

Character and Life Skills: **Fairness**

Lesson Title: **Fair or Unfair?**

Grade Level: **3-5**



Project and Purpose

Students discuss the differences between and the emotions associated with the concepts of “fair” and “unfair” and design a visual representation of a scenario where fairness is seen.

Essential Question

Why is it important to show fairness?

Materials

- Pens, pencils
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Construction paper or card stock

Procedure

Introduction

Start by asking students what the word “fairness” means to them and create a group definition.

Direct Instruction (I do)

1. Share with students a time when you were treated unfairly. Make sure you touch on how it made you feel. Discuss the details of why you thought it was unfair and if anyone else saw your point of view at the time.
2. Ask a students to share experiences they had where they were treated unfairly with a partner.

Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Divide students into two groups. (**Note:** some teachers split groups by types of shoes, socks, single syllable names, or some other innocuous reasonreason that will not cause huge controversy.) Direct the students in each group to sit in different areas of the room.
2. Choose one of the groups to favor. Without explaining why, give everyone in your favored group a treat of some kind. Explain to the class that only one group will get the treat. That same group will be the only ones to get other special privileges (such as extra recess time, being first in line, etc.) Students in the other group likely will protest.
3. After a few minutes (or until someone in the other group says, “that’s not fair!”), stop the exercise.
4. Ask students if they know what determined whether they were in the favored group or the non-favored group. Encourage all guesses and share the answer.

Independent Practice (You do)

1. Have students pair with a partner from the opposite group and discuss the following questions:
 - How did you feel during the exercise? Do you think you would have felt differently if you had been the one getting the treats and special privileges than if you had been the one not getting the treats and special privileges?
 - Do you think that it was “fair” or “unfair” that some kids got treats and other special privileges? Why or why not? If not fair, what would have made it fair? Would it be fair to give the treats to students who earned it? Would it be fair if all students got the treats? Would it be fair if you picked 10 students names out of a hat to get the treats. Why or why not?
2. Give students a piece of construction paper and art materials. Divide the paper in half by drawing a line down the middle. On the left side of the paper, draw a picture of something you think would be unfair. It can be something that is unfair in class, in your family, on a team or in your community. Then on the right side of the paper, draw a picture of how that same situation could change to become fair. Write a sentence under each picture that describes what is “unfair” and what is “fair.”

Conclusion

Give each student time to share their fairness illustrations with the rest of the class. Create a class book with all of the students’ contributions to be placed in the class library.

Vocabulary

disappointed (adj.)

Definition: being unhappy because something did not happen or was not as good as expected

Context: Juanita was disappointed when she did not get the puppy she wanted for her birthday.

fairness (n.)

Definition: the act of treating people the same; the quality of treating everyone equally

Context: To demonstrate a sense of fairness to all of her students, Mrs. Parsons gave each student one free homework pass at the beginning of the school year.

motto (n.)

Definition: a short statement that expresses the aims or beliefs of a person, school, organization, etc.

Context: Our team’s motto, “There’s no ‘I’ in ‘team,’” reflects our commitment to teamwork and working together.