

Including Yourself

This lesson helps students realize the value of not only being inclusive of others but also of being inclusive of themselves. It is hard to include others if we feel like we, ourselves, are being excluded. This lesson is designed to give students strategies to ask to be included, to try new things, and to take some risks and succeed.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- A hat or bucket to hold the role-play strips
- Role play scenarios cut up into strips (see below)

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.



**DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.**
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Recognize the value of including ourselves in activities as a means toward including others.
- Practice expressions of self-inclusion.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Even as an adult, it can be difficult being the “new kid on the block”. Every new job, every move, every time your children transition to a new school; all of these result in a new set of people to meet! One of the most challenging aspects of these new beginnings is finding entry points into already formed social circles. As you introduce this valuable lesson to your students, take time to reflect on how you feel when this is required of you. If you are more of an introvert, putting yourself out there on day one may feel impossible. Start slowly and identify one person a week to approach. It is definitely easier to look for small groups of 2-3 people rather than approaching a larger group. On the opposite end, extroverts can come across too overbearing, chatty, or even loud. Try to get involved in productive ways through committees, meetings, or other activities that focus your nervous energy. Whether you are an introvert, extrovert, or somewhere in between, asking permission in new social situations can be unnerving, but practice makes perfect, so get out there!

Tips for Diverse Learners

- If you aren't comfortable letting students pair up on their own (as you want them to pair up with someone they don't know well or regularly work with), pair students ahead of time so the role-plays are balanced with students who are eager to role play and those who are more hesitant. This is a great way for students to model and teach one another and build confidence, not to mention new relationships.



Share

3-5 minutes

Let's review what we discussed in our last Inclusiveness lesson. In that lesson we talked about what it meant to be on a team and then we played a team-based game. Can someone share what it means to be on a team?

Invite student response.

Good! Can someone tell us how teams use inclusiveness to be successful?

Invite student response.

Yes! And remember our story from the last lesson. Remember how the friends from China formed a team and did amazing things even though one could not see and one had no arms? Did you expect those men to be able to do everything they did? I didn't! Sometimes we might think that we cannot do something because we have never done it or believe we are limited somehow. This leads us to excluding ourselves. Sometimes it isn't others who exclude us, but we who exclude ourselves!



Inspire

7-10 minutes

Let's talk a little bit about why we might choose not to try something or ask to be included. Remember, other people cannot read your mind. If you want to be included in something, sometimes you need to ask to include yourself. This can be uncomfortable, though.

What are some reasons why you might not ask to be included in something?

Invite student response.

Sometimes we feel like we don't belong or we aren't good enough or the group or person won't want to include us. This is the emotion center of our brain telling us something we fear, but not something that is actually true. Do you see what I mean here? Let's say we would like to join a game that is already in progress out at recess. Do we KNOW that the group that is playing will say 'no'? Do we KNOW that we won't do a good job? Of course not! We have no idea because neither of those things have happened yet! We simply fear that they will say no or that we will mess up somehow. Our emotional brain is telling us lies about the situation.

So, here is what we need to do. We need the logic or thinking part of our brain (which is a separate part from our emotional brain) to speak up and say, "Give it a try! Just ask to play! You might do a great job! Or, it might not go well. Either way, it will probably be fun. You won't know until you try! They will probably say you can join and would love to have you. You don't know until you ask!" This part of your brain reminds you that you don't know anything until you try it, so try it! See what I mean?

How often have you jumped to a conclusion or made a decision about something before you even tried it? Have you ever decided you didn't like a food before tasting it? What other decisions do we often make without even really trying? Invite student responses.



Empower

15-20 minutes

So, what we need to remember with inclusiveness is that it is as much about including others as it is about including ourselves. We should not count ourselves out so quickly or be afraid to join up, speak out, make friends, or share our time or ideas. It will be hard to include others if we don't even think to include ourselves.

So, we are going to practice including ourselves in some role play situations.

Let students get into pairs and challenge them to pair up with someone they don't usually work with (teachers may want to pre-arrange this if they don't feel students will be able to do this effectively).

Bring a hat or bucket around with the role plays cut up into strips; re-use role plays so there are enough to go several rounds. Let students each pick out of the hat/bucket. If they get the same situation, have the last to draw re-draw. When each student has done his/her part, they switch scenarios with their partner and the other person gets to role-play that situation.

Situations (add to or subtract as desired or necessary)

1. You are new in school. When you arrive in the cafeteria with your lunch, you see all the tables are full except for one. Practice asking to sit in that spot.
2. You have never played soccer but you want to try it this year. When you get to the first practice, you realize you don't have the right equipment (like shin guards and cleats), and everyone there is clearly experienced. What do you tell yourself so that you stay and give your best effort? Practice that now.
3. You really want to try out for the school play but are afraid you will forget your lines. What do you do or say to yourself to keep yourself from not trying out? Practice that now.
4. There is a group of kids at recess that are playing four-square. You love four-square and want to play, but they haven't asked you to join. What do you do to be included? Practice what you would do or say.
5. It seems like kids in your class are always having playdates after school or meeting up at the park to hang out. You don't feel like you are being included and this makes you feel sad. What can you do to be included and inclusive, and also feel better and likely make more friends? Practice with your partner.



Reflect

3-5 minutes

As we have been learning in this unit, it is important to include others, to work as a team, and to treat each other with respect and kindness. We must also remember our very first lesson in our very first unit, though: self-respect. We have to realize that for as much as we must include others, we must also include ourselves. Don't count yourself out! Don't let the emotion center of your brain tell you that you can't play, can't join, can't share, or can't succeed. You can! You need to give yourself the opportunity, though. The opportunity may not always come to you.

Look for specific ways this week to include others but also to create an opportunity of inclusion for yourself. If you were not asked to play a game at recess, you do the asking! Or start a new game yourself and invite others. If you are afraid to try out for a team, remember the friends from China! If they can plant 10,000 trees without eyes or hands, you can take a chance too! You won't know how great something can be if you don't give it a try.



Extension Ideas

- This could be turned into a science lesson where you look at a diagram or model of the brain; you can discuss the limbic system and cerebral cortex of the brain and how the emotion center and logic center work and impact thoughts and actions.
- A home extension could include making parents aware of the students' attempts at trying new things and overcoming a fear of failure or a sense of isolation. Give parents tips to help encourage their students to meet up with friends, try out for community events, volunteer, etc.



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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/>

Role-play slips

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