

Student Involvement Activities

Grades K-2



Yarn Geometry



Purpose: To create challenges and to promote cooperative skills

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials:

- chalk
- chalkboard
- several strands of yarn with lengths varying from 4 feet to approximately 50 feet

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into one group of three, one group of four, one group of five, and so on until all students belong with a group.
2. Give each group a length of yarn. The larger the group, the longer the piece of yarn.
3. Draw different types of triangles on the chalkboard, and ask the group with three members to duplicate the drawing with their yarn. However, in duplicating the triangles, the yarn may not touch the floor and each person in that group must be part of the triangle.
4. Draw a square and a rectangle on the board and ask the group with four members to duplicate your drawing, the same rules applying to them that applied to the triangle group.
5. Draw a traditional pentagon on the board along with various-shaped pentagons, assigning duplication to the five-member group. Same rules still apply.
6. Continue the sequence as long as you have enough students.
7. Try the same process in forming letters, both lower case and upper case.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was difficult about this assignment?
2. How did you go about completing this assignment (e.g. make a plan, take turns, assign a leader)?
3. What did you learn?
4. What other situations can you think of where you need to work with someone to complete a task?

Who Am I Today?



Purpose: To think about yourself and learn about others.

Time: on-going

Materials:

- crayons
- scotch tape
- Who Am I Today? Worksheet

Procedure:

1. Distribute the attached worksheet to your students.
2. Have children put their names on their papers and then ask them to write a word to finish each sentence. (If your students are not able to write, choose one question and have them draw a picture for the answer.)
3. Ask your students if there are any other questions the class should add to the sheet.
4. Once the students finish the worksheets, the teacher collects them. Over the next few days the teacher should randomly select sheets and read a few answers until classmates can guess the author. After everyone has been guessed, explain that you are going to put the papers in a secret time machine until the school year is over. At the end of the year, the students will take them out and read them to see if they have undergone any changes or growth.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think will change the most by the end of the year?
2. What is something new you learned about your classmates?
3. What was the most exciting thing you learned about a classmate?

Who Am I Today?

My name is _____

Today is _____

I like to wear my _____

My best friend(s) is (are) _____

At school my favorite thing to learn is _____

What I like to play most of all is _____

What I like most about my classroom is _____

My favorite music is _____

My favorite book is _____

My favorite TV show is _____

My favorite morning snack is _____

The recess game I like best is _____

That's My Hero



Purpose: To create a visual representation of heroes

Time: two 30 minute sessions

Material Needed:

- poster board or use of a bulletin board
- pictures of heroes chosen by the students (this may include family members, magazine cut-outs, community and school members, etc.)
- glue

Procedure:

1. Pre-activity discussion: With your class develop the idea of everyday heroes. Heroes don't have to be rich and famous. *Heroes are someone in their lives who they are comfortable with and can turn to for advice, support, and encouragement.*
2. Assign the students the task of bringing in pictures of their heroes. They may use photos, magazine and newspaper cut-outs, etc.
3. Together assemble your hero bulletin board. Throughout the year add new heroes. Some may be students in the class.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes someone a hero?
2. Who are some heroes in our school?
3. How are your parents heroes?

We All Belong



Purpose: To create a visual reminder of belonging by creating a classroom collage.

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials:

- newspapers
- magazines
- art supplies
- bulletin board space

Procedure:

1. Give students magazines and newspapers to search for pictures and words that depict people working together, helping each other, and being friends.
2. Allow the students time to cut out the pictures and words and glue them onto one large piece of paper.
3. You may want to title the collage "We All Belong" or think of a title together.
4. Hang the collage on a bulletin board.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it feel like to belong?
2. What does it mean to belong to a group?
3. What can you do to help someone who doesn't feel as though they belong on the playground or at lunch?
4. How can our class make everyone feel like they belong?



Taking Action Skits

Purpose: To give children experience in taking action in situations that call for change or improvement

Time: two class periods

Materials:

- none

Procedure:

1. Explain to the students that their lives will be filled with situations in which they can make a difference.
2. Give the students situations from the scenarios provided and ask them to perform skits showing how they would handle them.
3. After each skit is performed, take time to process and discuss the choices the students made and presented in their skits.

Skit Scenarios

- a. There is an old man in your neighborhood who rarely leaves his house. You're afraid he can't get to the grocery store or to the doctor as often as he needs.
- b. A new girl in school is always standing by herself on the playground.
- c. You see some classmates tell a boy that he can't play with them because of his skin color.
- d. One of your classmates seems sad.
- e. You see two kids getting ready to fight.
- f. There is one kid in the class who gets teased.
- g. You have a substitute teacher. She needs help and no one is helping her.
- h. You are assigned to a class for next year. None of your friends are in the class.

Discussion Questions:

1. How often do you do things to help others?
2. How does it feel when someone helps you?
3. What are some times you wish people could help you?

Recognizing Accomplishment



Purpose: To create awareness of daily accomplishments

Time: 5 minutes at the end of the day

Materials:

- none

Procedure:

1. Pause for a few minutes at the end of the day and ask, "What have we accomplished today?"
2. Try to elicit a full range of accomplishments, i.e. social, emotional, physical, academic.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do we accomplish something everyday?
2. What does it feel like to think about our accomplishments?
3. How can we increase our accomplishments?

Smile



Purpose: To learn that good feelings are contagious.

Time: on-going

Materials:

- none

Procedure:

1. Together with your class create a bulletin board titled "Smile and the World Smiles With You."
2. Explain to your class that the bulletin board is going to reflect what makes students smile, stories about how they have made others smile and photos of smiling people. You may even want to have a photo contest for the biggest smile and post all contestants' pictures.
3. Continue to change and update the bulletin board throughout the year.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the simplest things that make people happy?
2. How does it make us feel to make others happy?
3. What would our classroom environment be like if every day we made an attempt to make another person happy?

Student Involvement Activities

Grades 3-5



Success



Purpose: To examine how people become successful

Time: to be determined by teacher

Materials:

- none

Procedure:

1. Make the statements about Abraham Lincoln into a poster for the classroom. Initiate a discussion about what failure actually is and brainstorm about safe risk-taking. Celebrate the importance of effort.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AGE	
31	failed in business
32	defeated in bid for house of reps
34	failed in business
36	nervous breakdown
38	lost an election
43	lost congressional race
46	ran for office and lost
48	ran for office and lost
55	lost senate race
56	unsuccessful bid for vice president
58	lost senate race
60	became president of the United States of America!!

2. Have each student interview 1 or 2 adults asking the following questions.
 - a. What do you feel you've been most successful at?
 - b. How did you reach success?
 - c. What difficulties did you face?
 - d. Why is it important to have success?
 - e. Do you have any advice for others?
3. Share interviews in small groups.
4. Debrief the activity. In a group circle each student will tell one thing they learned from doing the interview activity.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes someone successful?
2. What obstacles did people commonly encounter?
3. How did people overcome obstacles?
4. What have you learned about success from your interviews?

What Makes a Hero?



Purpose: To allow students time to explore what characteristics make a hero

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- sticky notes
- writing utensils
- roll of newsprint

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into two groups.
2. Each group should choose one person to have their body outlined on newsprint and outline that person's body.
3. Give the students a few minutes to think about the people who have had a positive impact on their life.
4. Encourage each student to think of three positive traits that people in their lives display.
5. Give each group a package of sticky notes and allow each student to write their traits on sticky notes.
6. Each group should put their sticky notes on the body they outline.
7. Let your students know they just created a hero!
8. Compare and contrast the two bodies the groups created.

Discussion Questions:

1. What other traits does a hero have that your body didn't?
2. What do you think is the most important trait a hero should have?
3. Which traits do you possess that we've discussed today?

The Welcoming Committee



Purpose: To create a sense of belonging among students by giving them the responsibility of welcoming new students to school

Time: on-going

Materials:

- none

Procedure:

1. Involve your students in a discussion about how it feels to be a new member of a group (e.g., school, club, sport, etc.). Have the students brainstorm ways to make new students feel welcome.
2. Allow your students to create a welcoming committee. Teacher supervisors should meet with the welcoming committee on a regular basis to discuss the project. Welcoming committees will vary from school to school, but here are some suggestions:
 - a. Create a profile of the school. This profile may include a building map, the school mascot, the school schedule, after school activities, and any other interesting information.
 - b. Develop a tour of the building and important sites to see.
 - c. Take turns orienting new students.
 - d. Introduce new students to important adults in the building.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important for a new student to have a Welcoming Committee?
2. What are some obstacles to belonging when you are the newcomer to a group?
3. How could we make our school more welcoming?

You Be the Judge



Purpose: To give students an opportunity to consider appropriate consequences for particular actions

Time: two class periods

Materials:

- chart paper
- colored markers

Procedure:

1. Post 12 pieces of chart paper around the room.
2. At the top of each piece of chart paper, write one of the suggested crimes or infractions.
3. Have your class brainstorm what appropriate consequences would be for each infraction and have a student write them onto the corresponding chart. Share these suggestions with your principal.

INFRACTIONS/CRIMES

- a. Kids vandalize the school.
- b. A student continually disrupts the class.
- c. A student starts a fight.
- d. A student constantly teases someone.
- e. A student cheats on a test.
- f. A student starts a food fight in the cafeteria.
- g. A homework assignment is not completed.
- h. A student doesn't listen to the teacher.
- i. A student runs down the hall.
- j. A student uses bad language.
- k. A student steals something.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to have consequences for actions?
2. When are consequences unfair?
3. What do you do when you receive an unfair punishment for your behavior?

Volunteers Recognition



Purpose: To recognize and celebrate school volunteers who exemplify good citizenship

Time: dependent on extent of celebration

Materials:

- dependent on celebration type

Procedure:

1. Discuss with your class that you would like them to develop a volunteer celebration. The celebration can be as simple as sending a card to a volunteer or as complex as planning a luncheon.
2. The students should be responsible for the planning and the implementation of the celebration.
3. Make sure you give the volunteers enough notification so that they may plan on attending the event.

Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways do you benefit from volunteers?
2. How did you feel a sense of accomplishment during this project?
3. Why do you feel that recognizing the volunteers was worthwhile?

Speed Ball



Purpose: To provide students a fun activity

Time: 20 minutes

Materials:

- Nerf ball

Procedure:

1. Have the class get in a circle.
2. The challenge is for the group to pass the ball around the circle as fast as possible, starting clockwise.
3. After this is done a few times call the clockwise team, Team A, and time them. Have them work on improving their time.
4. Add a "second" team. Call them Team B. They are actually the same group only they have to do Speed Ball counterclockwise. (They are competing against themselves.) Time Team B.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was it like to compete against yourself?
2. Who was the faster team? Team A or Team B? Why?
3. What was different about this race?

Word Challenge



Purpose: To stimulate curiosity by challenging students' thinking

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials:

- pencils
- paper

Procedure:

1. This is an easy activity that can be done during any spare time. Use any word that has a lot of letters. For example, schoolyard.
2. Next, ask the students to come up with as many words as possible using the letters in the chosen word. Give your students a specific amount of time to complete the activity.

Discussion Questions:

1. Were you surprised at how many words you discovered?
2. What was the most creative word you found?
3. What are some other words that may be good to use?