

Including Yourself

This lesson helps students realize the value of not only being inclusive of others but also of being inclusive of themselves. It is hard to include others if we feel like we, ourselves, are being excluded. This lesson is designed to give students strategies to ask to be included, to try new things, and to take some risks and succeed.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- A hat or bucket to hold the role-play strips
- Role play scenarios cut up into strips (see below)

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.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Recognize the value of including ourselves in activities as a means toward including others.
- Practice expressions of self-inclusion.

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

- If you aren't comfortable letting students pair up on their own (as you want them to pair up with someone they don't know well or regularly work with), pair students ahead of time so the role-plays are balanced with students who are eager to role play and those who are more hesitant. This is a great way for students to model and teach one another and build confidence, not to mention build new relationships.

Share

3-5 minutes

Open with a review of the definition of **inclusiveness**. See if students can recite the definition without help: *Including others, inviting them in, and welcoming them with open arms.*

Invite students to give examples of how they have seen inclusiveness modeled at school this week.



Inspire

7-10 minutes

We are now going to shift the perspective of inclusiveness to inviting *others* to get involved and inviting *ourselves* to get involved. Use the following discussion starters to generate a whole class discussion:

Let's talk a little bit about why we might choose not to try something new or ask to be included in something that we really want to do or try. If we want to be included in something, sometimes we need to ask to be included rather than wait to be asked. This can be uncomfortable, though.

Ask:

- What are some reasons why you might decide not to try something that you really want to try, or not ask to be included in something, even if you really wanted to be included?

Invite student response.

Going deeper:

Sometimes we need to practice speaking kindly, respectfully, and inclusively to ourselves to remind ourselves that we deserve to be included and try new things.

Practice this kind of positive self-talk with your students now. Brainstorm some phrases they could say to themselves when they want to be included or try something new but feel nervous to try or speak up. Write these phrases on the board and spend a few minutes having students saying them out loud together.

Examples:

- “I think I would really enjoy that!”
- “I know I would make a positive difference!”
- “I am a good teammate.”
- “It doesn’t hurt to try!”
- “If it doesn’t go well, it’s ok.”
- “I deserve to have new and fun experiences.”

Remind students that we should not count ourselves out so quickly or be afraid to join up, speak out, make friends, or share our time or ideas. It will be hard to include others if we don’t think to include ourselves.



Empower

10-15 minutes

Students are now going to practice speaking up to include themselves in some role play situations.

Instructions:

- Let students get into pairs and challenge them to pair up with someone they don’t usually work with (teachers may want to pre-arrange this if they don’t feel students will be able to do this effectively).

- Cut out the role play strips below. Ensure there is a mix of scenarios and enough for one per student. *Create or modify scenarios as needed.
- Have students pick a scenario out of the hat/bucket.
- Students will role play their scenario with their partner. When each student has role-played the scenario they drew, they switch scenarios with their partner and the other person gets to role-play the situation.
- Remind students to use positive self-talk to help build courage and commitment before responding to their scenario. Encourage partners to engage back with the student to make the situation more realistic.



Reflect

3-5 minutes

When students are finished with their role plays, bring the class back together to debrief the experience.

Ask:

- What was the hardest part of standing up for yourself and asking to be included?
- What was the easiest part?
- How might positive self-talk help you speak up and ask to be included?

Remind students not to count themselves out or let anyone tell them that they can't play, can't join, can't share, or can't succeed. They can! Sometimes we need to go toward an opportunity.. The opportunity may not always come to us.

Challenge students to look for ways to speak up and ask to be included in things this week. If they want to join a game during recess, they should ask to join! If they want to sit by new friends at lunch, they should invite those friends to sit with them. Help them see they can create their own opportunities to include and be included.



Extension Ideas

- This could be turned into a science lesson where you look at a diagram or model of the brain; you can discuss the limbic system and cerebral cortex of the brain and how the emotion center and logic center work and impact thoughts and actions. This can help students understand where their fear of trying new things comes from vs. the logic that tells them they could actually succeed if they tried.
- A home extension could include making parents aware of the students' attempts at trying new things and overcoming a fear of failure or a sense of isolation. Give parents tips to help encourage their students to meet up with friends, try out for community events, volunteer, etc.



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/>

Role-play slips

You are new in school. When you arrive in the cafeteria with your lunch, you see all the tables are full except for one. *What do you do?* Practice asking to sit in that spot.

You have never played soccer but you want to try it this year. When you get to the first practice, you realize you don't have the right equipment (like shin guards and cleats), and everyone there has clearly played before. *What do you tell yourself so that you stay and give your best effort?* Practice that now. *What do you do so you feel more included at the next practice?*

You really want to try out for the school play but are afraid you will forget your lines. *What do you do or say to yourself to keep yourself from not trying out?* Practice that now. *What would you say to yourself if you did actually forget your lines?*

There is a group of kids at recess that are playing four-square. You love four-square and want to play, but they haven't asked you to join. *What would you do or say to be included?* Practice what you would do or say.

It seems like kids in your class are always getting together after school and hanging out. You don't feel like you are being included and this makes you feel sad. *What can you do to be included and inclusive, and also feel better and maybe even make more friends?* Practice with your partner.