

# WHAT IS DIGNITY?

Students/participants explore the definition and principles of dignity, what it means to them, what it means to others, and why it's important.

AGES 10+ | TIME 20 MIN

## MATERIALS

Paper, pen/pencil, or white-board and markers

**OPTIONAL:** copies of a graphic organizer, computer and internet

## DIRECTIONS

**SHARE:** Teacher/facilitator shares a brief example of dignity from his/her own life, the community, or the world. For help identifying and developing a dignity story, see our learning experiences called [Essential Elements of Your Dignity Story](#), [Human Rights and Your Dignity Story](#), and/or [Identifying Your Dignity Story](#).

**PONDER, SHARE:** Using a [graphic organizer](#), blank white board or a piece of paper, students have one minute to brainstorm every word and person that they associate with dignity. Students/participants take turns sharing their words and role models with the class.

Students/participants snap in agreement when a word or name is read that they have either already written down, or that they want to add to their graphic organizer.

**Facilitator Note:** Explore the more complicated ideas (i.e. respect, status, honor) more deeply so that all the students/participants share the same understanding of them.

**ASK:** Can our actions enhance the dignity of others? Make it clear how our own dignity is mutually dependent on the dignity of others.

**DISCUSS:** Students/participants view the *You Must Be the Change: The Global Dignity Song* by Nadirah X video and continue to update their graphic organizer. Students/participants think/share in response to the questions, *What is your reaction to the video? How did it impact your understanding of dignity?*



- **TECHNOLOGY FREE OPTION:** listen to the song (available at [globaldignity.org](http://globaldignity.org)) or omit this part of the learning experience.

**LEARN:** Read the Global Dignity [Dignity Definition and Dignity Principles](#) together as a class. Then students/participants pair/discuss with a partner. They take turns explaining the definition and the principles to each other in their own words. They note any questions that they have and share them with the class.

**PONDER, DISCUSS:** Read the following statements about dignity and ask students/participants to do a thumbs up if they fully agree with the statement, thumb to the side if they partially agree with the statement, and thumbs down if they don't agree with the statement. Ask students/participants to share their thinking about the statements that are preceded with an asterisk "\*\*". After they share their thinking, tell the students/participants that it's okay to change their minds, if they so choose.

**Facilitator Note:** Use your best judgment about which examples to include in the list below. Feel free to use different examples that would resonate more with your students.

### WHO HAS DIGNITY?

- I have dignity
- My best friend has dignity.
- My teacher has dignity.
- My favorite movie/television star has dignity.
- \*A person who has said something mean to me has dignity.
- \*A person who has done something unkind to my family or friends has dignity.
- \*My best friend, my teacher, my favorite movie star, the person who was mean to me, and the person who was unkind to my family or friends all have dignity.

- \*Every single person in the world has dignity.
- \*Everyone has dignity, but there are some people in the world who do not respect or recognize other's dignity.

**DISCUSS:** Explore the following ideas with students/participants either during the Ponder/Discuss activity in step 5 or as a way to conclude this learning experience.

- It's easy to honor the dignity of people you like, love, and respect, but it can be challenging to honor the dignity of people you don't like, don't love, and don't respect.
- Remind them that living a life of dignity means having the strength to honor your own dignity and the strength to honor the dignity of every other person in the world, regardless of who they are.
- Everyone has dignity, even people who have made destructive and devastating life choices . . .but not everyone honors other's dignity by treating others with dignity.
- We are hopeful that the people who don't yet have the strength to honor other's dignity will learn to do so. We believe that dignity has the power to transform our world into a place where acceptance, trust, respect, and peace triumph.

### EXTENSIONS OR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

- Connect online with another classroom/partners you know is celebrating Global Dignity Day and share your definitions and understandings. Use the hashtag #globaldignity to search for individuals who are celebrating Dignity Day, connect with them and share your story.
- Write a tweet or take a picture to share to #dignityday or #GlobalDignity about your experience with completing the [What is Dignity?](#) activity.

Connect with our Global Dignity community and explore our Teaching Dignity resources and curriculum at [GLOBALDIGNITY.ORG](http://GLOBALDIGNITY.ORG).