

Facilitating Respect in Children and Adolescents: A Resource for K-12 Classroom Teachers

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Recommended use:

These materials offer ideas for facilitating discussions between children and adolescents about research. They may be useful for the following audiences:

- K-12 classroom teachers who wish to teach respect
- They may also be adapted for caregivers who wish to discuss respect with their children

Recommended Readings: Chapters 2, 3, and 8

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INTRODUCTION

Respect is an integral part of our life. It means that we recognize and appreciate the good qualities or behaviors of another. Respect is an important component in collaborative, cooperative classroom settings, and fosters the development of positive peer relationships and teacher-child relationships. As such, nurturing respect can contribute to a positive classroom climate and optimal conditions for learning and thriving.

Suggested Activities

As a teacher, you may engage in a variety of activities with children and/or adolescents that will grow their thinking about respect. Techniques used within these activities need to be tailored to the age and developmental need of the children, so that they may be receptive to the message you are trying to convey. Below, we provide examples of activities you may wish to engage your students in, in order to develop their respect for others.

Module 1: Facilitating group discussions about respect in the classroom

1. General discussion question for all ages

To begin a discussion about respect with a group of students, you may wish to first ask children about their own understanding of respect:

- “What does it mean to feel respect toward someone?”
- “Why do you think respect is important?”

Note down the types of themes they mention so you can direct them to an appropriate understanding of respect within subsequent activities.

2. Conversations about the meaning of respect across age groups

Early to middle childhood (4-7 years of age)

- **Activity 1: Understanding Respect.** In groups, start by asking who from the group has heard the word *respect*. Of those who know what respect means, ask who would like to share their understanding of respect.
- **Activity 2: Respect Flashcards.** Show children various words on flashcards that do and do not relate to respect and ask them to identify whether the word is related to respect or not. *This activity can be done in small groups—it will facilitate discussion among peers about respect.*

Examples of words that reflect respect:	Fairness, kindness, caring, including, helping, sharing, empathy, understanding, admiring
Examples of words that do not reflect respect:	Hurting, pushing, teasing, ignoring, yelling, excluding, fighting, bullying, fearing

Middle childhood to adolescence (8-15 years of age)

Increasingly integrate the theme of fairness into conversations about respect. For example, you may ask: “If someone treats others fairly, are they being respectful? Why or why not?”

- **Activity 1: Talking about moral exemplars.** (i.e., persons who show good characteristics and act in accordance with ethical norms and principles, such as caring, justice, fairness.) Discuss why moral exemplars might be respected.

Example: Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela: “Why are they moral exemplars? What types of things can someone do to be like a moral exemplar?”

- **Activity 2: Talking about equity, equality, and kindness.** Talk about what equity, equality, and kindness entail and why these concepts matter to children.

▪ **Activity 2 continued**

Concept	Definition
Equity	Providing everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits, which may depend on the needs of an individual.
Equality	Providing everyone the same opportunities and benefits, regardless of their individual needs.
Kindness	Treating others with compassion and care.

- **Activity 3: Respect in the media.** Ask children to provide examples of respect from the popular media.

Example questions:

- “Which individuals from the media are most respectful toward others?”
- “Why do you think it’s important for people in the popular media to behave respectfully?”

Module 2: Discussions about children’s and adolescents’ respect in daily life

Recommended ages: 5-15 years

1. Ask children about times they felt respect for someone.

- Use effective prompts if you feel that children do not provide you with an elaborate answer.

Example prompts:

- “Tell me more.”
- “Why did you respect them?”
- “What did they do for you to respect them?”)

- Ask thought-provoking questions.

Example questions:

- “Who do you respect in your life and why?”
- “Do you respect your friends differently from how you respect your parents or teachers?”
- “Why do you think showing respect for others is important?”

2. Ask children about times someone felt respect for them or showed them respect. (e.g., “Tell me about a time someone respected you.”)

- Ask thought-provoking questions.

Example questions:

- “Why do you think they felt respect for you in that time?”
- “How did receiving their respect make you feel?”
- “How often would you like to be respected by others and why?”

Module 3: Activities for recognizing respectful behavior/qualities in others

Recommended ages: 5-10 years

Based on the stories used to assess children's evaluations of respect in the *Monograph* (see recommended reading Chapter 3), you may wish to present children with stories about others being fair or kind to others. Following these stories, you may wish to:

- Engage in discussions about why they think the characters in the story behaved respectfully.
- Ask them to tie it back to their own ideas about what respect means to them. (*Example*: "Did the character's behavior in the story reflect your own understanding of respect?")
- Pose discussion questions such as: "What about peers who engage in disrespectful behavior? Do you think they should still be respected even though they may not show respectful behavior sometimes?"