

Session 1: Introducing the Concept of a “Get-Along” Classroom

respect • collaboration

Session 1 lays the groundwork for a bully-free “get-along” classroom that will last all year long.

Students will

- identify qualities of a “get-along” classroom
- recognize their responsibility for helping create a safe and supportive learning climate
- create and sign an “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart

Materials

- globe (see page 6)
- chart paper and markers
- handouts: “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” (page 21, one copy); parent letter (page 22)
- *optional*: art materials for a classroom display

Introduction. Welcome your students and express how pleased you are about being their teacher. Let them know that this is an important meeting, one that will help them start to create a peaceful year where they get along with each other and treat each other with kindness and respect.

Discussion. Ask students their number one hope for the coming year, months, or weeks. Briefly discuss.

Hold up the globe and tell students that just as we are connected to each other as members of the same classroom, community, neighborhood, and country, we’re also connected as members of the human family. By learning to get along and respect each other in the classroom, we’re preparing ourselves to get along with all kinds of people in all kinds of settings.

Ask: **What kind of world would you like to grow up in?** Students will likely say things like safe, peaceful, fun, and healthy. Write the words on the board.

Activity. Now ask: **How about here in our own classroom? How would you like it to be in here?**

On chart paper, write the title “*Qualities of a Get-Along Classroom.*” List what students say. As each child shares, pass the globe.

Next, ask: **What are things each of us can do to create a get-along classroom?** Have students pass the globe as they speak. On chart paper, write the title “*Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom.*” List the agreements they suggest, stating them in the affirmative where possible; for example, instead of “No hitting” write “Keep your hands to yourself.”

As you list the agreements, ask students to give specific examples for each. For example, if someone suggests, “Treat each other with respect,” ask what that means in terms of actions (avoid using put-downs even when you’re angry, refrain from rolling

eyes or laughing when someone makes a mistake or says something you disagree with, etc.).

Keep the list short (seven or eight agreements) and be sure to leave enough room at the bottom for everyone’s signature, including your own. When the chart is complete, ask several students to lead in reading it.

Explain what a contract is and let students know that this agreement is a special kind of contract. Ask students to sign their names to the bottom of the chart. You might say: **By signing a contract we give our word of honor. This means we promise to do everything in our power to live up to the agreements we are signing our name to.**

Wrap-Up. Affirm students for working together to come up with agreements they can use all year long. Hold up the globe and remind students that getting along with others and creating peaceful relationships starts with each of us. Say: **If we want our world to become a more peaceful place, it has to begin right here.**

Follow-Up. Laminate the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart and hang it prominently in front of the room where you can refer to it every day. This is a living document to be continuously integrated into the daily life of your classroom.

Copy the agreements from the chart onto the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” handout and make photocopies to send home with a parent letter. Use the letter on page 22 or write your own.

Extension. Have students create and decorate a classroom bulletin board display that includes the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart. Use the display to incorporate other key classroom charts you make in future sessions.

Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Date: _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our class is committed to creating a classroom filled with peace, respect, kindness, and compassion: a “get-along” classroom. Attached are agreements we came up with together to help us do this all year long. Please ask your child to tell you about these agreements and why they’re so important.

Many parents are looking for ways to reinforce respect, kindness, compassion, and peace at home, so periodically I’ll be sending you information to help with this. You are an important part of the peaceful community we’re working to create this year, and I welcome your involvement.

Thank you for your support. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Contact me at: _____

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Session 23: Standing Up for Those Who Are Mistreated

kindness • compassion • respect • personal responsibility • decency

Session 23 helps students think of ways they can support peers who are called names or teased in other ways and practice being upstanders.

Students will

- be guided to choose kind actions, particularly when others are being unkind
- role-play being upstanders in situations where someone is being treated with meanness or intolerance

Materials

- chart paper and marker
- handouts: “8 Ways to Be an Upstander” (page 65); “Kindness Worksheet” (page 67)

Preparation. On chart paper, write: *“I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”* —Helen Keller

Introduction and Discussion. Ask students if they’ve ever chosen to be kind to someone everyone else was being mean to. Ask if they’ve ever been an upstander for someone who was being mistreated. Discuss, acknowledging how hard this can be.

Show the Helen Keller quote and invite a student to read it. Ask: **What is “something we can do” when someone’s being called names or made fun of by others? Why does it take courage to choose to be kind when others aren’t or to stick up for someone when no one else does?**

Activity. Present the following scenarios, or scenarios students suggest, and ask for volunteers to act them out. After each scenario, ask: **What kind choice could you make? What would an upstander do?**

- Brian gives the wrong answer to a question the teacher asks. Other kids start to snicker and make faces.
- Mindy comes to school wearing a shirt with a big stain on it. Her hair is all tangled and looks like it hasn’t been washed in a while. A few kids hold their noses as she walks by.

- Jason has trouble reading. He stumbles over some simple words that most of the class can easily read. Someone makes a joke about Jason’s reading. A few kids start to laugh.
- Jessie tends to be awkward around other kids. Sometimes she talks too loud. People find her annoying. She always ends up sitting alone at lunch.

Ask kids to list kind, caring choices that were demonstrated during the role plays. List responses on a piece of chart paper entitled, “Kind Choices We Can Make When People Are Unkind.”

Distribute the “8 Ways to Be an Upstander” handout and review the ways to help people who are picked on. Encourage students to come up with other upstander actions to add to the handout.

Wrap-Up. Affirm students for acts of kindness, compassion, and good listening you observed during this session. Ask whether anyone would also like to acknowledge a classmate for any positive actions or attitudes.

Follow-Up. Have students complete the “Kindness Worksheet.” Note that the worksheet will be used in Session 24.

8 ways to Be an upstander

1. Choose not to join in when people are picking on or laughing at someone.
2. Speak out against unkind words or actions.
3. Say something helpful to the person who's being picked on or laughed at.
4. Ask people who are teasing how it would feel if they were the ones being teased.
5. Ask the person who's being left out or picked on to join you in an activity.
6. Let an adult know what's going on.

7. _____



8. _____



Session 42: Things We Do When We Get Angry

anger management • self-control • personal responsibility

Session 42 reinforces the important understanding that we each have the ability to choose a response rather than simply react when we get angry.

Note: Review Sessions 10 and 11 (pages 40–41) prior to conducting this session.

Students will

- evaluate the outcomes of negative choices they might still make in response to anger
- identify things they can do to gain greater self-control when angry

Materials

- handout: “What Real Kids Do When They’re Angry” (pages 104–105)
- chart paper; black and red marker

Introduction. Say: You’ve been learning a lot of ways to better control anger. Change takes time, and sometimes it’s hard to let go of old habits. Today we’re going to evaluate how we’re doing with managing anger now.

Discussion. Distribute the handout and ask volunteers to read the comments from students about what they do when they’re angry. Have students pair up and discuss what they do now when they get angry, noting positive changes and places where they may be stuck in negative patterns.

After a few minutes have students share in the large group about things they do when they get angry, noting positive changes or negative choices that still remain. List students’ answers on chart paper.

When the list is complete, point to each action, one at a time, and ask: **Does doing this tend to make things get better or worse? How?** Put a red X by each action that makes things worse.

Ask: **What negative things happen when we do the things marked by an X?** (Punishment, guilt, retaliation, disappointing people we care about, disappointing oneself, etc.)

Then ask: **What can you do to help yourself avoid the choices that make things worse?** List these on a separate sheet of chart paper.

Activity. Ask for three volunteers to role-play the following scenario:

Three students have to come up with an idea for a science project. Student A keeps interrupting. Student B feels ready to lose his or her temper and say something mean. Student C notices and decides to say something that might help.

Have the role players act out the scenario, first using one or more of the negative actions on the list. Then have them replay it, this time using some of the positive strategies they’ve been learning. If they need prompting, here are some choices the players might make:

- Student C might suggest that they all take a break.
- Student B might excuse him/herself, get a drink of water, and think about an I-message to say. He or she can return to the group and deliver the I-message.
- Student B might use Stop, Breathe, Chill to calm down and then talk about the problem.

After the role play, debrief with the class. Ask what made things get worse the first time the scenario was acted out. What made things work out better the second time? What other choices could the players have made that might have helped?

Wrap-Up. Remind students to use the strategies you’ve been practicing together at home, after school, and throughout the day. Let them know you’ll check in with them to hear how it’s going.

Acknowledge acts of respect, listening, and compassion you observed during this session. Ask students if anyone wants to acknowledge somebody else.

Follow-Up. Have students answer the questions on their handout, either in writing or in discussion with a partner.

What Real Kids Do When They're Angry

In a national survey of more than 2,100 students in grades 3–6, kids wrote about negative ways they deal with anger. Here are the top 5 things boys and girls reported doing when they're angry:

Top 5 Things Kids Do When They Get Mad

Boys

1. Walk away or ignore/avoid the person or situation.
2. Fight or do physical things such as hit, kick, push, or shove.
3. Try to stay calm.
4. Tell an adult.
5. Tell the person to stop.



Girls

1. Walk away or ignore/avoid the person or situation.
2. Tell an adult.
3. Talk/work it out.
4. Tell the person to stop.
5. Try to stay calm.



Here are some other things students said they did when they're angry:

"When I get mad sometimes I freak out."

"I count to ten, take a deep breath, and try to relax."

"When someone gets me mad I egg them on."

"I try to stay calm and not get worked up."

"I scream into my pillow when I get home."

"I usually stomp away."

"If someone makes me mad I call them names."

"I just try to sort it out in my head."



What Real Kids Do When They're Angry (continued)

What do YOU do when you're angry?

What helps?

Is there something you still do in response to anger that you need to change? Explain.

What can you do to make this change?

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Session 68: The Dignity Stance

courage • self-worth • calmness • assertiveness • self-control

Session 68 introduces the Dignity Stance, an effective assertiveness tool students can use when they are involved in conflicts or mistreated by others.

Students will

- learn to use the Dignity Stance in conflict situations
- understand how to act assertively rather than aggressively or passively

Materials

- chart paper and marker
- handout: "The Dignity Stance" (page 162)

Preparation. On chart paper, write the steps for the Dignity Stance (see page 162).

Introduction. Tell students that today they're going to learn about an important way to stand up for themselves when they're involved in a conflict, or when they want to prevent a conflict or stop one from getting worse: the Dignity Stance.

Review with students what it means to be assertive (strong and honest, yet respectful, saying what you need to say with confidence).

Say: **You can show *assertiveness* in the way you hold your body and how you speak. The Dignity Stance is one way to do this.**

Activity. Tell students that starting with deep breaths and a calming statement will make it easier for them to use the Dignity Stance. Spend a few moments taking deep, abdominal breaths together; remind students to say a calming statement to themselves as they breathe.

Direct students' attention to the chart you have created. Go through each of the steps of the Dignity Stance with the group.

Stand tall with your head held high, feet apart, shoulders back. Demonstrate the Dignity Stance. Ask students to stand and also take the stance. Scan the class for kids who may need coaching. Some students might stiffen their bodies while others may take an aggressive stance, maybe even balling up their fists. Others will stand tall with head down shoulders hunched. Give coaching where needed.

Take slow, deep breaths to keep your cool. Have students join in you in taking three slow, deep abdominal breaths. Remind them that they can do this "invisibly" (in a non-exaggerated way) and no one else will know they're doing it. Demonstrate how.

Keep your body language and facial expression neutral but strong. Emphasize that it's important to keep a *neutral* (nonemotional) expression that is strong but respectful. Demonstrate this for students. Then say: **Sometimes we have to act "as if." We need to act as if we are feeling brave, even if we're really scared. The more we act like we feel brave, the braver we will actually begin to feel. Our body language can help us look and feel brave and strong.**

Make direct eye contact. Demonstrate looking someone in the eye with confidence, not aggression.

Note: In some cultures, children are taught that looking someone in the eye is disrespectful. If you have students who have been raised to look downward or avert their eyes, let them know that, with many people, making direct eye contact is an important way to communicate respect and confidence. Help students identify when and how to do this comfortably.

Speak in a firm, steady tone of voice. Demonstrate with the following statement that can be used when facing an angry person: **"I know you're mad, but let's see if we can talk this out."** Have students turn to one another and make this statement standing tall, speaking in a steady, neutral tone of voice.

Select one student to join you before the group. Face your partner and say: **Now let's pretend you've just said something hurtful to me. First I'm going to take a deep breath and make my calming statement. Then I'm going to stand tall, look directly in your eyes, and in a firm, level voice I'm going to say how I feel.**

Still facing your partner, say: **"I find that insulting."** Now ask students to practice doing the same with the person next to them.

Walk away tall and strong. Demonstrate walking away tall and strong. Tell students that breathing deeply and repeating their calming statements will

help them walk away with poise and dignity. Now have them practice walking away tall and proud. Give coaching where needed, and if you see any aggressive or passive postures or gestures help students modify them.

Remind your students of the way Martin Luther King Jr. carried himself during civil rights marches. Even when people were yelling racist words and threats, he would consistently stand tall, walk strong and proud, and maintain a neutral facial expression. This is the finest example of the Dignity Stance that exists for all of us.

Discussion. Have students sit back down in the circle. Ask for two volunteers to come to the center. Ask one student to imagine the other has just called him or her a name. Have the recipient of the put-down assume the Dignity Stance, give an assertive I-message, then walk away tall and strong.

Ask students to give feedback. Did the person stand and speak assertively, not aggressively? Did the person walk away tall and strong (not wimpy or aggressive)?

Ask students to come up with other assertive statements that can be used in similar situations. They might be I-messages or simple statements, but they should always be firm and respectful. Some examples are:

- “That wasn’t funny.”
- “Not cool.”
- “I don’t need to listen to this.”
- “You’re wasting your time.”

Ask for more volunteers to come to the center of the circle, stand in the Dignity Stance, look the person in the eye, deliver a firm, steady response, and then walk away tall and strong.

Say: **If someone calls you a name or puts you down, the Dignity Stance is a way you can be strong and assertive without having to name-call back. You can walk away strong and brave, not scared and weak, just the way Martin Luther King Jr. did.**

Wrap-Up. Entertain questions and comments. Give students the “Dignity Stance” handout and suggest they tape it into their journal or onto the wall at home.

Extension. Suggest that students do the following visualization activity at home: **Tonight, while you’re lying in bed before falling asleep, practice some deep breathing and picture yourself using the Dignity Stance. See yourself standing tall and brave, looking someone who has insulted you in the eye, and speaking assertively. See yourself walking away tall and strong.**

The Dignity Stance

Stand tall with your head held high, feet apart, shoulders back.

Take slow, deep breaths to keep your cool.

Keep your body language and facial expression neutral but strong.

Make direct eye contact.

Speak in a firm, steady tone of voice.

Walk away tall and strong.



Session 82: Taking Responsibility for Mean Words

personal responsibility • conscience • compassion • respect

Session 82 guides students to take responsibility for hurtful words they might have spoken to another person.

Students will

- understand how mean words hurt and lead to conflict
- reflect on how they want to be regarded by others
- take greater responsibility for their words and actions and refrain from treating others in mean ways

Materials

- chart paper and marker or sign from Session 16 (see page 52 and Preparation, below)
- handout: "Jenna's Story: 'I Said Something Really Mean'" (page 192)

Preparation. If you haven't done so before, on chart paper write: *"Our words and actions today create memories that will fill others' memory banks tomorrow."*

Introduction. Ask for a volunteer to read the sign. Ask students what these words mean to them. Briefly discuss, emphasizing that when we're hurtful to another person, we risk creating in him or her a negative memory of us that can last forever. Say: **Today you'll be hearing a real story from a girl named Jenna whose mean words deeply hurt a classmate named Renee. (These aren't the girls' real names.)**

Discussion and Activity. Distribute the handout. Ask for a volunteer to read Jenna's story aloud to the class.

Afterward, ask students if they've ever been in a situation similar to Jenna's. Discuss briefly.

Ask: **Have you ever said something mean that ended up hurting someone? Why did you say what you said? Discuss briefly. Can you remember ever having someone say mean things about you? How did it make you feel? Briefly share responses.**

Then ask: **What important insight did Jenna gain from this experience? What did she learn?**

Emphasize that Jenna ended up taking responsibility for what she did. Ask why this is so important.

Refer to Win/Win Guideline 4: *Take responsibility for your role in the conflict.* Say: **By taking responsibility, Jenna was able to make things better. If she had denied what she'd done, what might have happened? How might she have felt inside?**

Ask students to turn to a partner and share about a time they said or did something hurtful that they still

need to take responsibility for. Let students know this might relate to a conflict with a friend, a sibling, a family adult, or someone else.

After several minutes, ask students what they might say to the person they hurt if that person were here right now. Some examples are: "It was wrong of me to say what I did. I'm really sorry and I hope you'll forgive me." Or, "I feel really bad that I hurt your feelings before. I was having a stressful day, but it was still wrong for me to take it out on you." The latter is an excellent example of truly taking responsibility without trying to excuse one's bad behavior. (In contrast, the following attempt at self-justification cancels out any good done by the apology: "I feel really bad that I hurt your feelings before. I was having a stressful day, and you should have known better than to annoy me.")

Encourage students to seek out the person later and make amends. Have them practice doing this with their partners. Circulate and give help where needed.

Reconvene in the circle and say: **Jenna realized that she didn't want to say mean things about people behind their backs. How else could she have handled the resentment she felt toward Renee? What can she do differently if a situation like this comes up again?** Discuss. Remind students that I-messages are an ideal alternative to hurtful words. Say: **If you have an issue with someone, try speaking to the person directly, starting from "I," instead of resorting to name-calling, sarcasm, put-downs, or talking behind the person's back.**

Ask students to think of an I-message Jenna could have used had she chosen to talk directly to Renee about how she felt.

Wrap-Up. Refer back to the sign: *“Our words and actions today create memories that will fill others’ memory banks tomorrow.”* Ask: **How do you want to be remembered by others? Discuss.**

Affirm students for their willingness to take responsibility, and for any acts or words of kindness, insight, and integrity during this session.

Follow-Up. Have students observe themselves as they go through their day, taking note of how they speak to others at school and at home. If someone gets on their nerves, do they react with a mean comment? If they do, are they willing to take responsibility afterward without making excuses for themselves?

Jenna's Story

"I Said Something Really Mean"

At the beginning of the year, I said something really mean about Stacy, this girl in my class who used to be my friend. I was mad at her because it seemed like she was the teacher's favorite kid. The mean thing I said got back to her during recess.

When we got inside I started crying because I knew I had done something really wrong. I found Stacy and told her I was sorry. I told her about 1 million times, but she was still mad. (I know I would be, too).

Later I started crying again and went to the girls' bathroom. There was Stacy. She was crying, too.

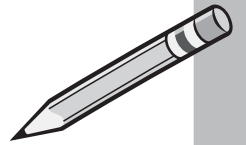
When she saw me crying, she realized how bad I really felt. She finally accepted my apology. Now she and I are good friends again.

The lesson I learned is that it's bad to talk about people behind their backs, because then you're just being like a bully. It is so true that no one is perfect. And it really hurts people when they find out you were talking about them. So why do it?

Think About It

How would you answer the question Jenna posed at the end of the story?

If you have the urge to talk behind someone's back, what can you do instead?



Session 97: What to Do If Someone Bullies You

courage • personal responsibility • self-respect • assertiveness

Session 97 provides skills and strategies students can use if they are being bullied. This session is a follow-up to Session 96.

Students will

- understand that the words of someone who bullies them should never be taken personally
- review what they can do if they are bullied
- understand that they don't have to shoulder bullying alone
- reflect on the fact that bystanders can become upstanders who help

Materials

- handouts: "If You're Being Bullied" from Session 96 (page 225) and "The Real Deal About Bullying" from Session 95 (pages 221–222)
- "If You Are Bullied: Do's and Don'ts" chart from Session 95 (see page 219)
- *optional*: student journals

Preparation. Have on hand some extra copies of the handouts so students who forgot to bring theirs or were absent during Session 95 or 96 will have personal copies.

Introduction and Discussion. Have students bring their "If You're Being Bullied" handouts to the circle. Ask: **What questions came up for you as you read through this?** Respond to questions and comments kids had about what they read.

Remind students that if they've ever been bullied, they're not alone. At least 50 percent of kids in all age groups are bullied.* Consider sharing your own story if you've ever been bullied, too. Doing so will help kids who've been bullied feel less alone and safer about opening up.

If anyone reveals having been bullied, allow time for discussion. Refer to both handouts and to the chart. Say: **If you're being bullied it's really important to remember that you have worth and value just as you are, no matter what the other person says or does.** Discuss.

Say: **Let's take another look at the story from a real student you heard in the last session. I'm going to be asking several of you to play the roles of the kids in this story. Then we're going to think about what the boy who was being bullied might have done to help himself.** Read the story aloud to your class:

"There is a boy at school who gets bullied all the time. It started last year and still goes on. Everyone I know, except me and my best friends, tease him. I

feel so bad for him. I think he should learn better comebacks.

"Last year I was hoping they'd forget about him over the summer, but right after summer break was over, they kept bullying him. I wish it could stop, but it doesn't. I feel so bad for him."

Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the boy who was being bullied. Have two groups play the roles of the kids who bullied and the bystanders. Afterward, ask students: **What assertive comeback could this boy use to be an upstander for himself?** ("I don't deserve to be treated this way." "I'm not listening to you anymore.") Have the boy choose a comeback and speak up assertively. Then ask the class: **What other things could he do to deal with the bullying?** Discuss students' ideas, focusing on the "Do's and Don'ts."

Note: Sessions 107, Bullied on the Playground, and 109, Physically Bullied by a Group, address physical bullying in more depth and include a handout, "Keep Yourself Safe from Physical Harm." See page 250.

Ask the bystanders to face the class next, and ask: **What could these students have done to help instead of remaining silent?** Finally, ask the kids who bullied to face the class. Have the class suggest what these students should or could have done differently, especially those in the group who had guilty feelings about contributing to the bullying. Discuss, addressing students' fears about speaking out and their concerns about not going along with the crowd.

* New York University Child Study Center, January 2010.

Wrap-up. Stress that in all three roles—the person who’s bullied, the bystanders, or the student or students who are bullying—there are positive choices everyone can make. Reiterate that students who are being bullied do not ever deserve to be bullied.

Follow-up. Have students review with a trusted friend or family member things they can do to help themselves if they are ever bullied, and what might stand in the way of advocating for themselves. Suggest that they write about this in their journals, too.

“What If?” Questions About Getting Help from Adults

Students are likely to have concerns about telling an adult about bullying. Here are some questions they may ask and responses you can give:

“What if someone hurts me and they threaten to do it again if I tell?” Tell students: People threaten because they’re afraid of getting in trouble. If someone threatens your physical or emotional safety in any way, don’t remain silent. Talk to a trusted adult as quickly as you can.

“What if they tell me they’re going to wait for me off the school grounds?” Tell students: This is all the more reason to talk to an adult, like the teacher or guidance counselor. The school has rules that are meant to protect you in school and on the way home. If you remain silent, you put yourself at greater risk.

“What if telling makes it worse?” Tell students: If this happens, it’s time for a family grown-up (a parent or guardian) to meet with the principal. Adults at school and at home have an

obligation to keep you safe. Don’t let yourself be defeated by someone else’s cruelty.

“What if it’s someone from my group of friends who is threatening me? I feel like I need to be loyal.” Tell students to think about this: If your best friend was being threatened, what advice would you give? Wouldn’t you want to make sure your best friend was safe? So if the same thing is happening to you, you need to treat yourself like you would a good friend. Another thing to think about: If someone in your group is threatening or hurting you, do you really want to be loyal to this person?

“What if I’m too scared to tell anyone?” Tell students: By going to an adult, you can help yourself stop feeling scared. Plus, if you get help, you may help other kids find the courage to get help, too. One thing you might do is talk to an adult about how you can deal with the person who’s picking on you. You can decide what to say and role-play it first for practice. If this assertive approach doesn’t work, the adult can talk to the person who’s bullying you.

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