

Inclusion Acrostic

This lesson teaches students that in order to be inclusive, they have to value and understand its importance. Through a short video and large group discussion, students will help identify the qualities of inclusion that are important to them as a class. They will work on an acrostic poem that outlines these values and qualities to help remind them each day of their mission for inclusion.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

30-40 minutes

Required Materials

- ☐ Cardstock or Cardboard
- ☐ Basic art supplies
- ☐ Smartboard to project the video.
- ☐ Inspirational video:
<https://www.passiton.com/inspiration-al-stories-tv-spots/153-sarah-greichen>
- ☐ Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools website and resources:
<https://www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom/>

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Recognize the value of including everyone, regardless of ability.
- Develop a mission statement through an acrostic poem around the qualities they value about inclusion.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being new is always hard, no matter the age. How comfortable do you feel joining in? This week, practice joining a new group during lunch or recess. Expand your horizons.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- If there is a student on the autism spectrum in class, consider how to use the video and present the foundation of the lesson; while the lesson is not rooted in autism spectrum disorder or in any other unique ability classification, it is part of the video in the Inspire section.
- Determine ahead of time if the whole class will be able to effectively work on the acrostic or if it should be done in smaller groups. Perhaps each group takes one letter of the acrostic and comes up with a variety of options that the whole class can vote on.



Share

3-5 minutes

Review the definition of **inclusiveness** - see if students can recite the definition on their own: *Including others, inviting them in, and welcoming them with open arms.*

Invite students to share examples of how they demonstrated inclusiveness toward others this week, how they were the recipient of inclusiveness, or how they witnessed inclusive behavior between other people.



Inspire

7-10 minutes

With Video:

One way that humans are the same, even if we look different or have different abilities, is our need to be loved, heard, appreciated, and included. Everyone wants to have purpose in life.

If possible, show students the following short video about a girl whose twin brother has an autism spectrum disorder. She realized that he struggled to make friends and she wanted to help him and others who were regularly not included.

Watch Video (1 minute)

<https://www.passiton.com/inspirational-stories-tv-spots/153-sarah-greichen>

Ask:

- What happens to Jacob when he is included?
- We can relate to that feeling. How do we feel when we are excluded or left out?

Invite student response.

Without Video:

If you are not able to show the video, you can relay the same message through this summary:

Let me tell you a story. There was a girl named Sara who now attends college at Colorado State University. She has a twin brother named Jacob who has an autism spectrum disorder. When they were in high school together, one day, when their mom picked them up from school, Jacob got in the car and started crying. He told his mom that he had no friends. "Why don't I have any friends?" he asked. Sara said her heart broke for her brother; she had not realized that he struggled to make friends, and she wanted to help him and others who were regularly not included.

Ask:

- Have any of you not been included in something? How does it feel when we are not included?

Invite student response.

Remind students that even something small like being invited to play a game at recess or to sit down and eat lunch together can completely change a person's day. The key is to be inclusive all of the time, though, not just occasionally. People want others to genuinely care about them.



Empower

15-20 minutes

Inclusion Acrostic

Whether you watched the video or not, continue with the story:

*Sara, the girl we just learned about, actually did something to help her brother Jacob and be truly inclusive of all kids who have differences and need more ways to be included with others. She created a non-profit organization (that she originally started as part of a Girl Scout project) in Littleton, Colorado. She eventually merged with the Special Olympics organization and helps people nationally. Schools and communities form inclusive clubs called **Unified Classroom** which is part of the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS), where everyone is welcomed and valued.*

Ask:

- If we are an inclusive and unified classroom, what are some of the behaviors other people would see us doing here in 5th grade? *Take notes of student answers; these might become part of your acrostic.*

Explain that you are going to work on making your classroom more unified and inclusive by creating a visual reminder of ways we can be more inclusive. You are going to create an **"Inclusion"** acrostic.

You can demonstrate this on the board or project acrostic examples on the smartboard:



You create your acrostic in several ways: on the white board, on the smartboard, in a large group, in small groups. The aim is to create one acrostic for the whole class and for everyone to contribute, but how you arrive at the acrostic is up to you. Ensure you are having discussions about the ideas that

students are generating and connect them back to what you have discussed so far in the Inclusiveness Unit and in any other Random Acts of Kindness Foundation kindness unit you have completed (Respect, Caring, Integrity, Responsibility, or Courage).

In the end, you should have a word or phrase that represents all of the letters in the word **INCLUSION** and upholds the definition and mission of being an inclusive classroom.



Reflect

5 minutes

When the acrostic is finished, review it with students. Have everyone read it out loud together and then sign it (if you have a paper version to hang in the room). When this is done, display it in a visible place in the room or outside in the hallway by the door, so students see it when they enter each day and other students can see it as they pass by.

This is a great time to also remind students that they are older now and younger students look up to us as examples. How we treat and include others will show everyone how we value people and what we believe in. And when we include others, especially those who might normally be excluded or left out for some reason, we help them feel like they can succeed and that they have a purpose, just like Sara did for her brother Jacob.



Extension Ideas

- Send a copy of the acrostic home with students or email a picture of it to parents; let parents know that this is how 5th graders are going to work on being more inclusive and invite them to regularly ask their students how this is going.
- Send an acrostic poem template home for parents/kids to create their own Inclusiveness Acrostic. This acrostic could be for INCLUSION or could be for any of the kindness concepts (or, simply, KINDNESS).
- Visit the national website for Unified Classroom to find resources on inclusion with your students:
<https://www.generationunified.org/unified-classroom/>
- You might also find that your school district participates in Unified Classroom - if not at the elementary level, perhaps at the Middle- or High-school level. Check with your Special Education or Counseling/Student Advising departments. How might you and your students get involved?



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED
PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL
AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the [CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs](#).

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
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