

Black History Month Activity for Kids

Skin Tone Color Mixing Art

Why this activity matters

Children notice differences. This art experience helps them explore **skin tone diversity** in a positive, age-appropriate way—building **respect, observation skills, vocabulary, and self-confidence**.

Recommended ages

Toddlers–Early Elementary (Ages 2–8)

(Great for mixed-age groups, see adaptations below.)

Learning goals

Children will:

- Practice **color mixing** and fine-motor skills
- Build **positive identity** and appreciation for differences
- Use descriptive language (warm, light, deep, golden, etc.)
- Learn respectful classroom norms: “All skin tones are beautiful.”

Materials

- Paint: **white, brown, red, yellow** (optional: a tiny bit of blue)
- Paint trays or small paper plates
- Brushes or sponges



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- Paper (white or tan works well)
- **Mirrors** (handheld or tabletop)
- Paper towels + wipes
- Optional: crayons/markers with varied skin tones

Prep (5 minutes)

- Set out paint in small amounts (you can refill as needed).
- Place mirrors at each spot.
- Add a simple sign: “**We mix colors to match many skin tones.**”

Directions (Step-by-step)

1. Start with observation:

Invite children to look in a mirror. Say:

“Skin comes in many shades. All are beautiful. Today we’ll mix paint to make different skin colors.”

2. Mix base colors:

Begin with **white + brown**, then adjust using tiny amounts of **red or yellow**.

Encourage kids to notice how small changes create new shades.

3. Create skin tone swatches:

Children paint 3–6 swatches on paper and give each one a name (examples below).

4. Optional self-portrait:

Children use their mixed color for a face/hands, then add hair and clothing details.

5. Share respectfully:

During clean-up, invite kids to show their favorite shade and say one kind observation.

Teacher language (helpful scripts)

Use simple, positive wording:

- “Your skin tone is unique and beautiful.”
- “Let’s find a shade that feels like *you*.”
- “We can all be different and still belong together.”
- “We don’t compare skin tones as better or worse—just different.”

Avoid: “Who is darker/lighter?” or anything that ranks tones.

Vocabulary to introduce

Try “paint scientist” words:

- **warm, cool, deep, rich, golden, honey, cocoa, caramel, peach, copper**
- **shade, blend, mix, match, observe**

(Tip: Let children choose the words—ownership matters.)

Adaptations by age

Ages 2–3 (Toddlers)

- Focus on **dabbing swatches** and naming colors (“warm brown,” “light tan”).
- Adult helps with mixing; child chooses and paints.



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Ages 4–5 (Preschool)

- Children mix with guidance and create a **simple portrait**.
- Add a classroom chart: “Our Colors / Our Community.”

Ages 6–8 (Early Elementary)

- Children record “recipes” for their paint mix (example: “3 white + 1 brown + a dot of red”).
- Write 2–3 sentences about what they learned.

Inclusion & care tips

- Provide **crayons/markers** that include multiple skin tones.
- Model consent: “Would you like help matching your color?”
- If a child says something hurtful, respond calmly:
“In our classroom, we speak respectfully. All skin tones are beautiful.”

Extension activities

- **Color Museum:** Create a hallway display of swatches titled “**Many Shades of Beautiful.**”
- **Family Connection:** Invite families to send a note: “A tradition or story that makes our family proud.”
- **Book Pairing:** Read a story that celebrates skin, hair, families, or community.

Quick reflection questions

- “What happened when you added more white?”
- “What words describe your color?”
- “How can we make sure everyone feels included?”



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