



USE WITH:

Small group or whole class



GRADE LEVEL:

Upper elementary, middle school, or high school



CONTEXT:

In person

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Participate in "Colorful" Conversations

Build classroom community through sharing.

Created by [Search Institute](#)

Description:

This resource will help strengthen relationships in the classroom by engaging students with colorful questions and helping them practice deep listening.

Prep time needed:

10 minutes

Est. time to complete:

40 minutes

Steps:

1. Let students know that each person is going to share something about themselves based off of questions you will provide. Alleviate anxiety and support vulnerability by communicating that each student should share at a level that suits them. Share that everyone else in the group is going to show they care about that person by listening and asking questions. Remind students that they should listen carefully when their peer is speaking so they can come up with a follow-up question to ask them about what they said. Encourage students to bring paper and a pencil with them if they'd like to jot their questions down.
2. Pass a bag of colorful candy to each student. Ask them to take a small handful of candies in as many different colors as possible, but not to eat the candy until they hear the instructions. You should take a handful of candy as well.
3. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. Consider grouping together students who cross paths less often. Give each group a copy of the Colorful Conversation Questions or have them in an accessible location for everyone (e.g. on a board or screen). The questions are:

- Blue: Share a talent you have and how long you have had that skill. What did you do to learn the skill? How do you practice?
 - Red: What is a subject or topic you'd like to learn more about? Why?
 - Orange: What is a value or rule you live by? How did you figure this out?
 - Yellow: Who is someone you really respect? Why?
 - Green: Describe your dream job. How did you learn about this job? What excites you about it?
 - Brown: Where is a place you can really be yourself? Why?
4. Ask each student to select one candy and compare its color to the questions. Based on that color, students will respond to the corresponding question. Share with students that you will keep time and that they will have 1 minute to speak for each round. You can model the process by sharing facts about yourself corresponding to the candy you have. After each student responds to their question, one other student should ask a follow-up question about what they heard.
 5. In their small groups, have students take turns responding to the questions. They can eat their candy after each turn. Give students the opportunity to share at least three times with the group.
 6. Bring the students back to the large group and ask them to discuss the following question: "What did you experience in this activity that might be helpful in other relationships in your life?"

Tips for Educators:

- A bag of colorful candies like M&Ms or Skittles is needed (enough for each participant to take a small handful or enough individual bags for each participant to have one). If candy isn't an option in your setting, you can use marbles, small pieces of construction paper, pattern blocks, or other manipulatives that come in a variety of colors.
- You may want to begin with participants sitting in a circle. Later they will break into small groups, so this activity will work best where there's enough space for participants to spread out.
- Depending on the size of the group, this activity could also be done in pairs to shorten the duration.

Inspired by:

1. Johnson E. (2011). Developing listening skills through peer interaction. *Music Educators Journal*, 98(2), 49-54.
doi:10.1177/0027432111423440