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# Lesson Plan: The Great Community Mix-Up!

**Subject:** Social Studies, Art, and Sensory Play

**Topic:** Mixing in the Community

**Students:** Viviana, Reggie, Allegra, and Florence (Ages 3-4)

## Materials Needed

- **For Color Mixing:**
  - Washable tempera paint (red, yellow, blue)
  - Paper plates or a plastic paint palette
  - White paper or cardstock
  - Paintbrushes or cotton swabs
  - A smock or old t-shirt for each child
  - A cup of water for rinsing brushes
- **For Sensory Sort:**
  - A large, shallow bin or container
  - Sensory base filler (e.g., dry pasta, beans, or rice)
  - Pictures or small toy figures of community helpers (e.g., doctor, baker, mail carrier, construction worker)
  - Small toys representing their tools (e.g., toy stethoscope, small rolling pin, envelope, toy hammer)
  - 4 small bowls or containers for sorting
- **For Friendship Cake:**
  - A large mixing bowl and a large spoon or whisk
  - Play-Doh in various colors (representing "ingredients")
  - Optional: Colorful pom-poms, beads, or buttons for "sprinkles"
  - A round pan or plate to "bake" the cake on
- **Book:** "A Color of His Own" by Leo Lionni or another book about colors and belonging.

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## Learning Goals (Objectives)

By the end of this lesson, our little learners will be able to:

- **Explore and Create:** Mix two primary colors to create a new secondary color (e.g., yellow and blue make green).
- **Sort and Classify:** Match at least two tools to the correct community helper during sensory play.
- **Collaborate and Socialize:** Work together by taking turns adding "ingredients" and "stirring" to make a pretend Community Friendship Cake.
- **Connect to a Concept:** Begin to understand the idea that when different things (like colors or people) mix, they can create something new and wonderful.

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## Lesson Activities

## Part 1: Welcome & Warm-Up (5-7 minutes)

**Goal:** To introduce the idea of "mixing" in a simple, relatable way.

1. **Gather Together:** Sit in a circle. Start with a simple "Hello" song.
2. **Story Time:** Read "A Color of His Own." As you read, emphasize how the chameleon changes and mixes with his surroundings. Ask questions like, "What color is he now? He's mixing in with the green leaf!"
3. **Introduce the Big Idea:** Say, "Today, we are going to be mixers! We will mix colors, mix up jobs in our community, and even mix a special friendship cake. Mixing makes things new and exciting!"

## Part 2: Activity - Community Color Mixing (10-15 minutes)

**Goal:** A hands-on activity to physically experience mixing and see a direct result.

1. **Setup:** Give each child a paper plate with small dollops of red, yellow, and blue paint. Provide them with paper and a brush.
2. **Guided Discovery:**
  - Start with one mix. Say, "Viviana, let's see what happens when we mix a little bit of your sunshine yellow with some of your blueberry blue. Swirl them together!"
  - Celebrate the result! "Wow! Look, Allegra! You made green! When yellow and blue mix, they make a beautiful new color."
  - Encourage them to try another combination. "Reggie, what do you think will happen if we mix red and yellow?"
3. **Creative Application:** Let them use their new, mixed colors to paint a picture. It could be a picture of their community, their friends, or just a beautiful mix of colors. This is about the process, not the product!
4. **Connect to the Theme:** As they paint, say things like, "Our community is like this painting. It has lots of different people, and when we all mix together, it makes our neighborhood a beautiful and interesting place to live."

## Part 3: Activity - Community Helper Sensory Sort (10 minutes)

**Goal:** To connect the idea of "mixing" to how different people and jobs work together.

1. **Introduce the Bin:** Bring out the sensory bin. Say, "Oh no! All the community helpers' tools got mixed up in this bin! We need to help them sort everything out so they can do their jobs."
2. **Model the Sort:** Place the pictures or figures of the 4 community helpers next to the empty bowls. Pick up one tool, for example, the toy hammer. Say, "Hmm, who uses a hammer? Florence, do you think the baker uses a hammer? No! The construction worker does!" Place the hammer in the construction worker's bowl.
3. **Let Them Explore:** Encourage the children to dig through the sensory filler to find the tools and sort them into the correct bowls. You can help guide them with questions: "I see a stethoscope! Who helps us feel better when we're sick?"
4. **Connect to the Theme:** After a few minutes of sorting, point out how everyone works together. "The baker mixes ingredients to make us bread, and the mail carrier brings us letters. Everyone's job is important and mixes together to make our community work!"

## Part 4: Activity - Baking a Community Friendship Cake (10 minutes)

**Goal:** A culminating, collaborative activity that symbolizes the lesson's theme.

1. **The Recipe:** Bring out the large mixing bowl. Say, "Now for the best part! We are going to mix all our friendship together to make a Community Friendship Cake. Everyone gets to add an ingredient!"

2. **Turn-Taking:** Give each child a color of Play-Doh. One by one, have them add a piece of their "ingredient" to the bowl. Encourage them to name their ingredient: "Reggie is adding the happy red strawberries!" "Viviana is adding the sweet blue sprinkles!"
3. **Mix It Up:** Let each child have a turn to stir the "ingredients" with the big spoon. They will see the colors start to press together and mix.
4. **Decorate Together:** Once it's mixed into a single ball, flatten it out on the pan. Let them all decorate the cake together with the pom-poms and beads ("sprinkles").
5. **Celebrate Your Creation:** Admire the final cake. "Look at this amazing cake! We all mixed our special ingredients together to create something beautiful that we all share. That's what a community is!"

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## Wrap-Up & Reflection (3-5 minutes)

Gather the children and look at everything you made today: the colorful paintings and the friendship cake.

- Ask simple, reflective questions:
  - "What was your favorite thing we mixed today?"
  - "What new color did you make?"
  - "Who liked stirring our big friendship cake?"
- Reinforce the main idea one last time: "Remember, mixing things—whether it's colors, ideas, or friends in our community—is a wonderful thing. It makes the world more colorful and fun!"

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## Notes for Differentiation and Support

- **For a child needing more support:** During color mixing, you can guide their hand to help them swirl the paints. For the sorting activity, reduce the number of community helpers to just two to make the choice simpler.
- **For a child seeking a challenge:** Ask them to predict what color two paints will make before they mix them. During the sorting game, ask them to describe what each community helper does.
- **For varied motor skills:** If a child has difficulty with a paintbrush, offer cotton swabs, sponges, or even finger painting as an alternative. The large spoon for the "cake" is great for developing gross motor skills.

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