

# 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.

**Caring Sub-Concepts**

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 be able to:

- 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**

Being new is always hard, no matter the age. How comfortable do you feel joining in? This week, practice joining a new group during lunch or recess. Expand your horizons.

**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

Ask students if they can remember the definition of inclusiveness: Including others, inviting them in, and welcoming them with open arms.

**Class Discussion:** Ask the following questions to generate a discussion about inclusiveness:

- Have you ever been alone at the park or on the playground at recess and saw other children playing a game that seemed fun? Did you ask to join in? Why or why not?

Sometimes we can ask to join the group, but other times the game they are playing might need an even number of people. (Foursquare is a good example.) Remind students that if they want to join this type of game, they

might have to wait your turn. They are still being included, but they need to be patient.

- 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?

You may need to discuss the definition of fairness here. A good definition to use is that 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 and to make things as fair as possible. When we only choose our favorite friends and leave out others, that can be unkind and unfair.



## Inspire

7-10 minutes

### How We Can Include Others

After the initial class discussion about inclusiveness, 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 (or until you have built a snowman).

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



## Empower

20 minutes

Students are going to do a simple craft that allows them to create something that represents themselves. Ultimately they will use this as a way to observe similarities with their classmates, finding common ground.

### Instructions

#### 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 exercise.

#### 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

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOUNDATION®

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 the statement.

- My creation is related to school or learning.
- My creation is related to sports.
- My creation is related to music or theater.
- 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 an activity I enjoy.
- My creation is related to my culture and/or faith.

If anyone did not stand up, invite them to stand up at the end and share their creation and identify what bigger theme it might be connected to - see if others also connect to that theme. Ensure everyone gets a chance to stand and share at least once.

## 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 “We 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.
- **At School Extension:** Make a chart with the areas you covered (Learning, Sports, Personal Attributes, Talents, Family, Activities, Culture/Faith, Other). Fill in a bar tallying up how many students created something within each category.



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/>