

# 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.**”
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## 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.
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## 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.

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## 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.)*

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## 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.
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## 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.”
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## 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.
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## Quick reflection questions

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



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