After defining and differentiating the differences between prejudice, stereotype and discrimination. I then explain “in group” and “out group” to the students. I ask them to them identify their “in groups”. As they are call them out, I write them all over the chalkboards around the room. I then ask for them to call out “out groups.” I continue to write them all over the room. After this activity I often have words such as, “white, black, Hispanic, Asian, gay, straight, lesbian, fat people, thin people, rich people, poor people, homeless, genius, prostitutes, doctors, lawyers, teachers, students, celebrities, private school students, handicapped people, deaf people, Christians, Muslims, Jews, politicians, strippers, gang members, etc.”

Then I have them pull out a piece of paper and write the word “Most.” I then instruct them to pick a group that is written around the room and finish the sentence. For example,” Most Jewish people….” I then tell them that no one will know what they write on the paper, but they are NOT allowed to play it safe, meaning they CANNOT use a people group that they consider an in-group. They must choose an out-group, a group they consider to not be a part of.

Next, I tell them to crumple the paper into a ball. I then tell them I am going to incite a little violence…a snow ball fight! I throw my own crumpled paper into the classroom. Soon the student follow suit, throwing their “snow balls” at each other and around the room. I let them pick up and throw the snow balls for about 60 seconds. (This clearly is just my tricky way of getting them to exchange papers without anyone knowing whose they are getting. This act also gets them physically charged so the discussion to come are vibrant and energetic!) When I say stop, everyone is to find a “snow ball” near them and smooth it open. We then go around the room reading the stereotypes and talking about where they may have originated. Often, it is the students’ insights that generate the most conversation about the origin, truth or perversion of the stereotypes.

I wrap up the activity with showing the original documentary of the Jane Elliot discrimination study. It is without fail, that at the end of the activity, the students report being more away of stereotypes and how often they lead to undue prejudices and, unfortunately, discrimination.