

Friendship

Grades 4-6, Lesson #5

Time Needed

35-45 minutes

Student Learning Objectives

To be able to ...

1. Identify characteristics of a "good" friend and assess self.
2. List at least three opening statements to initiate conversations.
3. List at least 3 ways to maintain a friendship.

Agenda

1. Explain the reason for the lesson.
2. Read a case study about friendship (aloud or silently).
3. OPTIONAL: Use the case study to tie this lesson to decision-making.
4. Use a focused-writing exercise to help students identify what they value in a friend.
5. Discuss focused-writing exercise.
6. Discuss feelings of alone-ness and loneliness.
7. Discuss the risks and benefits involved in "initiating" a friendship.
8. Use a bulletin board exercise to identify skills in building and maintaining friendships.
9. Answer "Anonymous Question Box" questions regarding friendship.
10. Summarize the lesson.

Materials Needed

Classroom Materials:

- 2 empty bulletin boards
- Friendship Transparency #1
- Overhead projector

Student Materials: (for each student)

- Construction paper
- Markers
- Tape
- OPTIONAL: one copy per student of "Terry's Story"

Activity

1. Explain the reason for the lesson.

Explain that, as people grow up, not only their bodies change. Their understanding of themselves changes and so do their friendships. That is what this lesson is about-- understanding yourself and friendship.

2. Read a case study about friendship (aloud or silently).

Read "Terry's Story" aloud to them (or copy it and have them read it silently or follow as someone reads aloud). If you read it aloud, show Terry's list of friends (transparency #3) on the overhead.

3. OPTIONAL: Use the case study to tie this lesson to decision-making.

Ask the class what they think of Terry's decision to help Gabriel. To tie this lesson in with decision-making, you can have the class brainstorm Terry's alternatives (choices) as you write them on the board. Then have them consider and discuss the possible positive and negative consequences ("good and bad things that could have happened") of each.

4. Use a focused-writing exercise to help students identify what they value in a friend.

Have the class number a paper 1 to 15 and list all their friends, similar to how Terry did.

- List at least eight.
- They may be people you don't see any more, but who used to be your friend (when you lived somewhere else).
- They don't have to be your age; some may be adults and some may be little kids you babysit for.
- They may be male or female (same sex as you or other sex).
- Some may be members of your family, but only if they really feel like friends.

Have them write, next to each name, what they like about that person...why the person is their "good friend". They may not have time to finish this in class. Some may have to finish as homework.

5. Discuss focused-writing exercise.

Remind them of the ground rules, especially their right to "pass" and their agreement not to put one another down. Explain that everybody's definition of friendship is different; that one person, for example, might choose a friend because that person had a good sense of humor, whereas another might not care at all about humor, but might really care that the person be someone they can talk seriously with. Explain that the point of the exercise is not for everyone to agree, but for each person to have a chance to think about what is important to him or her. Ask for volunteers to each share one reason they put one person on their list. Compare and contrast. Reflect back to the group characteristics many people list as important in a friend: trust, honesty, listening skill, sense of humor, helpfulness, etc. Point out that the things they value now in friends may be very different from things they looked for in friends as a kindergartener.

6. Discuss feelings of alone-ness and loneliness.

Discuss how it feels to be in a new school where you don't know anybody. Point out that, while a person may feel as if she or he is the only one with those feelings, it's not true.

- 7. Discuss the risks and benefits involved in "initiating" a friendship.**
Discuss how it feels to initiate conversation or to phone someone you think you might like to become friends with. Discuss, too, how it feels to be on the receiving end--when someone else initiates.
- 8. Use a bulletin board exercise to identify skills in building and maintaining friendships.**
 - a. Have half the class write ideas and tape them on a bulletin board, re: "What you could say after you say hi!" or "How to start a conversation to make a friend." This can be done aloud as class discussion, instead.
 - b. Have the other half of the class write ideas and tape them on a second bulletin board re: "If you want to keep a friend, it helps to ..." This one also can be done in discussion format.
- 9. Answer "Anonymous Question Box" questions about friendship.**
- 10. Summarize these points:**
 - People value different things in friends.
 - Each of us is valuable as a friend for one reason or another.
 - As we grow up we change in terms of what we want in our friendships.
 - It is difficult to be the "new kid on the block".
 - It can be scary to initiate a new friendship, but it's just as scary to other people as it is to ourselves.
 - There are many ways to go about starting or keeping a friendship.
 - People need friends.

Related Activities For Integrated Learning

A. Language Arts

Have students write a letter from Terry to Gabriel inviting him to the birthday party and explaining why. Alternately they could write a letter to a friend of their own about why they are friends.

B. Math

Have students create bar graphs showing the average number of male friends the boys in the class listed, the average number of male friends the girls listed, etc.

Homework

Students' options:

- Take home their "friend list" to discuss with an adult in their families. Ask the adult who is the adult's good friend and why.*
- Write a poem about friends.

*see "Preparing Parents" page 4-5

"Terry's Story"

I know a lot of different kids. In fact, for my 11th birthday party, I had 15 on my list to invite. When I showed it to my mom, she said, "Terry, I'm afraid you're going to have to cut that list in half."

"C'mon, Mom. You know you can't divide an uneven number by two. Besides," I told her, "this is no laughing matter. How am I supposed to choose who comes and who doesn't?"

She suggested that I write the main reason I picked each person beside his or her name. Then, I could decide which reasons seemed to be most important. That's what I ended up doing.

PEOPLE TO INVITE TO MY BIRTHDAY

1. Michael -- Lives next door.
2. Jennifer -- Michael's sister.
3. Heather -- She's new; I think I might like her.
4. Rocky -- Sits by me in school.
5. Terry -- We laugh at the same kinds of things.
6. Kevin -- Everyone thinks he's neat.
7. Troy -- Kevin's best friend.
8. David -- Hasn't ever called me a name.
9. Stefanie -- Been to her house.
10. James -- Kids treat him bad; I don't know why.
11. Kerry -- Acts like I'd like to act.
12. Lisa -- Made a science project together; took a month.
13. Shelly -- Asked me to her birthday party.
14. Jay -- Super sports star.
15. Gabriel -- My friend.

My mom just happened to be standing near me when I finished writing. She pointed to number 15. "Here, you've put down 'My friend.' Aren't they all your friends?" she asked.

"Kind of, but not like Gabriel," I told her. Then, so she'd see the difference, I had to remind her of the time when the principal called to discuss "a problem we're having with Terry at school."

It happened during the month that Gabriel was playground supervisor. The 7th and 8th graders take turns at this job. Well, Gabe had just moved here from Mexico and sometimes kids couldn't understand the way he talked. When it came to sports, though, that didn't seem to matter much. The job seemed to mean a lot to him.

Well, anyhow, I'm not a terrific athlete. Lots of times I'm one of the last to be picked for a team; and once in a while I end up "leftover." When that happened, I'd help Gabriel keep score and sort of be his assistant. Sometimes we'd stay a couple of minutes after the bell rang and he'd give me some pointers to improve my game. Then, I'd help him bring in the equipment that was left on the field and we'd get to talking about other things.

That's why I got back to my room late some days during the month that Gabriel was on duty. After so many times, Mrs. Sykes said that if it happened again she'd have to report me to the principal. I didn't plan to let that take place. But, a few days later, things got complicated.

It was one of those times that I wasn't in the game, so Gabe kept me busy. I was used to taking a few remarks when certain people saw us helping each other out. Things like, "Hey, Terry! You gettin' paid overtime for that?" when I was carrying equipment back to the storeroom, or stuff about my "private coach" since Gabriel had been working with me after the bell.

But that day kids were teasing even more than usual, and they left a lot of equipment lying around. I even saw a few kids throwing balls and gloves over the fence where they'd be hard to find in all those shrubs.

I thought of what a time Gabriel was going to have trying to explain why all those things were missing. See, even though everyone is supposed to bring back equipment, the supervisor is still responsible.

I didn't like any of my choices. I didn't want to be late again. But I couldn't walk off and leave Gabe. So that's why there was a phone call from Mr. Savage telling Mother I'd be home late. I had to pick up litter for a punishment after school.

But it wasn't so bad, 'cause see, real soon after I started picking up the trash Gabriel showed up and together we found spelling papers dated 1974 and wrappers from candy they don't even make anymore. Well, that's why he had to come to my party.

My mom said, "Aha! Maybe you're trying to say that you and Gabriel speak the same language." She was right. He's my friend because we help each other out.

Adapted from *The Person I Am: Self-Concept, Decision Making, Values and Career Options*, Marcia J. Smith and Judith M. Uriostengui, San Diego City Schools.

Friendship Transparency 1

PEOPLE TO INVITE TO MY BIRTHDAY

1. Michael -- Lives next door.
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