

# Finding Common Ground

This lesson focuses on inclusiveness by finding common ground with others in the class through a hands-on, simple pipe cleaner craft activity.

## Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

## Required Materials

☐ Pipe Cleaners

## 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:

- Express their individuality through a personalized creation.
- Incorporate inclusiveness within the classroom by highlighting similarities with others.
- Explain different ways to find common ground with others in our community.

## 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 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

- Brainstorm ideas individually with English Language Learners.
- Allow students with manual dexterity struggles to work with a partner to assist them in creating their object.
- Create an example object that represents the teacher, to illustrate how the activity works.



## Share

5-7 minutes

Work together to complete a game of snowman (word guessing game). The phrase you will ask the students to solve is, “HOW CAN WE INCLUDE OTHERS?” Rotate through all of the students for choosing letters until the mystery sentence is identified.

- After the sentence is identified, ask volunteers for answers to this question.
- If desired, write the answers on the board below your snowman game.



## Inspire

7-10 minutes

### **Inclusiveness and Fairness**

We have spent several lessons talking about what makes each of us special and highlighting different talents within our class. Today we will talk about how to use inclusiveness to show kindness to others by including them in our activities.

Guide a class discussion on this topic:

- What are some examples of ways we can include others both here in our classroom and within the rest of our school?

Sometimes we don't readily include others in our games, groups, etc. It might be because they are new, they look or act different, or they speak a different language. There are many reasons people might not be inclusive. However, more often than not, it is simply because we don't know them very well!

### **Fairness in Games**

Have you ever been alone at the park or playground and saw some other children playing a game that seemed fun? Sometimes we can ask to join the group, but other times the game they are playing might need an even number of people. Can you think of a game that has a certain number of players? (Foursquare is a good example.) If you want to join this type of game, you might have to wait your turn. You are still being included, you just need to be patient for your turn.

What about when someone asks to join YOUR game? How do you react? Do you practice inclusiveness and fairness and let them play? What about when the game already has enough players? What can you do then? Fairness is treating others in a way that does not favor some over others. Kind friends figure out ways to include anyone who might be left out. When we only choose our favorite friends and leave out others, that can be unkind. How can you be a kind friend?



## Empower

20 minutes

### Step 1:

Provide every student with 3 pipe cleaners. Explain that they must create something that represents themselves with the pipe cleaners. (Example: glasses, ball, pencil, etc.) Allow 5 minutes for creations.

### Step 2:

Divide the class into pairs. Have each person explain their creation to their partner. Emphasize that they must be able to articulate HOW their creation relates directly back to themselves. Example: I made a ball because I play competitive soccer. Allow 5-7 minutes for this sharing exercises.

### Step 3:

Bring the class back together and read the following statements aloud. Have students stand up every time they agree with a statement. They will sit down between each statement. Allow time for students to look around and acknowledge how many others have something in common with them after each statement. Students can stand up more than one time, but they must be able to explain how their creation directly connects to your statement.

- My creation is related to learning.
- My creation is related to sports.
- My creation is related to a personal attribute (how I look/act).
- My creation is related to a talent I have.
- My creation is related to my family.
- My creation is related to my culture and/or faith.



## Reflect

5 minutes

After completing the activity, guide a conversation using the following questions:

- What surprised you most as you stood up?
- What is one new thing you learned about someone in our class?
- How can you show inclusiveness and fairness when someone has different interests than you?

It can be easy to say “include everyone all the time”. However, actually practicing this every day through kind words and gestures can be difficult. Being inclusive and fair means that you are open and inviting to others that may share the same interests!



## Extension Ideas

- At Home Extension: Send home leftover pipe cleaners and have students continue this game with their families. Have them report back about what their loved ones created. They could even bring them in and have the class guess before they explain.
- Make a chart with the 6 areas you cover (Learning, Sports, Personal Attributes, Talents, Family, Culture/Faith). Fill in a bar tallying up how many students created something within each category.

RAK Notebook Prompt (See RAK Notebook Project in the Respect unit for more details):

- Draw a picture of (or tape in) your creation.
- Below your creation, explain how it directly relates to you. How does it describe or represent you?



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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/>