



OVERVIEW

Every child has his or her own ideas of what's fair and unfair. Those preconceptions are explored in this lesson which explores unfair and discriminatory practices. In a controlled setting, students are given preferential treatment that mirrors real-life discriminatory practices. After all children have had a chance to experience both sides, students will pair up with others they normally wouldn't choose to work with and keep a journal of unfair treatment experienced by their partner during the course of a set time period.

MATERIALS

- Green star-shaped stickers, one for each student
-  Daily and Weekly Journal for pair-work, enough for the duration of the activity
-  Report Rubric, one for each student

That's not fair!" "Yes, it is!" "No, it isn't!" We all seem to have a clear picture of what's fair and what isn't. Unfortunately, we don't always agree on what this "clear" picture is.

What the argument often comes down to is: What gives people an advantage is "fair" and what gives others a better chance is "unfair."

The truth is, although some decisions are clearly unfair, there's usually more than one fair choice.

To avoid complications, set clear rules and expect everyone to know them and abide by them. If nothing else, fairness means going by the rules. It's treating everyone the same. It's using the same rules for everyone.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



In this lesson, students will learn fairness by:

- Experiencing discrimination in a controlled classroom setting
- Brainstorming fair-treatment practices
- Applying fair treatment to activities in real life
- Keeping a journal as they're paired with someone outside their normal circle and monitoring fairness

ACTIVITY

1. As a class, discuss the different awards available to the students. These could include things such as being allowed to choose seats, sitting at the front or the back, running errands for the teacher, etc.
2. Have them think about what they have to do to earn those privileges. Discuss these informal rules of the classroom.
3. Ask the class if they think those rules are fair or unfair. (They should be fair!)
4. Explain to the class they are going to participate in an experiment that will help them understand how it feels when things are unfair.
5. Distribute half the green star stickers arbitrarily. Tell the students to put the stickers on their clothing. The other half will not receive any stickers at this time.
6. For a set period of time, those with green stickers will be able to do everything they normally earn, such as sitting in the front, being allowed to read when they finish their work, etc.
7. When the allocated time is over, reverse roles: Have the green star students remove their green stars and give the other half of the class a green star sticker to wear.
8. After everyone has experienced unfair treatment, gather the students together and discuss what they felt was fair or unfair. How could the decisions be made fair? How would they make fair decisions?
9. Tell them people are treated unfairly every day and perhaps even in this class. To find out about unfair treatment, have the class brainstorm situations where they felt they were treated unfairly. Share the stories and how each felt about the situation.
10. Tell the students they will each work with a partner over the next day (or however long you wish the activity to run). Distribute the Daily or Weekly Journal pages and go over each section, making sure the students understand how to complete them.
11. Form pairs of students who don't normally work together. Tell them they're to write examples of unfair treatment toward their partner in their Journal as they occur.
12. When the allocated time is up, have them share experiences when their partner was treated unfairly and what they learned about fairness and unfairness.
13. Distribute the Report Rubric. Have each student write a report based on the experiences he or she recorded. Make sure everyone understands the criteria in the rubric before proceeding.
14. Have their partners assess their work using the same rubric.

FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

- Brainstorm a list of Fair Treatment Guidelines that should be followed as a class. List things like "Treat everyone with respect," "Don't leave anyone out of games," and other ideas that will help classmates treat each other fairly.
- Read the story of *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss, and continue the discussion of unfair treatment.
- Have the class keep a journal of unfair treatment they perceive during one week. Encourage them to develop strategies to combat unfair treatment such as forming clubs or groups promoting fair practices in sports.

OTHER FAIRNESS ACTIVITIES

- Ask parents to reinforce fair behavior by noticing and practicing it.
- Brainstorm ways to be fair on the playground and in sports. Discuss options when opponents are being unfair. Emphasize being fair to others.
- Make a mural showing fairness at home, on the playground, and in the classroom.

LINKS TO USEFUL WEBSITES

http://www.humanityquest.com/topic/art_activities/index.asp?theme1=fairness
List of links to art ideas to teach fairness.

<http://www.eduplace.com/activity/index.jsp>
Links to lesson plans from Houghton Mifflin.

http://www.thesolutionsite.com/lpnew_bin/UI_Metadata/public/957
Great lesson for young kids about respecting the diversity of everyone.

<http://charactercounts.org/>
Visit our website for free teaching resources, lesson plans, ideas, and much more to help you incorporate character education into your classroom and school.



STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS

Standard 4

Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

LEVEL II [Grades 3-5]

Benchmark 8

Uses strategies to compile information into written reports or summaries (e.g., incorporates notes into a finished product; includes simple facts, details, explanations, and examples; draws conclusions from relationships and patterns that emerge from data from different sources; uses appropriate visual aids and media).

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VOCABULARY TERMS

fairness
justice
discrimination

unfair
rules
treatment

behavior
reporting
guidelines

DAILY JOURNAL

Time	Unfair Treatment	What I think
7:30 am		
8:00 am		
8:30 am		
9:00 am		
9:30 am		
10:00 am		
10:30 am		
11:00 am		
11:30 am		
12:00 pm		
12:30 pm		
1:00 pm		
1:30 pm		
2:00 pm		
2:30 pm		
3:00 pm		
3:30 pm		
4:00 pm		
4:30 pm		
5:00 pm		

REPORT RUBRIC

Skill/Score	Fairness Level	Planning	Presentation
1	NONE	<p>POOR</p> <p>The presenter didn't gather much information about the level of fairness in the situations described. There is no logical sequence to the presentation.</p>	<p>POOR</p> <p>The presenter didn't make good eye contact with the audience. The tone of voice was not varied. I wasn't interested in hearing this presentation.</p>
2	SOME	<p>AVERAGE</p> <p>The presenter made an effort to record examples of unfair and fair treatment and tried to explain them to the audience, but there wasn't enough detail.</p>	<p>AVERAGE</p> <p>The presenter tried to make eye contact and used a different tone of voice to keep the audience interested. The person asked the audience some questions to engage them in the presentation.</p>
3	GOOD	<p>GOOD</p> <p>The presenter gathered information that would help the presentation follow a logical sequence. There was some humor and good opinions presented with good amounts of detail.</p>	<p>GOOD</p> <p>The presenter made good eye contact and used open body language and a varied tone of voice to interest the audience. I wanted to listen to this presentation.</p>
4	WELL DONE!	<p>EXCELLENT</p> <p>The presenter made a great effort to record examples of fair and unfair treatment, and it was interesting to listen to the events. The presenter offered opinions, asked the audience questions, and finished the presentation on a strong note.</p>	<p>EXCELLENT</p> <p>The presenter made excellent eye contact and engaged the audience at every part of the presentation. I wanted to listen and learn more.</p>

WEEKLY JOURNAL

Days of Week	Unfair Treatment	What I Think
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Name: _____ Date: _____