

We Are All Wonders!

This lesson introduces the idea of inclusiveness by examining why we might not include people in the first place. Often kids do not include others because they are comfortable and don't want to change it and risk losing that level of comfort; or, they are unsure about including others they do not know or who are different from them. This lesson will remind students that there are unique and special things about everyone and in order to be inclusive, we must take the time to really get to know them.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes.

Required Materials

- The book *We're All Wonders* by R.J. Palacio or use a read-aloud from YouTube.[This one by PV Storytime on YouTube is good.](#)
- I Am a Wonder space helmet handout (one for each student)
- Crayons/Markers - for students

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:

- Explore the concept of inclusiveness through story and self-expression.
- Share something that makes them unique and wonderful to build a level of comfort and understanding within the class.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Identify three people this week to include in some capacity. Lunch time, recess conversations, bus duty. Branch out from your typical social circles at work and try getting to know new people.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Students should write their wonder on their sheet (so the teacher doesn't have to interpret the drawing only), so float the room to assist with needs from emerging writers or ELL students.
- Pay special attention to students who have visible special needs. Help them articulate additional special things about them so to not focus the activity on their limitations but more so on what makes them special (instead of different).



Share

3-5 minutes

Open with asking students if they know what the word **inclusiveness** means. After students have shared, give them the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation's definition: *Including others, inviting them in, and welcoming them with open arms.*

Ask: What are some examples of how we include each other in activities here in our classroom or school?

Prompt responses like including everyone in classroom activities, inviting kids to join them in games at recess, making room for someone at lunch, etc.

Ask: What might cause you to not include someone in these types of activities?

You will likely get a variety of responses here; ultimately drive the conversation to the idea that sometimes we don't include people because we don't know them very well. A personal example here would be useful!



Inspire

5-7 minutes

Talk with students about how sometimes we don't always include others because we don't know them. In some situations, when we are in new places with lots of people we don't know, for example, it is okay to stick with the group of people that we do know. It is important to be with people who are safe friends. At school, though, and in our second grade classroom especially, it is important to know everyone so that we are comfortable including everyone. Everyone has something wonderful about them that we may not know about. We are all wonders!

Read: "We're All Wonders," by R. J. Palacio

Read Aloud Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lWOuoAtXGE> (2.5 min)

After the story, **ask:**

- What do we know about the main character in this book?

Responses will likely include that he doesn't look like the other kids.

Encourage responses that also discuss how he likes "ordinary" things like other kids. Help them focus on what makes him different and the same.

Going Deeper: You can have the following discussion with your students about getting to know other people:

It seems like people did not take time to really get to know this boy because of how he looked, and so they did not include him or treat him with respect or caring. Have you ever heard the saying, "Never judge a book by its cover"? This means that we cannot truly know someone or something until we ask questions and learn about that person or thing. Look around the room. Do you think you know every wonderful thing about each of your classmates? There are probably some wonders that you don't know about.



Empower

10-15 minutes

This activity will help the class get to know each other even better than they already do.

Pass out “I am a Wonder” space helmet handout.

Instructions:

- Ask students to write and draw something that makes them a wonder (special, unique). Ideally this is something that their classmates may not already know.
 - Ideas for Students:** Something you enjoy doing, a special talent that you have, a special gift that you treasure, or something you have to do every day for a reason (like wear a retainer to keep your teeth straight or use an inhaler so you can breathe easier). It could also be a place you have been or an experience you have had that helped make you, you! Again, try to make it something that not everyone already knows about you!
- Tell students NOT to put their name on their space helmet and to try and color/draw on their helmets without their neighbors seeing too much.

When everyone is done, collect the helmets.



Reflect

7-10 minutes

Once everyone is done with their drawing, see if the class can guess whose helmet belongs to whom.. After a quick vote, ask the “real wonder” to stand up. You might make this even more empowering by telling students to say “I am the Wonder!” or “I am a Wonder!” when they stand. Hand the drawing to the student who claimed it and then move on to the next one.

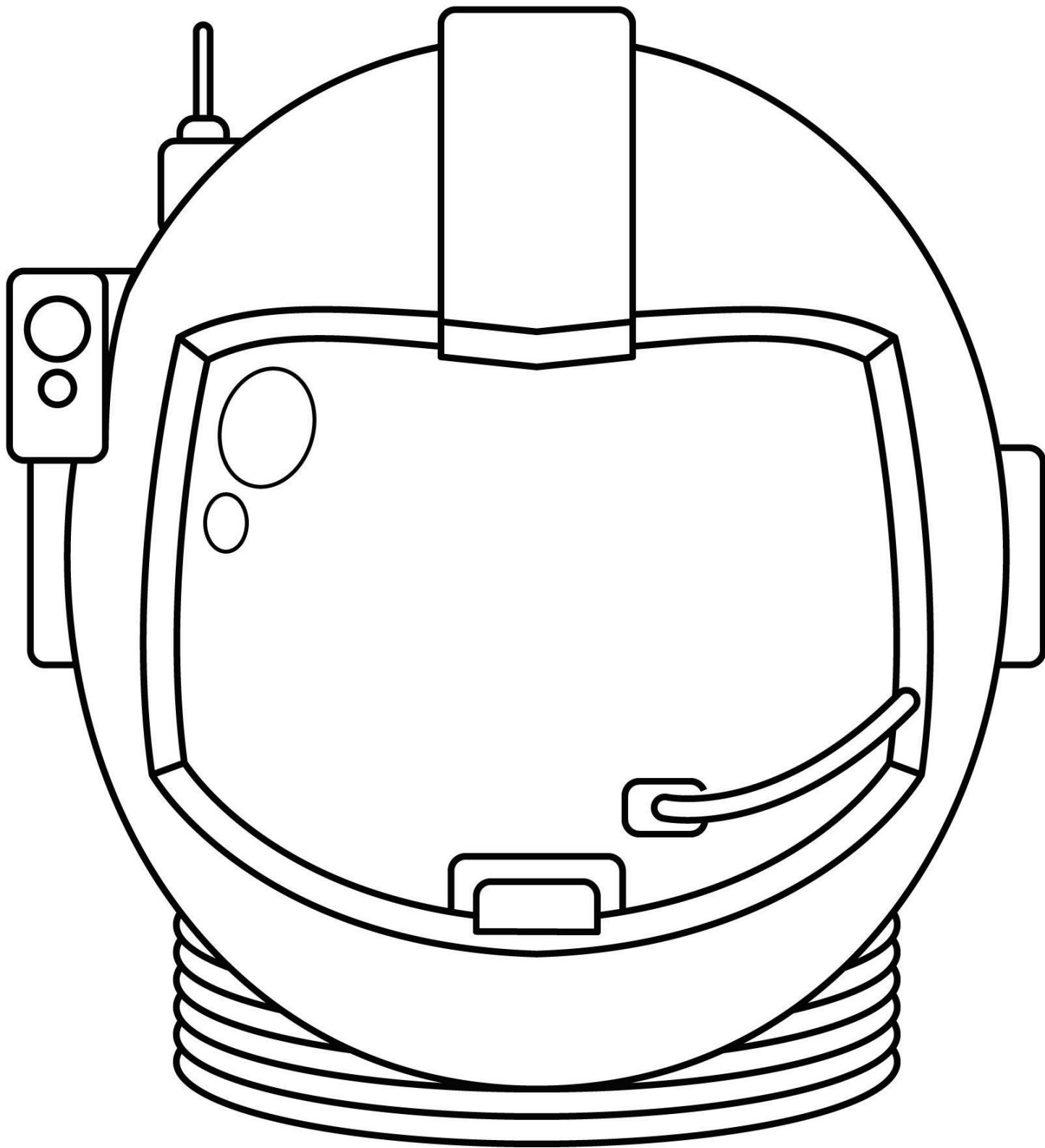
After the last helmet (which could be yours to help eliminate students from immediately knowing who the last student to be called is), remind students that everyone has unique and wonderful qualities about them. It is important to truly get to know someone so that you can include them. Everyone is a wonder and deserves to be included.



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/>



I AM A WONDER

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
FOUNDATION®