

# Inclusiveness

This week we start the Inclusiveness unit by examining our school environment. Is it as inclusive as it could be? If not, students will eventually work on an action plan to help make the school kinder and more welcoming. The mini lessons also dive into bullying; specifically how it impacts our ability to be inclusive. We also look at the difference between bullying and teasing and students are invited to self-reflect on where they feel most included and most like they belong.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

**Whole Class Lesson**  
30 minutes



### Inclusive School Discussion

In this first lesson, students have a big conversation about where their school does well at being inclusive and where it could improve. This teacher-led discussion can help form the foundation for the unit project where students create an action plan to develop a kinder, more inclusive school environment. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

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## Mini Lessons

**For Small Groups**  
15 minutes



### Bullying vs. Teasing

One thing that makes an environment feel instantly exclusive and unwelcoming is bullying. But, sometimes it's hard to know if you are witnessing or experiencing bullying or teasing, or if you are engaging in bullying versus teasing. What is the difference between bullying and teasing and how do you know? In small groups, have a discussion about these two things and then identify situations in school that would be considered teasing and situations that would be considered bullying. How should teasing be handled in school? How should bullying be handled? Have the small groups report back to the larger group.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### What to do About Bullying

Discuss with your partner bullying or teasing that goes too far that you see in your school. Is bullying a problem in your school or on the school bus? If yes, what are some solutions you can think of to help stop bullying in its tracks? Have one partner take notes. Return to the larger group and share what you discussed.

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### **How I Belong**

Belonging is something we all need and want, and it's different from simply "fitting in". Belonging is the deep sense that you are where you are meant to be, doing the things you are meant to do, with people who see you for who you are. Belonging is a wonderful gift! Think about what makes you feel like you belong. What are the sights, smells, people, things, activities, and settings that make you feel calm, happy, and that you belong? You can write about this or draw it out as a picture. Then, write or draw how you also make others feel like they belong. When you are done, evaluate what you just wrote or drew and then LOOK for these things today. Surround yourself with what not only makes you feel like you belong, but also what make others feel like they belong, too.

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### **Stopping Bullying with Tech**

How does technology empower people to bully others? What are some ways you can stand up for someone if you see them bullied online? What are some ways you can protect yourself from being bullied online?

# Inclusive School Discussion

In this first lesson, students have a big conversation about where their school does well at being inclusive and where it could improve. This teacher-led discussion can help form the foundation for the unit project where students create an action plan to develop a kinder, more inclusive school environment.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- ☐ Whiteboard, smartboard, or other note taking device/materials

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Evaluate their school environment for inclusiveness and for fostering a sense of belonging among students.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Inclusiveness Unit! This is a great unit for kids at this age because they are starting to form their identities, explore new activities and friendship circles, and navigate new thoughts and emotions. These things combined can make students feel either lost or cling too tightly to what is familiar. In so doing, they may become exclusive of others and not even know it. As you help students navigate the concept of inclusiveness, think about how inclusive your classroom and school are. Do you welcome new students and give them adequate support to be as successful as the students who have been there since Pre-K? Are there clubs or teams for a variety of student interests? Do you see students leaving others out? Do you see teachers leaving other teachers out? Do you practice inclusiveness or do you, too, gravitate toward the same group of people? There is nothing wrong with having friends or establishing familiar routines, but are there opportunities to invite those who seem left out? Are there ways to assert your own ideas or work a bit more independently? How can you model inclusiveness to your students, especially if you notice them being somewhat exclusive? Start today by simply observing your routines and relationships. What are some healthy patterns and where could you practice greater inclusiveness?



## Share

5-7 minutes

Welcome to the Inclusiveness Unit! I think you all know what it means to include or to be included, right? It means to be a part of something, to belong and to invite others to belong. It can feel very lonely when we don't belong, and if our goal is to be kinder people, then we also have to be inclusive. It fits with respect and caring, right? If you respect and care for someone, you will work to include them and to help them find a place where they belong.

Where is somewhere you feel you belong? Take some time to think about this and when we'll do some sharing. (Invite students to share. This could be done popcorn-style to keep it moving and light.)

What are some words to describe the feeling of not belonging or being excluded? (Invite student responses; popcorn-style works well here, too.)



## Inspire

3-5 minutes

Our goal in our school and in this classroom is to have an inclusive environment where everyone belongs and no one is left out. This means we have no room for bullying or behaviors that intentionally exclude people. But, in order to make what we call an inclusive culture, we need to understand where we are excluding people and then work to fix it.

We also need to recognize when things are fair or unfair and equitable or inequitable. Let's review these terms:

What is fairness? (Invite student response.)

And what is equity? (Invite student responses; they might struggle more with this term.) A good way to define equity is this: Ensuring everyone has just what they need to be successful. Sometimes fairness and equity are confused because it might seem "fair" if everyone has the same things (same teacher, same homework, and same books), but that doesn't always ensure that everyone has the same ability to be successful.

These terms are part of being inclusive because if things are not fair or not equitable, then people will be left out. They will feel like they don't belong and that is not what we want.



## Empower

15 minutes

So, let's think about how we approach inclusion, fairness, and equity in our school. Remember, too, as we go through these questions that we are not looking to name names or single people or groups out. Think about our school holistically; being inclusive is everyone's job and anything that makes us exclusive is not the fault or sole responsibility of any one person or group. If one person excludes another, then we all do. So, keep that in mind as we discuss; do not single anyone out. This is about all of us. Also, the ideas we discuss here will help us for our final unit project, so we will take notes.

NOTE: Take notes on the board or smartboard or have a student notetaker assist with this. You may also want to record this session if that is possible. To encourage more student participation, and if students have access to computers/tablets, you might consider using a [backchannel chat strategy here](#). Finally, students may find they don't know the answers to the questions; note this so they can be focal questions when you work on the final project, which will be to create an action plan to make the school kinder and more inclusive.

- What do we do to welcome new students/families into our school?
- What do we do for students who are being bullied at school?
- Do we have students who sit alone at lunch time or who hang out by themselves a lot?
- Do we have cliques in our school and, if so, is this a problem?
- Does everyone have an equal opportunity to succeed in our school?
- What do we do well at school to help everyone feel like they belong?

- Do we have accommodations for students who have unique physical abilities, or is getting around our school a struggle for people?
- Are the rules applied fairly to everyone?
- What is something unique we could do to make our school more inclusive?



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

So, as you think about the things we talked about today and about how we can be more inclusive at school, be on the look-out for opportunities to be more inclusive yourself. What can you do to include others? This doesn't mean you have to be best friends with everyone; I know that can be emotionally and physically exhausting. Also, it isn't about being the most popular or taking care of anyone else's problems. It's simply about being kind and accepting and inviting of others. You can do this and still maintain a healthy personal boundary.