

Building A Kind & Caring Culture

For this project, students will create an action plan for how their school (or classroom, depending on how you want to scale the project) can be more inclusive. The plan should address inclusiveness, fairness, and/or equity, depending on your students and how big or small you want this project to be. Some ideas for what this can look like are in Part 1 below.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Fairness, Equity, Kindness

Project Timeframe

1-2 weeks, broken up as needed by class schedule

Required Materials

- ❑ TBD - whatever aids in the planning and drafting processes (likely note-taking and visual-aid making materials)

Standards Map

This project aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Note: If you are looking for a cross-curricular opportunity aligned with ELA standards in research and persuasive writing/presenting, this would be a good project for that.

PART 1:

We've been working on being kind in the face of bullying and of being more than a bystander. We have been working on being inclusive, being fair, and looking for ways to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to be successful. Perhaps we could share the ideas we've been learning with others in our school community. Would you be interested in doing that?

Have the students brainstorm ways to develop a kind and caring community at school. (This could compliment the school's anti-bullying program, if one exists.)

For examples, students could:

- Start a poster campaign where students design posters to promote a kindness zone at school. They could think about how a poster campaign can address where bullying occurs at school. (As an optional activity have students research bullying statistics or collect bullying data for the school before designing posters, and then track instances of kindness a month or so after the poster campaign or kindness zone is created.)
- Introduce a kindness box where students can place notes they write about kind acts they have seen or experienced. These ideas could be shared at a kindness assembly once a month.
- Start a kindness club where students discuss ways to be kind at school. (See supplemental RAK Club materials at <http://randomactsofkindness.org>.)
- Make kindness stickers out of contact paper and permanent markers.
- Create a physical place at the school where students can address issues as they arise.

Have students discuss their ideas and vote on what activity they want to pursue. The end product will be an action plan that they can present to the administration (or whomever is the appropriate approving body) and actually implement the plan in their school/classroom. Use Week 1 as the brainstorming stage.

PART 2:

In Part 2 of the project, have students work on various parts of their plan. Depending on what they pick, you might break students into small groups or give everyone an individual role. Or, you may stay as a large group and work on the plan together.

The goal will be to empower students to do the work themselves with you as their guide. Allot time in Week 2 for students to create any visual aids as part of their plan. While the ultimate goal is for them to implement this plan, the first step is for them to plan it. They should understand that these types of changes aren't made overnight or on a whim. In order to create meaningful change, especially regarding student/faculty behavior and school culture, the plan must be thoughtful and implementable. This is where the action plan comes in. But, as part of the plan, they will want to create compelling data reports and visuals to persuade their audience that their ideas will work. Use Week 2 as the plan drafting stage.

Inclusiveness

This week we focus on how to be an upstander when we see bullying behavior, which can include intentionally excluding people. Students will learn four specific upstander strategies and role play them in the first whole class lesson. The mini lessons expand on upstander behavior and experience, giving students a deeper opportunity to examine how to be an upstander and more inclusive of others.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

Main Lesson

Whole Class Lesson
30 minutes



Becoming an Upstander

In this first lesson, students learn four strategies for being an upstander when they notice someone being bullied or excluded. Students first learn the strategies and then practice them through role play situations. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



Burger King Stands Up to Bullying - Do We?

Watch the video created by Burger King to demonstrate how people do (or do not) respond to bullying yet do respond when their meal is not treated properly:

https://youtu.be/YNnHdR9DQDA?si=e-B_Ewj5qd_3dDlz

Based on the four strategies we learned about in the primary lesson, which strategies did the upstanders use? How did the upstanders demonstrate inclusiveness? Why do you think people got more upset about the beat-up burger than the bullying?

For Partners
15 minutes



Bystander vs. Upstander

With a partner, discuss which (being a bystander vs. upstander) is easier and why? Have you ever had a chance to be an upstander but chose bystander instead? Explain (though do not use the real names of the people involved).

For Individuals
15 minutes



My Upstander Mission

Journal about situations you've experienced (or could imagine experiencing) at school, at home, or in public) where you could stand up for someone else or choose to include them. From this activity, write a personal mission statement for yourself about how you will choose to be an upstander and choose to be inclusive over choosing to be a bystander or choosing to exclude. You could begin with, "I will be an upstander by _____."

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



Upstanders in the Media

Ask students to share any music, TV shows, or movies that they've seen or heard that promote upstander behavior or kindness. Have a class discussion about their ideas.

Becoming an Upstander

In this first lesson, students learn four strategies for being an upstander when they notice someone being bullied or excluded. Students first learn the strategies and then practice them through role play situations.

Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- No materials are required for this lesson.

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Learn four strategies for being an upstander when they see bullying behavior.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being inclusive often requires action. Most naturally, we might think it simply means inviting others to join you. However, it might mean ensuring that your classroom management is fair for every student. It means using equitable teaching strategies that give everyone an equal chance at success. If some students are treated unfairly by classroom rules that are hard for them to follow or if they cannot keep up with the pace of the curriculum or your instruction, then you might be creating a classroom culture that is not as inclusive as you think. In what ways could your classroom or your instructional practices be more inclusive, fair, or equitable?



Share

5-7 minutes

In this unit, we are learning about being inclusive and how we can build a more inclusive school environment. One way we can do this is through simply being more inclusive of others, by fairly easy things such as inviting people to sit with you if they are sitting alone, expanding your friend circle, or partnering up with new people in class. It doesn't have to be a big gesture; if you are kind to others, you will naturally be inclusive of them.

Today, though, we are going to talk about a specific way, which can feel like a big way, to be more inclusive, and that is to be an upstander when we see someone either being bullied or being intentionally excluded or teased in a way that might cross the line into bullying. We use the term upstander and not bystander. Why do you think this is? Invite student responses; they have likely heard both of these terms through work done in any anti-bullying curriculum your school uses.

To be a bystander means we simply “stand by” while something happens. We see it but don't do anything about it. An upstander, on the other hand, “stands up” for the person being bullied, mistreated, or excluded. This is harder than simply being a bystander, but it makes a much larger impact and is the right thing to do in most circumstances.



Inspire

3-5 minutes

Today we are going to talk about how to be an upstander. To begin, though, I want you all to briefly journal your responses to the following quote by Martin Luther King, Jr. Here is the quote: "In the end we will not remember the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

--Take 1-2 minutes to write down what you think this means.

Give students time to write (or simply think) - and do a think-pair-share with their neighbor to give everyone a chance to exchange ideas. Then ask for one or two people (or pairs) to share their thoughts.



Empower

15 minutes

Good. What Dr. King, Jr., is saying is that we need to speak up when we see injustice - particularly if we witness injustice toward those we know. It is easy to stay silent, but takes courage to stand up for people. Today we will discuss four strategies we can use to be an upstander.

Note: If the students have been through anti-bullying programs before and have learned about these strategies, you could ask them, first, to identify upstander strategies. If they miss any listed below, you can add them to their list and body of knowledge.

Strategy 1: Be Present - When you see bullying, show the bully that their target has a friend. Be present with the victim - be a friend in that moment, even if you are really more like acquaintances.

Strategy 2: Distract - When you see bullying, interrupt the bullying by distracting that person. Ask the bully a question not related to the situation. Invite the bully to join you in doing something else. In short, get that person's attention off of their target.

Strategy 3: Step In - This one takes more courage; here, the upstander tells the bully to stop and that their behavior is not right. Say it loudly enough to draw attention to the situation.

Strategy 4: Get Help - Tell a trusted adult about the situation to get appropriate help for both the bully and the bullied.

Which of these strategies do you think is the easiest one? Invite student responses; have them explain why they think the strategy they picked is the easiest.

Ok, which is the hardest? Repeat student response interaction.

Next, invite students to role play the strategies one at a time. They can use any hypothetical bullying situation (or repeat the same situation) for each strategy. Some situations are also suggested below. Rotate students into each situation so different students model different strategies. This could be done in small groups or as a large group.

Bullying Situation 1: Carmen is new at school and has to wear braces on her legs because of a spinal condition she has. Kids regularly tease her for how she walks. Be an upstander for Carmen.

Bullying Situation 2: Matt struggles with reading and is often teased by classmates during silent reading time in class or before/after English class for reading lower-level reading books. Be an upstander for Matt.

Bullying Situation 3: Summer lives with her grandparents and they don't have a lot of money or a very big house, and her peers make unkind remarks about her home and grandparents every day when she gets off the bus. Be an upstander for Summer.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

After the role-plays, ask students which strategy was the easiest/hardest to use and why. See if their answer changed at all. If so, why?

Then, ask students which strategy they think is most effective and why.

Remind them that any teacher is willing and able to help. If they do not feel safe standing up to a bully or intervening for someone, tell them to get an adult to step in right away.

We will be talking more about being an upstander in the mini lessons this week.

Notable Quotables: Inclusiveness Posters

This project gives students an opportunity to learn some notable quotes about inclusion and diversity while practicing critical thinking skills in explaining and illustrating them.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Project Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials

- Large poster paper
- Slips of paper with the quotes on them. Ensure each group has a quote (or, if you are having each student make a poster, find more quotes so that each person has a different quote).
- Markers or other media for the poster creation

Students can do this project individually or in small groups. Groups are nice because some of the quotes are somewhat challenging and it might help students to discuss them with others.

The aim is for students to explain the quotes in plain terms and illustrate a poster to go with it. The end products will be colorful expressions of inclusion that can decorate the classroom or other spaces in the school.

The following quotes are recommendations, though you can pick others:

- Why fit in when you were born to stand out? - Dr. Seuss
- When you let your own light shine, you unconsciously give others permission to do the same. - Nelson Mandela
- We could learn a lot about crayons; some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some are bright, some have weird names, but they all learned to live together in the box. - Robert Fulghum
- Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid. - Albert Einstein
- Always remember that you are unique -- just like everyone else. - Margaret Mead
- Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. - Mark Twain
- It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves. - Sir Edmund Hillary
- People generally see what they look for and hear what they listen for. - Harper Lee
- The time is always right to do what is right. - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter. - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wrap Up:

When the posters are finished, have students present them to the class and then display them - either in the classroom or in other school spaces; the lunch room or the library might be good options.

Proposed Lesson Outcomes:

Students will:

- Think critically about well-known quotes about inclusiveness and diversity.
- Design posters to highlight the meaning of their quote.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

Kindness Escape Room: Teamwork

In this lesson, students will learn about inclusiveness through the lens of teamwork. They will also review and demonstrate understanding of past unit concepts around respect and caring through an “escape room” simulation. Teams of four work together to solve four situations and earn a pass “out” of the escape room. The idea is to create a slightly competitive environment where students must work together toward a common goal while simultaneously reviewing key concepts from previous lessons.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes

Required Materials

- Paper for printing the scorecards and situation slips
- Envelopes for situation slips or staples if simply folded. The idea is to keep the situation somewhat concealed until the retriever returns to his or her team
- Stamper or some kind of marker to check off teams' scorecards
- Could have prizes for the team that escapes first
- Scorecards
- Situation slips to be copied and cut out

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Recognize how teamwork requires inclusiveness.
- Practice teamwork through a game situation.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

The skill of working together on a team is one that is utilized throughout our adult lives. Your teaching partner, your grade specific teaching group, your school, and even your district are all run by structured teams that must find common ground to accomplish a shared goal. However, your assigned team doesn't necessarily correlate with your desired team. The skills you use in your classroom every day can and should be applied to the various teams, committees, and boards you sit on both at school and beyond. Don't expect to be perfect. We all have our faults. It is easier to look outwards than to personally reflect. Before you start complaining or struggling with your group, ask yourself these three questions: How can I help? How might I be a problem for others? How can I help things go right? We all have strengths and weaknesses. Being open about them can help you in any team situation. Be up front about both what you can offer and where you may struggle!

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Students with anxiety may not respond well to the idea of an “escape room” so adjust the presentation as necessary.
- Because each student will have a specific role on the team, there should be an opportunity for everyone to contribute. If students are self-selecting groups and there are groups that do not have strong readers and writers, they may be at a disadvantage. Adjust requirements as necessary or pre-assign groups to ensure everyone can be in a role that gives them an opportunity to be successful.



Share

3-5 minutes

How many of you have played on a team before?

Invite student response.

Can someone tell me what a team is? What are some qualities that make a good, successful team?

Invite student response.

Do you ever decide, before giving someone a chance, that he or she would not be good on your team? That you don't want to include them? How might excluding - or, not including - others from joining a team hurt the team?



Inspire

5-7 minutes

We are going to dive even further regarding teams. Let's use the example of a baseball team. How many of you have either played baseball or softball or have seen a baseball or softball game?

Let students respond.

On a baseball or softball team, you have nine players out on the field at one time. Are those players all doing the same job?

Correct! They all have different jobs, don't they? And what happens if one of those nine players is missing? Can they play the game successfully? Right - they can't. Teams only work if everyone participates and does his or her assigned job. Even if a team has a really good player, they still need everyone else. A single first baseman cannot win an entire baseball game.

Teams sometimes have members that work individually to get a job done, like a gymnastics team or a golf team; each athlete is important but they don't play together - they work on their own but the points they earn go toward the entire team. They still must each do his or her best to help ensure that everyone succeeds.

Turn to your neighbor and do a think-pair-share about other types of teams (other than sports teams) and what each team member has to do in order for the whole team to succeed.



Empower

20-25 minutes

Have you ever heard of those “escape rooms” where people need to work together and solve puzzles or riddles or problems in order to get out? Well, we are now going into the Kindness Escape Room!

If time permits, you could prepare the room in advance with some escape room signs, suspenseful music, etc. (see ideas here:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/build-a-classroom-escape-room-lesson/>)

You are going to work in teams to address some situations about kindness, including concepts that we studied in our Respect and Caring Units. Each person has a special job to do and in order for your team to be successful, each person must do his or her job.

Here are the teams [put students into teams of 4 or allow self-selection if that is best for your class]. On your team, you need a retriever, a reader, a writer, and a reporter. The retriever, on my mark, comes to get the first situation from my desk (they cannot run, though!). The retriever returns to the team and gives the envelope to the reader who reads the situation to the team. The writer writes down the team’s final decision or response on the scorecard and gives it to the reporter. The whole team must agree on the response and sign the card to verify the results. The reporter then walks the score card back to the teacher who will review and either approve or reject the answer.

If approved, the teacher will stamp the score card. The reporter returns to the team, and high-fives the retriever who then goes back for the next situation. The retriever cannot leave his or her seat until the reporter high-fives them. Then the team repeats the same action for the next situation.

As soon as you get all four stamps, you get to “escape”. The goal is to be the first team out!

To keep the room in suspense, continue playing music in the background and/or have a buzzer at the desk that you hit or ring when a team escapes.



Reflect

3-5 minutes

Ask the following questions:

- What was this experience like for your team? Did everyone feel confident in performing their duty?
- How did you assign team members roles?
- Was there ever any conflict on your team?
- What would have happened if one of your team members didn’t fulfill his or her role?



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Kindness Escape Room Situations

Ensure there is one of each of the four situations for each team; cut them out and put them in envelopes (or simply fold them in half and staple).

Note for Teachers: With the exception of #4, the aim of these situations isn't to make students simply recall facts or concepts; it is to apply them. Therefore, any answer has the potential to be the right answer. Make a quick judgement call, but if the response does not specifically address the question or is missing an element of kindness, caring, or inclusiveness, ask teams to rethink their response so that it is more specific or addresses a kindness concept in more detail. With #4, the apology should address the four steps in some way. If a step is missing, encourage teams to add it in.

Four Steps to Making an Apology:

1. Realize you did wrong.
2. Sincerely apologize.
3. Explain yourself.
4. Make future plans.

Situation 1

Maddie is a new student in your class. She is from another state and her family just moved here. What are three specific things you and your classmates could do to make her feel welcome?

Situation 2

You heard a rumor about your best friend from a boy in your class named Trey. You talk to Trey and ask him to stop spreading lies about your friend. Trey says he doesn't care what you say and starts making fun of what you are wearing. How could you respond that is assertive yet respectful?

Situation 3

You are feeling stressed. You have a big test on Friday. You have music lessons once a week and theater twice a week, so you don't have a lot of time after school to relax. Your little sister is getting on your nerves, and you are nervous about your upcoming solo at the school music concert. Name three things you can do to help take care of yourself so that you don't feel so anxious and stressed out, and explain how the strategy will help at least one of these specific stressors. (For example: You could ask your teacher for help studying so you aren't nervous about your test. You cannot use this example as one of your self-care strategies!)

Situation 4

You took your mom's phone without asking and accidentally dropped it and cracked the screen. Using the four steps you learned about in the Caring unit, write a sincere apology.