

Justice and Fairness

Pre-teach: Begin by greeting the students and telling them that you will be discussing the traits *justice* and *fairness* with them today. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Below each question are examples of the type of responses you are looking for. You may need to rephrase students' answers or guide them along.

(Ask) What is justice?

1. Treating everyone fairly under established rules and laws. (You may want to give an example, such as following classroom rules.)

(Ask) What is fairness?

1. Treating all people with honesty and respect.
2. Giving everyone equal opportunities to succeed.
3. Cooperating with one another.
4. Celebrating the uniqueness and value of everyone.
5. Making sure others are not treated badly.

(Ask) Why are justice and fairness important?

1. To make sure that everyone has the chance to succeed.
2. To make our home, school, community and world a better place for all people.

(Ask) Who are some people that have fought for justice and fairness for others?

1. Martin Luther King Jr.
2. Rosa Parks
3. Abraham Lincoln
4. Susan B. Anthony

Book: Read and discuss a story that teaches a lesson about justice and fairness. (*Book suggestions attached*)

(Ask) What are ways we can show justice and fairness at our school?

1. Treat all people equally - the same.
2. Cooperate with one another.
3. Be respectful and listen to what others have to say.
4. Be willing to do what is best for everyone.
5. Play by the rules at all times; be a good sport.
6. Include others in games and activities. Don't leave people out.
7. Understand that being fair doesn't always mean the same treatment in every circumstance. For example, you may have an earlier bedtime than your older brother, or your younger sister may not have as many household chores as you.
8. Stand-up for someone you see being treated unfairly - you can make a difference!

Activity: Complete an activity to go along with your lesson. Remember, you can incorporate your activity into your lesson at any time. (*Activity suggestions attached*)

Closing comment: Life may not always be fair to you, but you can always be fair in life! (*Pass out Justice and Fairness bookmarks. Bookmarks attached. Make copies as needed.*)

"I know, up on top you are seeing great sights. But down at the bottom we, too, should have some rights." ~Dr. Seuss

Justice and Fairness Activities *(continued)*

Fair Treatment (Suggested for all grades)

Materials: Sack of candy

Bring a sack of candy containing 5 less than the total number of students in the class. Pass the sack around and tell everyone they can take one. When the students discover the unfair situation and that there is not enough candy for everyone, discuss the following questions:

1. How did those students that did not get the candy feel? How about those that did?
2. What would be the fair solution to the problem?
3. Can you think of another situation when people might feel left out or rejected?

You Be The Judge (Suggested for grades 3 -5)

Materials: Slips of paper

Before your lesson, write down on slips of paper different "crimes" such as, cheating on a test, disobeying a teacher, fighting in the hallway, and stealing a cookie from the cafeteria. Have the students role play a scene where the "criminal" picks a crime from the hat and the "jury" (the class) decides his sentence. How harsh should the punishment for each crime be? Should the punishment for some crimes be worse than others? Discuss the justice and fairness of the punishments decided by the jury. (*The Best of Character, by Duane Hodgkin*)

The Fair Eggs-periment (Suggested for all grades)

Materials: Clear drinking glass filled with one cup of water, fresh egg, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt, a permanent marker, and tablespoon

Carefully place the egg in the glass of water. Tell the students that the egg (*You may want to give it a name like "Eddie"*) "represents someone who is not being treated fairly. Sinking to the bottom represents how someone who is left out or mistreated would feel - sad, depressed, defeated, unappreciated, and unloved. Remove the egg from the water and set it aside. One tablespoon at a time, add salt to the water. As you stir in each spoonful, explain that the salt represents different ways to show fairness towards others. For example: following the rules when playing a game, taking turns and sharing, treating others with honesty and respect, and taking action to help someone being treated unfairly. After you have added all of the salt, put the egg back in the water. (*If you want, you can put a smiley face on the egg with the permanent marker*) and it will now float. Explain that now "Eddie" is being supported with kindness and "held up" by the fairness and acceptance of others. (*10-Minute Life Lessons, by Jaime Miller*)

Sing About Justice and Fairness (Suggested for grades K-2)

Materials: None

(*Sing to the tune of "You Are My Sunshine"*)

Justice and Fairness, Justice and Fairness,
Treat others kindly, respect the rules.
Stand up for people who are mistreated,
Make a difference in the world.

Justice and Fairness Activities *(continued)*

Fair Cents (Suggested for all grades)

Materials: ten pennies, two nickels, and one dime

Stack the pennies on top of one another, stack the nickels next to them and place the dime beside the nickels. Begin by discussing the fact that although each set of coins looks different, they all have the same value. This is the same with people, we may look different on the outside - short, tall, blonde, etc., but we are all of equal value and deserve to be treated fairly. When you share, take turns, and treat others equally and with respect, you are showing fairness.

Who Made It? *(Suggested for grades 4 -5)*

Materials: None

Ask the students where they think their clothes are made and by whom. Students may check tags on their own clothing or on the collar of a classmate's shirt. If available, you may want to bring a piece of clothing made in a country with questionable child labor laws (e.g.: Pakistan, India, Thailand, Brazil, Mexico, China, and Indonesia). Explain to the students that thankfully due to many determined people that took action when they saw injustice by marching the streets in protest in 1908, the United States has laws that protect working conditions and prohibit children from working in factories. Before the workers went on strike, women and children were forced to work in horrible, filthy conditions, for long hours for very little money. Instead of attending school and playing with friends, young children had to work in factories. Unfortunately, there are still countries in this world that do not have laws that protect children. The children that live in these countries may not have schools or the right to an education. They are expected to work in a factory perhaps making the very clothes we wear on our backs. Encourage the students to think about ways they can help these children. They may want to check out the following websites along with their parents for more information on ways that they can make a difference in the lives of other children living in the world. (www.pbs.org) Resources: www.FreeTheChildren.org; www.Unicefusa.org; www.HistoryPlace:ChildLaborInAmerica.com

Ponder This... (Suggested for grades 4 -5)

Materials: None

Write this quote on the board: *"It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself."* ~Eleanor Roosevelt~ Discuss with the class the meaning of this quote by a former first lady who dedicated her life to improving the quality of people's lives around the world. Have students brainstorm situations they see as unfair and then come up with some solutions together. If time permits, help the class write their own quote about justice and fairness to post in the classroom. For example, "Always be fair and square" ~Mrs. Johnson's Class

The Fairness Jar (Suggested for grades 2 -5)

Materials: Container and strips of paper

Label a container and place it in a location in the classroom where everyone can reach it. Cut strips of paper and put them in the container. When a student experiences an unfair situation, encourage the student to take out a slip of paper and write a note about what happened and place it back in the jar. Throughout the month, ask the classroom teacher to read the notes and talk about ways to make things fairer. (*Being Your Best*, by Barbara Lewis)

Bookmarks for Justice and Fairness

"I know, up on top you are seeing great sights. But down at the bottom we, too, should have some rights." ~Dr. Seuss

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