

# The Ripples of Respectful Communication

This lesson will provide students with the basic skills to communicate differences and disagreements.

## Respect Sub-Concept(s)

Self-Care, Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

35-45 minutes

## Required Materials

Print and cut out copies of the following (one for each student). It is recommended you print the cards on different colored paper to help cue students to the cards statement.

- Statement Card (white paper)
- Turn, Say, Right Card:  
“That is nice, but I disagree!  
I think \_\_\_ because \_\_\_”
- Turn, Say, Right Card:  
“I agree with \_\_\_ because \_\_\_”
- Turn, Say, Right Card:  
“That is cool! Can you tell me more?”
- Blue stones for the Kindness Pond. If stones are not available, use another colored item (Legos, balls, etc.)

## 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:

- Apply communication skills to conversations with disagreements.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Respect for others combines a myriad of social skills and compromise with individuals that we may or may not naturally mesh with. Take time out of your day to mentally prepare for difficult situations. Choose to approach each situation with a positive outlook, focusing on cooperation and collaboration. Your approach to difficult situations will ultimately influence every student you encounter.

### Tips for Diverse Learners

- There is a lot of talking in this activity. A pre-made pasteboard with steps and pictures of what students do in the role play would be helpful for all learners but especially for those who struggle with multi-step instructions or students who have language limitations.
- Another idea is to assign groups based on verbal abilities. This will allow lower level speakers to participate through observation.
- You may also want to divide the group into four so that one can opt out if speaking is not possible, but no one will be left out of the question and answer session.



## Share

5-7 minutes

*Today we are going to talk about communication. Can anyone tell me what communication means?*

Invite student response.

*Communication is about sending and receiving messages. We can communicate through our words, through our actions, through our writing, and through things like art or music.*

*Have any of you been in a situation where you had friendly, kind communication with someone else? I have. (Give a short example.) Does anyone want to share their example?*

*How does it feel when we have kind communication that goes well and where everyone understands what we are saying?*

*Have any of you been in a situation where you had a disagreement with someone? Where you and the other person had different ideas about something or where you weren't understood? Did it feel like friendly, kind communication or did it feel unfriendly and unkind? I have an example of this, too. (Share a short example.) You may not want to ask kids for their personal examples as it could create a situation where a student shares something about another classmate or about his/her family that is uncomfortable.*



## Inspire

12-15 minutes

Did you know that communication, even if you are in a disagreement with someone, can still be friendly and kind? Disagreements do not have to be negative experiences. All communication can be positive if we want it to be.

We can have communication where everyone gets these three things:

1. a chance to be right
2. to have a say
3. to have a turn

We also need to apologize, or say we are sorry, when we say or do something that is unkind. This helps us have respectful, kind communication, even when we disagree.

We are going to read a story all about how to have respectful, kind communication. Listen for the three things we just talked about: Everyone gets a chance to be right, to have a say, and to have a turn. Also listen for the right time to say "I am sorry".

Read Aloud: *Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns We Can All Get Along* by Howard Binkow or [watch the read-aloud on YouTube](#).

Questions:

- *In what ways was Howard's communication with his friends unkind?*
- *How did he let others have a chance to be right?*
- *How did he give others a chance to have a say?*
- *How did he give others a chance to have a turn?*
- *Why did he apologize?*



## Empower

15-20 minutes

This activity will give students a chance to practice giving others a chance to be right, to have a say, and to take a turn.

The “statement cards” have a statement starter on them and students finish the statement. They may disagree about how they finish the statement, but that is okay. That is the point! After the student reads his/her statement card, he/she finishes the statement. Then the other two students have a chance to hold up one of their Turn, Say, Right Cards to help them continue the conversation using guided prompts. Once each person has had a turn to respond, the next student can read his or her statement, and so forth until everyone has read and finished their statement.

Put students in groups of three and give each group the following items (one per student):

- Statement Card and Thank You Card
- Turn, Say, Right Card: “That is nice, but I disagree! I think \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Turn, Say, Right Card: “I agree with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Turn, Say, Right Card: “That is cool! Can you tell me more?”

Students read and finish (with their own opinion) the statement on their Statement Card and the group has a conversation about the statement. Students should use the Turn, Say, Right Cards to help them navigate the conversation. You may want to [model](#) this, which could go as follows:

Teacher: Reads statement card:

Example: “The best flavor of ice cream is \_\_\_\_\_.” (example: chocolate)

Student (prepared) or Teacher Helper #1: Chooses and holds up a Turn, Say, Right Card and reads and finishes the statement.

Example: “That is cool! Can you tell me more?”

Teacher: Provides a brief explanation in response.

Student (prepared) or Teacher Helper #2: Holds up a Turn, Say, Right Card and reads and finishes the statement.

Example: “That is nice, but I disagree! I like strawberry ice cream because it tastes really good with cake!”

Teacher: “Thank you for sharing and taking a turn! I think we are all right!”

Once everyone has had a turn in that conversation, the next person reads his or her statement card, and another discussion happens.



## Reflect

3-5 minutes

How did it feel to have a conversation where everyone had a turn, a say, and a chance to be right, even if you didn't always agree with each other? How did it feel to use those questions to help guide your communication?

Having calm communication, even if we disagree, is a big deal in our classroom! If we speak kindly to one another, it creates a ripple effect that causes others to speak kindly, too. So, whenever I see second graders giving others a chance to have a turn, have a say, and be right, especially when you are disagreeing with that person, I will drop a blue stone into our Kindness Pond. Let's see how many calm, blue stones we can add to our pond this month!



## Extension Ideas

- Teach students about the CALM acronym to help them remain calm in a disagreement (adapted from "[Everybody Gets Mad: Helping Your Child Cope With Conflict](#)"):
  - Calm: Take deep breaths to remain calm during the conversation.
  - Avoid: Avoid interrupting others, avoid name-calling, and avoid saying unkind things about what the other person is saying.
  - Listen: Use whole-body listening so you can truly hear what the other person is saying. Try to see his or her point of view (why he/she thinks the way he/she does). Ask questions if you don't understand what the other person is saying and listen to the answer.
  - Move on: If you are not able to have a calm, kind conversation with the other person, it is best to move on to a new topic or seek help from an adult who might be able to help you finish the discussion.

Invite students to teach this method to their parents and/or siblings at home, and discuss or even role play how to have respectful and calm conversations (even disagreements!) at home. Or, if they do not have an opportunity to teach this method, tell them to use it on their own. Tell students that you will ask about who taught their family how to be "CALM" or who used the method in morning meeting tomorrow.

- To make this a math lesson, you could have a set number of stones for "kind and respectful communication" (say, 50 stones) and do a regular "stone count" to help your students see how many stones are in the pond versus left "on shore" in the container. You can count stones at the end of the week, too, to determine how many more have been dropped.
- To make this a science lesson, you can measure the water line before the stones are dropped and then measure the water line after the stones are dropped to see how much the mass of the stones have displaced the water.



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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/>

The best flavor of ice cream  
is \_\_\_\_\_.

That's nice, but I **disagree!**  
I think \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

I **agree** with \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

That's cool!  
Can you **tell me** more?

...

Okay, thanks!

The best movie is \_\_\_\_\_.

The most exciting school  
subject we have is \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for sharing  
and taking a turn!  
I think we are all right.