



Lesson Time: 20–30 minutes

## Respecting Differences

### Objectives & Outcomes

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will make a connection between the similarities and differences among classmates and the idea of showing respect for everyone.

**Lesson Outcomes:** *Students will be able to...*

- recognize that all people have similarities and differences.
- explain why it is important to treat everyone with respect (upper grade levels).
- draw diverse people treating each other with respect (lower grade levels).

**Subject Area Connection:** Language Arts, Social Studies, Math

### Background

Experts agree that the selection of a target for bullying is often based on a real or perceived difference. By recognizing that all people have similarities (e.g., basic needs, feelings, interests) and differences (e.g., cultural background, experiences, preferences), students will begin to identify with one another and to view one another in a positive light.

This lesson will highlight the similarities and differences between students in your classroom in a way that does not promote one choice or circumstance over another. Students will be engaged in searching for commonalities and becoming better acquainted with their classmates. Students will begin to take ownership for building an atmosphere of respect in the classroom.

“Students will begin to take ownership for building an **atmosphere of respect** in the classroom.”

### Getting Ready

**Teacher Preparation:** To prepare for this lesson, ask questions to determine areas of sensitivity to avoid when discussing similarities and differences with your students. For younger students, create a template Venn diagram and make a copy for every two students.

**Materials Required:**

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- pencils
- blank paper
- template Venn diagram (optional)

### Introduction and Modeling

Begin by asking students to move to one side of the classroom or the other based on the answers to your questions. For example, boys on this side and girls on the other side; people who like cookies best on this side and people who prefer ice cream on the other side; people who have three or fewer family members living with them on this side and people who have four or more family members living with them on the other side. Point out that the two groups change based on the question posed. Ask students to return to their seats.

### Key Vocabulary

**respect:** being thoughtful of and polite to others.

**multicultural:** a mix of people from all over the world.

**diversity:** many types of people or things in a group.

## Procedure

1. Ask students to generate questions that could help them get to know someone. List the questions on the board. For example: What do you call your grandmother? Have you ever been on an airplane? What are your chores at home?
2. Pass out paper and pencils. Assign or allow students to choose partners. Explain that students should ask their partners the list of questions on the board and record the answers.
3. Once all students have completed their interviews, demonstrate how to fill in a Venn diagram and pass out your templates or have students draw one Venn diagram per pair.
4. Have students fill in their Venn diagrams with the similarities and differences discovered in their interviews. Go around the room and make sure each pair has at least one similarity.
5. Have pairs share their Venn diagrams with the class. Discuss the similarities and differences between students in your class.
6. Discuss what your classroom (and the world) would be like if every person was exactly the same as all the others. Explain that we live in a diverse society, but all people have certain things in common such as basic needs and feelings.
7. Connect the idea that all people are similar with the idea that all people deserve to be treated with respect. Ask students to explain what respect means to them and offer feedback on their responses.
8. Create a list of ways to show respect to diverse people. For example: smile, listen, be kind, be helpful, talk about things that interest both of you, etc.

## Discussion Questions

- What are some ways people are different that you can see?
- What are some ways people are different that you cannot see?
- How are your friends the same as you?
- How are your friends different from you?
- What have you learned from your friends because they are different from you?
- Why is it important to treat everyone with respect?

## Evaluation

- For lower grade levels, have students draw diverse people treating each other with respect.
- For higher grade levels, have students write a paragraph explaining why all people should be treated with respect.

## Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

### For Higher Grade Levels

- Allow students to create additional questions specific to their pairing. For example, if both students in a pair are bilingual, this could be included in their Venn diagram.
- Have pairs of students join up to create groups of four. Ask the group to create a new diagram showing the similarities and differences between all four members of the group.

### For Lower Grade Levels

- Create Venn diagram templates for students prior to the lesson.
- Read the questions on the board one at a time and allow time for students to record their own answers before moving to the next question. Then allow students to partner up to compare answers and fill in their diagrams.

## Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

### Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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#### Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- CCRA.SL.1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCRA.SL.2** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CCRA.SL.5** Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

### Social and Emotional Core Competencies

Social and Emotional Core Competencies: the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies associated with social and emotional learning as identified by CASEL. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

#### Social awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.