

Inclusive is Kind

This lesson will give students an opportunity to think about what it feels like to be included and what it feels like to be excluded. The lesson introduces the term empathy and incorporates an interactive read-aloud that allows students to analyze a text and prepares them to brainstorm solutions to being left out.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

❏ *The Invisible Boy* by Tracy Ludwig
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fI7dBpzDG8>

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:

- Understand the difference between include and exclude.
- Engage with a text in a dynamic way that checks for comprehension.
- Evaluate the connection between kindness and inclusiveness.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Teamwork is an essential part of teaching. Look around - who is on your team? Are you a cohesive team or could you be more inclusive of others? What could you do to help bring people together more?

Tips for Diverse Learners

- When discussing inclusive vs. exclusive, consider drawing it visually on the board at the same time for those students who need a visual cue: For inclusive, draw a big circle and put the word “inclusive” IN the circle. For “exclusive,” write the word and make the “X” large and sweeping as if to “X” it out.



Share

7-10 minutes

Review the definition of **inclusiveness**: Including others, inviting them in, and welcoming them with open arms.

Tell students that today they are going to hear a story about a boy who was regularly **excluded** by his classmates.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION®

Ask: What do you think “excluded” means?

The story we are going to read is called “The Invisible Boy.”

Ask:

- What does invisible mean?
- What do you think it means for a person to feel invisible?
- Have you ever felt invisible before?

Invite student responses.



Inspire

12-15 minutes

Read: “The Invisible Boy” by Tracy Ludwig

Read Aloud Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fl7dBpzDG8> (6 min)

You can ask the following questions as an interactive read-aloud by stopping the video at the time stamps noted and asking the questions; or, you can have students hear the whole story and then ask the questions.

Ask:

- What happens to Brian at school that makes him feel invisible? (1:50)
- How do you think Brian feels when he is invisible to other people?
- How were the kids in the class being unkind to the new student, Justin? (3:40)
- How did Brian show kindness to Justin? (3:40)
- How did Justin respond when he found the note from Brian? (4:10)
Note how Brian’s kind act inspired Justin to do something kind in return!

The next set of questions ask students to notice how the illustrator is starting to draw Brian’s character (approximately 4:38 onward). When Justin invites Brian to join their group for the special project, Brian moves from gray to colorful. This symbolizes that Brian is starting to feel less invisible.

Ask:

- Look at Brian on this page. What do you see?
- What do you think this means Brian is feeling?

Read until the end of the story

Ask:

- *In the end, why did Brian feel “not so invisible after all”?*

Students should arrive at the conclusion that Brian was finally being included. He had someone to sit with at lunch. Justin was being a kind friend and others were starting to be kind, too.



Empower

15-20 minutes

Going Deeper:

We read a really powerful story about a boy who felt invisible. Have there ever been times when you've felt invisible? No one wants to feel invisible. Everyone wants to be included. Let's take some time now to brainstorm some ideas to help us solve the problem of invisibility in our class!

You can do the following activity as a whole class or invite students to get into groups of 3, like Brian, Justin, and Emilio in the story. Give each group one of the following problems to solve (do not give them the explanations in parentheses).

Problem #1:

You are going to play a game with your friends that requires four people, but there are SIX people who want to play.

- **What is the problem?** (We have more players than spots.)
- **What are some solutions?** (People can rotate in and out. Find two more people to play and have two games going. Think of a new game that everyone can play.)

Problem #2:

You notice that someone often sits alone at lunch time.

- **What is the problem?** (That person might feel lonely. That person might feel excluded. That person might want to sit with someone but doesn't know how to ask to join a table.)
- **What are some solutions?** (Ask the person if you can sit with them. Ask the person to join your table.)

You may want to explain that sometimes people need some personal space or prefer to do certain things, like eat lunch, by themselves. This is okay! Inviting them to be included or offering to join them is a kind act, though, that can make them feel included, even if they decide to eat by themselves.

Problem #3:

You overhear a group of kids talking about a birthday party they are all going to that weekend. You have not been invited to the party.

- **What is the problem?** (You might feel excluded because you are also friends with this group and would like to go to the party. There might not be a problem if you do not like to go to parties or have other plans for that weekend.)
- **What are some solutions?** (Well, you probably should not invite yourself to someone's party, but if you were feeling like you wanted some special time with friends, you could ask your parent or guardian if you could invite some friends over. You could also wish the friend having a party a "Happy birthday!" and mean it! Even if you are a little disappointed that you are not going to a party, you can still choose a kind and caring act by wishing this person a happy day. It will help you feel less disappointed if you do something kind for someone else! Remember that sometimes you don't make the invite list simply because the parents or guardians of the person having the party have

limited the guest list to just one or two friends and family members, so not everyone could be invited, even if the friend wanted to.)

This last “problem” can be tricky for kids, so you may need to guide this discussion.



Reflect

5 minutes

Review the definition of inclusiveness again; see if students can recite it without help.

Then, ask students to spend some time today looking for ways to be inclusive. Maybe they can sit with new friends at lunch time or invite new friends to play with them at recess. Also remind students that if THEY are feeling invisible, they can always ask to join in an activity, ask to sit with friends, or ask to be included. They can also talk to a teacher or trusted adult if they need help being included. It is important to remember that if you are good at being inclusive, others will want to have *you* around, too.



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/>