

The Rules of Inclusion

This project helps students recognize the difference between cliques and friends and identify language that might cue them that people are leaving others out as well as identify rules for their classroom that they can abide by in order to make sure everyone is included.

Inclusiveness Sub-Concept(s)

Kindness

Project Timeframe

25-30 minutes

Required Materials

- “Friends or Clique” worksheet
- Poster board / markers

As a class, discuss the difference between a [clique](#) and a friendship group. Highlight the fact that cliques often have someone who is a leader and who dominates the group dynamic. This person also usually makes rules for the group and excludes other people who do not seem to fit the group dynamic (often superficially - they don't look the right way, wear the right clothes, or have the right things).

Friendship groups, on the other hand, allow people to be who they are; friends value each other's unique qualities and seek to build each other up. Friendship groups, though kinder and more authentic than cliques, can still be somewhat exclusive. It can still be difficult to expand a friendship circle and let others in unless you are paying attention.

Have students work in small groups to complete the worksheet “Friends or Clique”? When the groups are done, return as a class and discuss the answers.

Note that answers may vary; students may have rationale for why all three groups in all three situations are cliques, though some may feel like the groups in #1 and #3 are friends while #2 is clearly an example of a clique. Ensure students can explain their answers and be open to discussion. You might need to point out that sometimes we assume clique behavior for certain reasons, like in the example of Marissa and the group of girls: Marissa was nervous that the girls would reject her, but that was not reality since she hadn't actually talked to them yet.

Wrap Up:

At the end, as a large group, come up with 5-10 rules the class can follow to help keep friendship groups inclusive and eliminate exclusive cliques.

Develop the inclusion rules as a large group and write them on a large piece of paper that can be posted prominently in the room. Posting these by the door might be a good area, so that students are reminded as they go out into the more social spaces of the school (lunchroom, media center, commons, recess, lockers, etc.) to be authentic friends and not exclusive cliques.

Proposed Lesson Outcomes:

Students will:

- Recognize the difference between friendship groups and cliques.
- Develop a list of guidelines to draw from when confronted with clique behavior.
- Develop skills to build authentic friendships, include others, and stand up for people who are treating others unkindly.



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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/>

Friends or Clique?

Example 1:

Danny sat in his desk cutting out shapes for the class project they were working on. He struggled to keep up as he was the only student who hadn't found a group to work with. Danny had asked a couple of groups but they said they were full, so he worked alone. Near Danny's desk, Brad, Ray and Blake were also cutting out shapes from pieces of paper for the project they were working on. Brad saw Danny sitting all alone. Danny hadn't asked if he could join their group, but Brad knew others had said no and that he didn't have a group to work with.

1. Are Brad, Ray, and Blake behaving like a friend group or clique?
2. Why do you think this?
3. What should Brad do?

Example 2:

Samara, Iman, and Alisa sat at their lunch table whispering. Allie walked past with her tray, and suddenly they started laughing loudly. "Do you see Allie's shoes?" said Samara. "Looks like she found them at one of those second-hand stores!" said Alisa. "That's probably the same place she got that ugly shirt!" Samara and Alisa both laughed. Allie kept walking, pretending not to hear their comments. Iman sat there, feeling really bad about what her friends said about Allie.

1. Are Samara, Iman, and Alisa behaving like a friend group or clique?
2. Why do you think this?
3. What should Iman do?

Example 3:

Marisa was new to school. At recess, she would stare at a group of girls in her class. They seemed nice enough but she was still nervous to go talk to them. What if they made fun of her? What if they were mean to her? What if they just ignored her completely? She watched as they talked and smiled at each other. Some of the girls looked over her way and smiled. Marisa took a deep breath.

1. Are the girls in the school yard acting like a friend group or a clique?
2. Why do you think this?
3. What should Marisa do?