive during Mix It Up at Lunch Day.
- 95% said Mix It Up at Lunch Day prompted students to interact with people outside their normal social circles.
- 92% said Mix It Up at Lunch Day increased awareness about social boundaries and divisions within school.
- 83% said the event helped students make new friends.
- 79% said students have heightened sensitivity toward tolerance and social justice issues as a result of Mix It Up.

- 78% said students seem more comfortable interacting with different kinds of people as a result of Mix It Up.

Source: Mix It Up Survey conducted by Quality Education Data, 2008

What can I expect from students participating in Mix It Up at Lunch Day?

As with any program, student enthusiasm and participation will vary. When students understand that they are being asked to join thousands of other schools in taking another seat at lunch—for just one day—they usually go along and come to appreciate the benefits almost immediately.



Getting Started

When your school participates in Mix It Up at Lunch Day, it becomes part of a long tradition of kickstarting new friendships in schools across the country and around the world.

The big day will be one you, your colleagues and students won't soon forget!

But where to start?

While pulling off a successful Mix It Up event takes a good deal of coordination, you don't have to reinvent the wheel! We've pulled together the best practices, approaches and planning details so you don't have to.

Just follow these six essential steps.

1. Create a Planning Team

"Mixing it up" begins with your planning team. Don't rely on the usual players; bring folks together from all over the school. The most effective Mix It Up campaigns bring enthusiastic adults—administrators, counselors, cafeteria workers, custodians, parents or guardians and community members—together with student leaders.

2. Determine a Lunchtime Activity

Focus on the two main goals of Mix It Up: Getting students to sit with someone new and helping them engage in positive conversations.

The first step? Mix it up! Hand each student a color-coded ribbon, piece of candy, playing card or other small object as lunch begins. Decorate tables so students know where to sit. Next, have plenty of starter questions that lead to "aha!" moments.

3. Make It Festive

Mix It Up at Lunch Day should be fun—so make it festive! With your planning team, brainstorm ideas that will appeal specifically to your student body. Will your event have a theme? Consider rearranging and decorating the tables in the cafeteria to "wow" students as they arrive. Ask students to mix up their clothing for the day, wearing unexpected color combinations and patterns or wearing their shirts backward. Conga lines, DJs, flash mobs, celebrity guests and prizes all score with students!



4. Publicize the Event

Get your school community—students, teachers, administrators, staff, families—excited. Consider using email, calendars, newsletters, morning announcements, posters, fliers and social media. Craft a straightforward message that explains the event fully or build a bit of mystery, starting with posters or fliers that spark interest and slowly reveal details over the weeks leading to the event.

5. Capture the Day

In addition to photos, consider recording interviews with students as they leave lunch. You may hear some wisecracks, but you'll also hear great positive feedback you can use to plan next year's event. Consider alerting local TV and news outlets with a press release. If your school has a newspaper or offers photography, video or film classes, invite student journalists to cover the event as well.

Don't forget to share the pictures and press coverage with us on social media.

6. Evaluate, Debrief and Follow Up

Evaluate Ask for and keep track of post-event feedback. At the elementary level, get a show of hands in each class after lunch, asking, "Should we do this again?" For middle and high school, consider a paper or electronic survey.

Debrief Bring the survey data to a post-event planning meeting and make a list of "lessons learned." Meet when the successes and mishaps are fresh in people's minds. Make notes and file them for next year's Mix It Up planning.

Follow Up The impact is deeper when schools plan at least two follow-up activities to sustain the message. Many simply Mix It Up at Lunch again on other days throughout the year—often at the request of the students!



MIX IT UP AT LUNCH DAY

Planning Checklist

Create a planning group

- Identify members of the planning group.
- Review “lessons learned” from previous years.
- Create an email distribution list for easy communication.
- Set up meetings — every other week is good for August and September, then weekly in October.
- List key people to keep informed about the event.
- Identify influential people to bring on board.

Determine a lunchtime activity

- Decide on a theme (or if you want to have a theme at all).
- Plan how to mix up the students.
- Brainstorm and complete conversation starters.
- Select and confirm facilitators.

Make it festive

- Decorate the Mix It Up space.
- Make a plan for entertainment.
- Choose a closing activity.

Publicize the event

- Create posters and fliers.
- Create a list of publicity outlets, and determine which ones you can use.
- Consider a skit or video presentation in advance of the event.

Capture the day with pictures and video

- Identify a photographer and videographer for the event.
- Contact local media to request coverage.

Evaluate, debrief and follow up

- Determine a method of evaluation.
- Set a date for the debrief meeting.
- Create a list of “lessons learned” for future planning.
- Identify at least two follow-up events for the year.
- Use this checklist to start planning those events!





Activities

Mix It Up at Lunch Day presents a great, low-stakes opportunity for students to engage with one another and cross some common social boundaries. But how do you get them to that moment, and what do you do afterward?

That's where these activities come in! With options for all grade levels, these activities will build empathy, encourage acceptance and teamwork, address the value of differences and help students break down cliques.

You can delve into topics related to identity and diversity before and during your Mix It Up event, and then you can go deeper afterward to promote a healthy, inclusive school climate year round.

Try the activities below, including ideas from other participating schools.





Before Mix It up

With topics that address the importance of crossing boundaries and more, these classroom lessons and activities are great lead-ups to Mix It Up at Lunch Day.

Happy Faces

Grades K-2

Give each student three happy face drawings or stickers. Tell them that whenever they see someone who needs some extra cheer, they can give them a happy face and say something kind to them. Here is the catch: Students can only give happy faces to someone outside of their classroom! Tell students they'll have to really look and listen before school, at recess on the playground, at lunch and after school to find people who need an extra smile. After a week, give students a chance to reflect and share their experiences.

Allies: A Discussion Activity

Grades K-2, 3-5

Seat students in a circle. Ask them to think of times when they witnessed discrimination or bias. Then ask students to think about a time when they took action or did not take action to address discrimination or bias. Ask them to share their story with a partner. Ask students to consider the following: "Why did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable speaking up?" Then engage students in role-plays about how they can interrupt bullying or other oppressive behaviors.

Note: *This activity is adapted from [Because We Can Change the World](#) by Mara Sapon-Shevin.*

Everyone's a Helper

Grades K-2, 3-5

Ask students to make a list of their strengths on one sheet of chart paper. Then, on a separate piece of paper, have them list their struggles. Have students talk to a neighbor about how a classmate might help them with one of their struggles. Then ask students to make two charts, one labeled "Sometimes I HELP" and the other labeled "Sometimes I NEED Help." Students can illustrate and share their work and put their "Sometimes I HELP" pages together to make an "Everyone's a Helper" quilt. You can display your quilt in your classroom throughout the year.

It's Okay to Feel Different

Grades K-2, 3-5

Read the book *It's Okay to Be Different*, by Todd Parr, aloud to students. As a class, discuss why it is important to have lots of different kinds of people in a class community. What would be the disadvantages if everyone in the class were the same? Make a chart showing how various differences can contribute to a class. On [jigsaw puzzle pieces](#), have students write their names and use

words and illustrations to represent the differences you talked about. Work as a whole class to assemble the jigsaw puzzle. Then tape the pieces together and hang the puzzle in your classroom.

Me and We: We Are All Similar and Different *Grades K-2, 3-5*

Take students out in the hall and mark off areas ranging from 1 to 10. Call out items such as “ice cream” or “action movies” and ask students to move to an area based on how they rate the item (10=love, 1=hate). After each item, allow students time to move and observe their peers. Return to the classroom and discuss: “Was there a time in the hallway when you and one of your friends felt differently about an item?” Explore with students the idea that we don’t have to like all of the same things to be friends. In pairs, students can create booklets describing how their answers differed and how they can still be friends.

Note: *This lesson is adapted from Tom Scheft’s activity “Setting the Stage for Controversial Subjects.”*

Breaking Down the Walls of Intolerance *Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12*

Ask students to reflect on their experiences with intolerance, isolation and bullying. Have students write down their reflections or draw a picture. Next, distribute a red “brick” and a black marker to each student and allow them to write the act of intolerance down on the brick. On Mix It Up at Lunch Day, have students tear a brick (other than their own) from the Wall of Intolerance and take it to their seat in the cafeteria. Encourage students to read the issue written on their brick with their new friends and discuss ways to eliminate that specific problem from their school culture.

Developing Empathy *Grades 6-8*

Have students answer the “**Are You Empathetic?**” questionnaire. Distribute character cards to students from the handout “**Someone Else’s Shoes.**” Ask students to pair up with a classmate and discuss how they might feel in the situation described. As their character, one partner will describe their situation while the other partner practices listening empathetically. Have students switch roles and then discuss their experiences. Finally, have each student raise their hand and share something they learned about practicing empathy, lowering their hand after

they share. Tell students that if someone shares their thought, to lower their hand. Continue around the room until all hands are lowered.

Examining Identity and Assimilation *Grades 3-5, 6-8*

Download the essay “**Magic Carpet,**” and distribute a copy to each class member. Explain that the essay describes the author’s experience of boundaries within her own identity. Then ask students to describe the author’s childhood experience of cultural boundaries. How did she respond to these boundaries? How would she respond differently now? What might have happened to cause her to write about these experiences? Have students answer in writing: “Do you have a ‘magic carpet’ that you and only a few others share? What are its qualities? What would enable you to share this secret part of your identity with more people?”

Social Boundaries Activity: Map It Out *Grades 3-5, 6-8, 9-12*

For one week, ask students to observe your school’s hallways, common areas and seating arrangements in classrooms and the cafeteria, paying attention to how students are grouped. First, sketch the school’s social boundaries, identifying where social cliques hang out. Then, have students sketch the school. Compare the viewpoints. Did different students map the school differently? How were groups labeled? Ask students what they learned about labels and their perspective. Ask if this information challenges any assumptions they may have had and what they can change in your classroom and school to reflect this new information.

Cliques in Schools *Grades 6-8, 9-12*

Ask students to define the term “friendship group.” What does it mean to have a circle of friends? Define the term “clique” with your students. Explain that a clique is a group of friends that often has extreme control over group members, strict rules about who is allowed into the group, or inflexible exit from the group. Have students complete the “**Clique Survey**” on their own. As a class, set up an anonymous box where anyone can drop a letter about any issues with a clique. Share the letters with the class regularly. Discuss the issues in each letter together as a class to come to a resolution to any problems.

Borders and Boundaries

Grades 6-8, 9-12

Photocopy or create a large map of the school, including the school grounds and the cafeteria. Then have students identify places that cliques or self-segregating groups gather. Draw lines between these areas, marking the invisible walls. Then ask students: “How does a new student learn about these boundaries? What happens when someone tries to cross one of the invisible walls? What forces keep the walls in place? What forces, if any, are trying to bring down the walls?” Have students name all the factors that people use to separate themselves into these groups. Then name as many similarities between the groups as you can. Ask students: “Do people pay more attention to the differences than to the similarities? Why or why not?”

Crossing Social Boundaries

Grades 6-8, 9-12

Use the “[Cross-Pollination](#)” handout to help students brainstorm about the school’s different teams, groups or clubs. Ask students what organizations they’re involved in and start with those. Invite students to consider which group would be most surprised and positively affected by their kind support. Select a student leader from each team/organization to lead their group in this activity. Have each group reach out to another one to “create some buzz.” Groups can sign a card, send a gift, or throw a bake sale and donate the proceeds to another one. Ask students to choose three acts of kindness, and report back after they “create buzz” to share how they felt and the effects of their kind acts.

In-Group Favoritism

Grades 6-8, 9-12

Help students understand the concept of in-group favoritism with examples such as the Olympic Games, state sports teams or a lunch table where only athletes sit together. In small groups, have students brainstorm a list of in-groups and out-groups in their school and community. Ask them questions such as, “What favors or special privileges do people in the same groups tend to give to each other?” “How do you think it affects the feelings of others who are outside that group?” “What hurtful behaviors might be linked with in-group favoritism?” “If you saw in-group favoritism playing out, how might you try to change, confront or stop

it?” Invite students to form groups and to work on plans to participate in Mix It Up at Lunch.

Mix It Up

Grades 6-8, 9-12

Have students list the different kinds of groupings that exist in school. Ask them to do this without commenting on the group or judging it. Ask and discuss: “What group(s) do you fit into?” “Can group members easily move groups?” “Do some members have more mobility than others?” “Where do you most often see groups gathering together?” Next, explore boundary-crossing with students. Ask: “What benefit is there in crossing boundaries from one group to another?” “What opportunities are there to cross boundaries at your school?” “Do you want to cross boundaries? Why or why not?” “Why might it be important to learn the skill of crossing boundaries now and how might it help you in the future?” Explore action possibilities with students and support their efforts to implement them in the future.



During Mix It Up

Use these mixers during your lunchtime event—or whenever you mix it up—to get your students talking, learning about their peers and making new friends.

Eight Ways to Mix Students Up

1. Give each student a popsicle stick with a word on it before they leave the classroom for lunch. Within each class, each student should have a different word. When students arrive at the cafeteria, have them find students from another class who have the same word on their popsicle sticks and sit with them.
2. Give each student a lollipop and have them sit at a table with people who have the same color lollipop.
3. Give each student a playing card as they enter the cafeteria. Tell them to sit at a table where everyone has a card of the same suit or type (everyone with an eight sits together; everyone with a Jack sits together).
4. Decorate each table with a large cutout of a Life Savers candy, using a different color for each table. Hand each student an individually wrapped Life Savers candy, and have them sit at a table that matches their candy color.
5. Label tables with the names of the 12 months and have students sit with others who share their birthday month.
6. Label tables with letters of the alphabet and have students sit with others whose first name starts with the same letter.
7. Give each student strips of paper, round stickers and paint chip samples to send students to the matching table.
8. For younger children, decorate tables with geometric or animal shapes and stamp students' hands with shapes to match.

LUNCHTIME ACTIVITIES

Compliment Tag!

Grades K-2

Students sit in a circle and decide on one person to be “it” first. This student has to tag another person in the group. However, unlike a typical game of tag in which you run and use your hands, this game requires you to tag a person with your words. The student who is “it” will say another student’s name in the group, give them a compliment, and then say, “Tag! You’re it.” The person who gets tagged responds by saying, “Thank you,” and the person who gave the compliment responds with, “You’re welcome.” The person tagged then picks someone else and so on until everyone has had a chance to give and receive a compliment.

After the game of tag, it is always a good idea to have some discussion questions for the class to consider. Was it easy to give someone a compliment? Do you think it is possible to practice giving compliments on your own? How did it feel inside when you had a compliment given to you? How many compliments do you think you could give each day?

That's Teamwork

Grades K-5

Have each group solve a particular problem during lunch. For example, put a piece of construction paper (8" x 10") and a pair of scissors on each table. Ask each group to cut the piece of paper so a student can step through it. Afterward, talk about how the problems were solved and what makes a group function well together.

Quotable Quotes

Grades K-5

Print quotes from civil rights activists onto strips of paper or onto index cards, and hand each student a strip as they exit the lunch line. Once students are seated, have them discuss their quotes with others sitting at their table.

It's About Me

Grades 1-2

Each student brings a photograph to school that shows someone or something important to them. It might be a picture of them at an important event or of a special family member, friend, pet or place they love. An alternative to a picture could be an object that relates to something important to or about the student. It might be something given to them by a loved one, something they made or an object that symbolizes something important to them (e.g., a badge they got after they hiked a certain trail). Students introduce themselves to the people at their tables using their photographs or objects.

What's Your Name?

Grades K-12

Have students go around their table, introduce themselves and tell people about their name. For example: What do you like about your name? What are some positive words that start with the first letter in your name? Do you have any favorite nicknames?

Making New Friends

Grades K-12

Use a technique such as distributing playing

cards or "Life Savers in the Lunchroom" to get students to their tables and mix them up. Once students are at their tables, have them pair up with a new friend. The new friends introduce themselves to each other, using prompts. Some prompts include: What's your name? Where are you from? Do you have siblings? What's your favorite class (or music or game)? After the new friends have introduced themselves to each other, each person takes a turn introducing their new friend to the rest of the group.

Superhero Election

Grades 3-5

Once students are at their tables, have them pair up with someone they don't know well. Have each pair discuss and nominate two of their favorite superheroes for Best Superhero. Gather the nominations and project them on the wall. Then, ask the whole lunchroom to vote for their favorite (other than the one they nominated). Announce the winner at the end of Mix It Up at Lunch.

Building Sentences and Stories

Grades 6-12

One person says a word that will start a sentence. The next person chooses a word to be the next word in the sentence and says it aloud. Students continue until the group has constructed an entire sentence. The next person whose turn it is to speak recites the whole sentence. Then the group begins again, creating a sentence to follow the first one. Students can think of the activity as creating a story, one word and one sentence at a time.

Fact or Fiction

Grades 6-12

Each person writes down four facts about themselves, one of which is not true. As each person takes a turn reading their list aloud, the rest of the group writes down the one fact they think is not true. After everyone has read their list aloud, each person then reveals the "fact" that is not true. Group members compare their written responses with the correct answers.

What Do We Have in Common?

Grades 6-12

Divide the students into pairs. Give each pair 30 seconds to find five things they have in common. At the end of the 30 seconds, put two pairs together and give the group a minute to find something all four students have in common. Finally, each group can present the list of things they have in common.



After Mix It Up

The goals of Mix It Up—inclusion, empathy and a healthy school climate—go beyond one day! Use these lessons and activities to promote and deepen these concepts throughout the year.

Stay in the Mix for Valentine’s Day

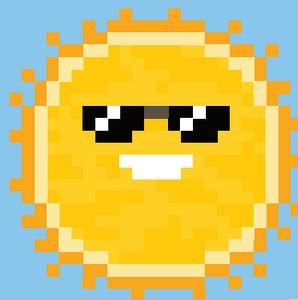
Grades K-6

Have K-3 students write valentines to students in grades 4-6. Tell the K-3 students to finish the following sentence: “One thing I really like about you is...” Students in grades 4-6 may be surprised to learn that some younger students look up to older ones. This will give older students a sense of the responsibility they have in modeling behavior to their younger classmates. Encourage the older students to write letters of reply, thanking the younger students for their compliments.

Stay in the Mix During National Poetry Month

Grades 3-6

Have students write a collective poem that helps everyone in the class or group learn about one another. Distribute index cards and ask students to number them 1 through 5 on the left border. Then ask them to list the following: 1) something a family member says that annoys you, makes you laugh, makes you feel safe or scares you; 2) your favorite sound, three times; 3) your favorite place in the world; 4) your favorite color, five times; and 5) your favorite thing to do. Ask them to join four other students, taking turns each reading one line at a time. Ask them to read each line in any order until each person has read all five phrases.



YOU WIN new friends!

Mix It Up at Lunch Day

Date _____



IN A CITY FAR, FAR AWAY...

MIX IT UP!

MIX! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

DON'T WORRY!

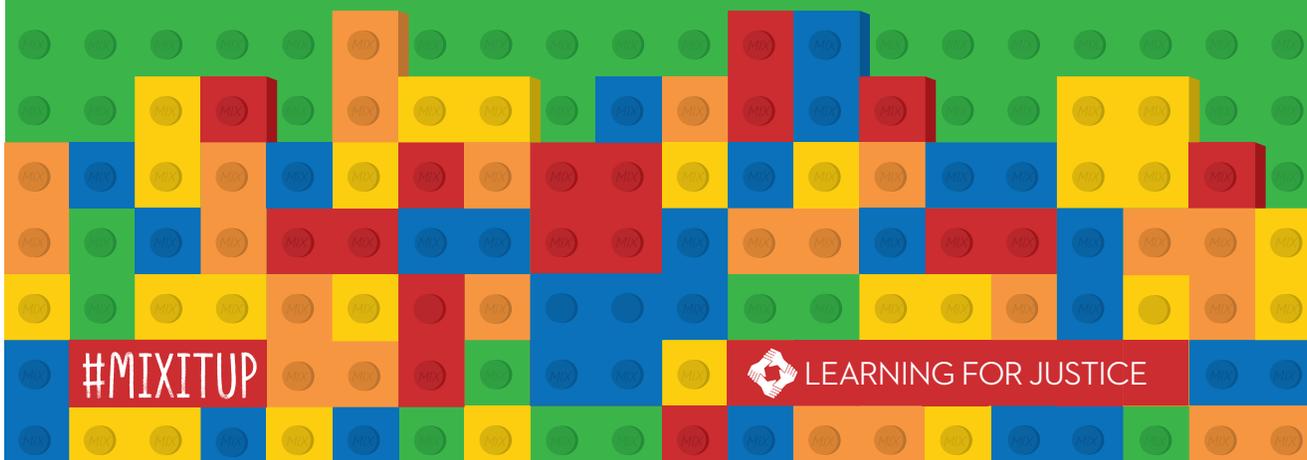
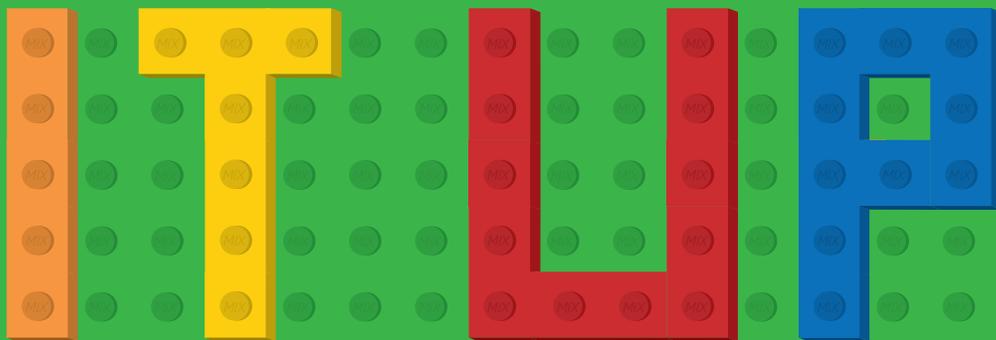
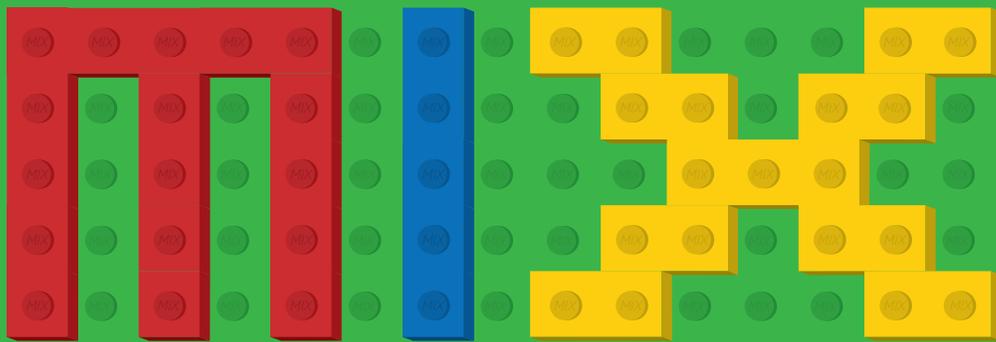
MIX IT UP!

MIX TO THE RESCUE! LET'S GO MAKE NEW FRIENDS!



MAKE NEW FRIENDS!

DATE _____



#MIXITUP



LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

