

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SOCIAL SKILLS LESSON PLAN

CASEL COMPETENCY: SOCIAL AWARENESS

SOCIAL SKILL: APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

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BOOK INFORMATION

Book title: *It's Okay to be Different*

Author: Todd Parr

Publisher and date of publication: Little, Brown and Company

ISBN: 978-0-316-04347-2

Number of pages: 30

Reading level or interest level:

BOOK SYNOPSIS

The narrator explains many ways it is OK to be different, from missing some teeth, to talking about your feelings, to being adopted. You are special and important and there is no one else just like you.

This book addresses the social skill of appreciating diversity through exposure to a wide variety of individual differences. Some of these differences are common and some are not.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is for students to understand that their differences make them interesting, just as others' differences make them interesting. However, it is also important to understand that sometimes we are more alike than we may realize.

LESSON MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION

K-2 project materials (for each child)

- A piece of large white construction paper for each student
- Water color or tempera paint
- Cups of water
- Paint brushes

3-6 advance preparation:

- Write down experiences that will show individual similarities and differences from the group

KEY VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

Diversity: Degree of differences in identifying features among the members of a defined group

Empathy: The ability to understand and share feelings of others

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Show students the front cover of the book. Ask them to point out how the people in the pictures appear to be different from each other. Explain that sometimes we may also appear different. Explain that our personalities, families, and interests may differ from others' and that is OK, even good. Explain that this book describes many differences that are OK.

READ THE BOOK

POST READING DISCUSSION

- Ask there any kids in the book who reminded you of yourself?
- Were there any kids that reminded them of people they know or have seen?

Show the picture of the fish looking at the hook.

- Why do you think it is okay to say “no” to bad things?
- If other people are doing it, does that mean that you have to do it too?

Show the picture of the girl with the toilet paper at her feet.

- How many of you have ever felt embarrassed?

Explain that many of us are embarrassed when we feel different. But, it is OK for us to be different. Everybody feels uncomfortable sometimes. Appreciating differences helps others feel more comfortable and accepted. It also helps to understand that we have more similarities than we have differences.

POST READING ACTIVITY

Grades K-2: Ask students to paint pictures of themselves that show something unique about them. This could be their appearance, family, interests, etc. Ask a few students to share what they painted. Hang the pictures up in the classroom.

Grades 3-6: Have students stand in a circle. Explain that you will name different experiences that students may have experienced. If it applies to them, they should step into the middle of the circle. Explain that sometimes there may be one person who takes a step and sometimes there will be many. Explain that this is a chance for us to understand similarities and differences. This requires courage, so let’s show kindness and support for our classmates.

Examples of experiences:

Step into the middle if:

- You have freckles
- You misplace things
- You have siblings
- You are an only child
- You live with one parent or a step parent
- You have visited a museum
- You like broccoli
- Your favorite subject is math
- Your hair is red
- You like reading a book better than playing a game

Create additional examples that fit the needs of your group of children.

CLOSURE

Explain that differences make people interesting. Even when we have not had the same experiences, we should try to appreciate others’ differences and show kindness and empathy. However, even though we are each unique, we are also more alike than we realize.

**Diversity: the art of
thinking independently
together.**

— Malcolm Forbes