

Building Empathy Toward Others

Grades K–3

Objective:

The student will be able to recognize how various behaviors can affect others.

Hook

Let your students know that throughout this lesson they will discuss and explore ways to recognize how various behaviors can affect others. Have students reflect on several behaviors that they may have displayed recently.

Ask the following questions:

- *Were these behaviors positive or negative?*
- *What type of response or reaction did you receive from others as you displayed these behaviors?*

Allow students to turn and talk with an elbow partner to discuss answers.

(Note: If you are teaching in person, students can use their elbow as a guide to determine who they should talk to. If you are teaching virtually, break students into two breakout rooms and assign two student monitors per room to ensure that questions are being discussed.)

Next, allow several students to share their answers with the whole group.

Introduce vocabulary words **empathy** and **behavior**. Display the definitions via board, poster, or PowerPoint.

- **Empathy:** The ability to identify with the way another person may be feeling
- **Behavior:** An action that one displays toward another

Read the words aloud, and have students repeat each word in an “I do, we do, you do” format:

- **I do:** Read the vocabulary word and definition.
- **We do:** Choral read the vocabulary word and definition.
- **You do:** Point to the vocabulary word and definition as the class choral reads without teacher assistance.

Teach/Model

Continue to explore how to show empathy toward others who display various behaviors with an activity called Showing Empathy.

- Direct students to take a sheet of paper and fold it in half (or fourths, depending on the developmental readiness of your class). Tell students that as you read a scenario, they will draw a smiley face to determine if the behavior is positive or a sad face to determine if the behavior is negative. Next, have students explain how they can show empathy toward the person who is displaying these behaviors.
- For example: *John, who sits next to Michael, reached inside Michael's desk and took his pencil sharpener without asking.* Illustrate a sad face and display it for students to see. Explain why this behavior may be considered negative. Next, discuss how John can continue to show Michael empathy. You might say:
 - John can tell Michael that he understands that he needs to use his pencil sharpener and next time he should ask.
 - John can tell Michael that it is important to respect things that belong to others and still allow him to sharpen his pencil.

Student Practice

1. Mario walks up to you and snatches the ball out of your hands during gym class. *What type of behavior is this? How can you show empathy toward him?*
2. Jean tells you that she loves your new sweater. *What type of behavior is this? How can you show empathy toward her?*
3. Macy needed to quickly get off of the school bus. Instead of saying excuse me, she rushes past you, causing you to bump into the seat in front of you. *What type of behavior is this? How can you show empathy toward him?*

Reflection

Encourage students to continue to practice showing empathy toward others when various behaviors are being displayed.

Ask:

- *Do you think that showing empathy toward those who display negative behaviors can have a positive effect on our classroom community? Explain.*