

Inclusiveness

This week we introduce the concept of inclusiveness and what it means to include others intentionally. We also take time for self-reflection and to assess how inclusive we are both as a class and as individuals. The technology lesson asks students to evaluate how social media impacts our levels of inclusivity and the partner lesson offers a nice icebreaker opportunity for students to get to know each other better.

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



Friendship vs. Clique: Evaluating our Level of Inclusiveness

This lesson helps students understand the differences between friendships and cliques and gives them an opportunity to evaluate their own interaction with friend groups to see if they are being as inclusive as they think they are. This lesson helps students see how friendships and cliques can share characteristics, making it hard to see when a friend group has turned into an exclusive clique. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

Mini Lessons

For Small Groups
15 minutes



How Are We Doing?

In what ways does our classroom promote an inclusive culture? Where could it do a better job? Have students discuss this in small groups and then engage in whole class sharing.

For Partners
15 minutes



Introduction Speeches

Give each student an interview sheet [or post the following questions on the smart board or whiteboard] and have them draw a partner at random. Give them about 7 minutes to interview each other and then return to the whole group so each person can “introduce” their partner to the rest of the group. Ask students to pay attention to the new things they learn about their classmates; they may find a new connection and opportunity to be inclusive of one another.

Interview Questions:

- Full name
- Birthday
- Favorite school subject
- Favorite hobby or interest
- Interesting fact that you don't think your classmates already know
- Favorite way to include others in something you are doing

For Individuals
15 minutes



Self-Reflection

Have students journal about the following questions:

- In what ways do I feel included with my peers at school or in my community?
- In what ways do I feel excluded?
- In what ways am I inclusive of others?
- In what ways do I exclude others?
- What are some action steps I can take to include myself more with others as well as be more inclusive of others?

Technology-Focused
15 minutes



FOMO & Social Media

How does social media make us feel both included and excluded? What is FOMO (fear of missing out) and do you think social media helps create this? Have you experienced it? You could introduce some supportive literature, depending on your student group. Here are some articles that may be of interest:

- [Feeling Lonely? Too Much Time on Social Media May Be Why](#) - NPR
- [Why Social Makes Us Even More Lonely](#) - Social Media Week
- [People Who Use Social Media a Lot are Isolated](#) - The Independent

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Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

Required Materials

- ❑ Clique Survey (can print copies or simply read the questions/KEY out loud)

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:

- Define inclusiveness.
- Compare and contrast friendship and clique.
- Evaluate levels of inclusiveness both socially and personally.

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 doing so, 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 is and how inclusive the school is. 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? Naturally, 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! This unit is exciting because we are going to do some really fun activities and have some good discussions about what it means to be inclusive and how we can be more inclusive as students and as a school.

Here are the big questions we are going to address in this unit: How can we be inclusive as 6th graders? What is the difference between fairness and equity? How does the media impact our feelings about being either included or excluded? How can we stand up for ourselves and others? And how can we make our school an inclusive, fair, and equitable place?



Inspire

15 minutes

We are going to start this week just with inclusiveness, though. Can someone tell us what the word inclusiveness means? (Invite student responses.)

Good! I want everyone to stop and think about one time either today or sometime in the last week that you either included someone or where you were included, and think about how that made you feel. (Invite student responses.)

Yes! When we include others or when we are included ourselves, we feel good! It feels good to show kindness through inclusiveness, just like it feels good when we show or receive respect or caring.



Empower

15 minutes

Today we are going to talk about the difference between friendships and cliques. Cliques are pretty common in middle school and you might notice this as you progress through these middle grades and into high school.

Let's first talk about what friendship means and what a clique is. (Invite student responses.) Now, let's talk about the differences and similarities between friend groups and cliques.

Draw a 2-circle Venn Diagram on the board (so that there is a common center oval); in the left circle, write friendship and in the right, write clique. Survey the students for the characteristics of both groups and take notes in the diagram. Pay special attention to where the two intersect or share characteristics and put those in the center circle. The aim is to demonstrate how sometimes you might not realize you are in or becoming part of a clique. What might begin as a friendship can get so exclusive that you end up leaving others out, which is the opposite of inclusiveness!

When you are done diagramming the similarities and differences between friendships and cliques, have students take the following survey, adapted from the clique survey from Teaching Tolerance (<https://www.tolerance.org/>). You can print out the survey questions and key for each student or simply have students write down their A, B, or C answers on a scratch piece of paper as you read each question out loud. You can read the key out loud at the end, too.

1. I _____ sit with the same people at lunch every day.
A) always
B) sometimes
C) never
2. When someone I've never talked to before speaks to me, I feel _____.
A) annoyed
B) unsure
C) excited
3. When a teacher asks me to find a partner in class, I look for _____.
A) a friend
B) someone I know but don't necessarily hang out with
C) someone I don't know very well or rarely talk to
4. When making a decision, I usually listen to _____.
A) my friends
B) my family
C) myself
5. My group of friends usually _____ other people.
A) makes fun of
B) ignores
C) welcomes
6. If we have a new person joined our class, I _____.
A) don't introduce myself until the teacher asks me to
B) introduce myself after I see my friends introduce themselves
C) introduce myself right away
7. If I can't be on a team with my friends, _____.
A) I probably won't participate
B) I still participate but don't usually enjoy the activity as much as I would if my friends were there
C) still participate because I like getting to know new people
8. If my friends like something or want to do something, I _____.
A) always like or want to do the same thing no matter what
B) usually like or want to do the same thing because I usually like/do the same things as my friends
C) often like or want to do the same thing but only after making a personal decision about it
9. If I see someone sitting alone at lunch, I would _____.
A) sit with my friends without really thinking twice about it
B) feel bad for the person who is alone but sit with my friends anyway
C) sit with the person or invite the person to come and sit with me and my friends

10. If my closest friend isn't at school, I feel _____.
- A) lost because now I have no one to hang with
 - B) disappointed but fine because there are other people to hang with
 - C) fine because there are so many other people to hang out with at school

See next page for answer key.

KEY

If you answered mostly As, you may want to examine your friendship group and ask yourself if you're in a clique or if you, personally, are being exclusive of other people because you are too tightly attached to your friends (or maybe you stick to your friends because you have felt excluded by others, which is understandable!). It is great to have close friends and to feel a part of a group, but you might be living your life too dependent on what your friends do, say, or think. If you feel like you are mostly influenced by your friends rather than by what you personally think or want to do, how could you be a little more independent and inclusive of other friendship opportunities? You have some great opportunities to grow here!

If you answered mostly Bs, your friendship group sounds pretty tight but is sometimes open to letting others in. It also sounds like you have your own thoughts and opinions, but tend to mostly follow the crowd. Are there ways you could be even more inclusive or independent? Would you be comfortable expanding your friend group if you had the chance, or speaking up if you have a different idea than your friends? There could be an opportunity to grow here!

If you answered mostly Cs, your friendship group sounds really inviting and everyone is welcome! It also sounds like you are comfortable being friends with many people and are not concerned with being friends with only a certain group. You also have your own thoughts and ideas and aren't afraid to make your own choices. This ability to work with and be friends with a variety of people will serve you well in life! Look for other opportunities to be inclusive; there could be someone who could use a kind word or an invitation to join you at lunch.



Reflect

5-7 minutes

Have everyone personally review their own results and score themselves using the key (you can read the key out loud if you did not print out the survey for students to individually complete). They can either discuss their results with the group or personally journal about their results, considering if they agree with the results, if they are surprised by the results, and if they are inspired to make any changes based on the results. Also, remind students that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and that a "Mostly A" or "Mostly B" result does not mean they are not inclusive. It is simply an invitation for students to think about how they treat others and how they assert themselves. They may find, upon self-reflection, that they are pretty dependent on other kids and could benefit from expanding their friend group or capacity for independent thought and action.

Also remind students that this whole unit will be about learning how we can be more inclusive and more open to others (even if we think we are really inclusive already), so encourage them to begin evaluating where they are being exclusive and don't even know it and then begin taking steps toward being more inclusive.