

Introduce the lesson

Today all of you who have birthdays in April, May, June, July, August, September, and October will go outside for recess today. The rest of you will stay inside to work on some extra math problems. Because you are older, (birthdays in November, December, January, February, and March), you can handle more math practice.

How does that make those of you staying in feel? (Mad. It's not fair- **I PURPOSELY PUT PREJUDICED INDIVIDUAL IN THIS GROUP**).

That's right; it's not fair that I've made the judgment that older students should stay in because they can handle more math. I've made that judgment without really knowing or checking in to find out if ALL older students could benefit from extra math practice. That's called prejudice.

Write prejudice on the board.

The root of the word "prejudice" is "judge." The prefix "pre" meaning "before" is added to the root word "judge." When people have prejudice, they judge or form an opinion about a person before even knowing him or her. It's unfair, hurtful, and disrespectful to form opinions about people without getting to know them.

Gather students in a group and introduce them to their new "classmate. (Give the figure a name such as Greenie or Bluey to avoid any association with a real person.) **Explain that new students often have difficulty fitting in because they are entering a situation where groups of students have already formed bonds of friendship. Point out that some people will automatically put up barriers to a new student, deciding quickly – without even trying to get to know him or her – that they dislike the new student.**

Ask students to imagine that Greenie (for example) has just come into a classroom where bonds already have formed; **the atmosphere is very unwelcoming. Invite students, one at a time, to say something mean to Greenie.** They will have to use their imaginations, because Greenie has no specific features they can pick on. The teacher might even start the ball rolling by saying something like "We don't want you're here, Greenie, or **"We don't like people who are different from us" or "You don't even have hair - baldy, oh, I mean Greenie.** Each time a mean thing is said to Greenie, forcefully rip off a piece of Greenie's body and hands it to the person who made the comment.

When ripping, rip large chunks: it will need to be obvious to students where each chunk fits into the whole if they are to piece Greenie back together.

After 5- 8 students have had a chance to say something mean to Greenie, its time to start taping Greenie back together. **Invite each student who said something mean about Greenie to come up to reconnect, the student must touch the scars and apologize (Using the mean words in their apology) to Greenie for the mean thing that was said.** (You might have younger students model in advance some of the words they might say when making an apology.)

When the torn body is fully repaired – no matter how hard the students have tried to piece Greenie back together – Greenie will not look the same as when they met him/her for the first time. Ask questions to lead students to the understanding that, **although some of the damage has been repaired, Greenie will never be exactly the same. His feelings were hurt, and the scars remain. Chances are those scars will never go away.**

Hang Greenie on a wall in the classroom as a reminder of the power words have to hurt. Greenie's presence will serve a constant reminder and reinforcement of a vivid lesson in kindness, respect and tolerance. Encourage the students to say kind things to Greenie each day.

Assessment

Have students write a paragraph to explain in their own words what lessons they learned from this activity/lesson OR **write a letter of apology to someone they hurt (e.g. a friend that they were prejudiced towards).**

Follow-up with book How To Lose
All Your Friends

By accepting differences and finding similarities we can avoid prejudice and respond to others in a respectful way.

Show student picture of Yasaman and Olivia from “Accepting Differences” Lesson from 12/19/13.

In our lesson on “Accepting Differences” you learned that Yasaman was from Pakistan. She wore different clothing, she came from another country, English wasn’t her first language, and she had a different religion than many others at her school.

Does anyone remember why students would sometimes tease Yasaman? (She’s different. They don’t understand how she acts. They don’t consider how she feels).

How did this make Yasaman feel? (Sad, hurt, embarrassed).

Then we learned that the two girls had many similarities (Both are girls, both are 3rd graders, both like art). And they both became friends when Yasaman showed Olivia how to create Pakistani art designs.

What could Olivia say to the other students at school who tease or laugh at Yasaman? (Teasing hurts people. It’s against the rules! People deserve to be treated with respect. Think about how you’d feel if we laughed at you!)

Even if you become friends with the person who is different from you in some way, remember that teasing and making hurtful comments will likely result in you **LOSING A FRIEND!**

POINT TO EMPATHY POSTER

Remember- having empathy helps you understand things from someone else’s perspective. This helps you accept and appreciate others’ differences. Accepting people’s differences is respectful.

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School Social Worker/Guidance Counselor**

Lesson: Words Can Hurt

Grades

- Pre-k – Gr. 5

Brief Description

This powerful activity illustrates how words can hurt---or heal.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Discuss what it might be like to be the new person in a group or class and show Empathy.
- Define prejudice and explore how all people can be different, yet still have many things in common.
- Choose the correct words for an apology.
- Learn a vivid lesson about how unkind words can hurt others.
- Write (journaling) a paragraph to explain what they learned from the lesson.

Keywords:

Prejudice
Different
Accept

Tolerance
Similar
Appreciate

Feelings
Self-esteem
Individual

Mean
Bully
Respect

Materials:

Bright colored construction paper is best

Lesson Plan

Before the lesson.

Using bright colored construction paper, trace and cut out a life-size silhouette/outline of a person. To avoid gender or race specific figure, you might want to cut the figure from green or blue paper.