

Friends
come with
all types of



abilities.

TOPIC: We're all OK: Understanding strengths, challenges and differences

Your students will use visual organizers to explore and discuss personal strengths and challenges. They will recognize that everyone has both...and that is a positive thing. Students will create a class poster to remind them how they can get and/or give help when they or someone else is facing a challenge. They will understand that we all want to be successful and to feel good about our

GRADE: 3

TIME: 30 minutes

This lesson is an extension of two Cromwell Center grade 3 classroom program activities that your class participated in:

- When students shared one thing that someone in their family has trouble doing (a disability/challenge) and one thing this person is good at (a strength.)
- When they explored how lemons are similar and different, yet the lemon was still a lemon – just as people are still people despite any differences/challenges/disabilities.

OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Define “strength” and “challenge”
- Understand the variety of classmates’ strengths and challenges and understand that one person’s strength may be another’s challenge
- Understand that classmates can help and support each other. (Students will develop a positive attitude, understanding, and sensitivity toward people with disabilities - Cromwell Center key message)
- Explore how to use a strength to help someone else *or* show understanding of the ways in which everyone is unique and should be treated with respect. (All differences should be treated with dignity and respect - Cromwell Center key message)

MATERIALS:

- Two pieces of chart paper, or whiteboard, or interactive whiteboard
- Markers (2 colors)
- Highlighter

ACTIVITIES:

A. Define the words “challenge” and “strength”

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- Write “challenge” on the board or flipchart. Ask students, “What is a challenge?” Gather and list some examples.
- Write “strength” on the board or flipchart. Ask students, “What is a strength?” Gather and list some examples.

B. Create a T-chart with two headings in different colors: STRENGTHS and CHALLENGES.

- Ask students to think back to the Cromwell Center activity in which they told about a family member who has difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, etc. (Challenges)
- Ask students to recall the activity in which they shared something that that person was good at. (Strengths)
- Tell students to think about something that is a challenge personally and something that is a strength. (You can suggest that they think about something in school: during class time, on the playground, or in the cafeteria.)
- List responses (without names) under CHALLENGES and STRENGTHS

C. Compare and Contrast

- Ask the students to look at the chart. “Are there any words that show up on both sides? Is it possible that one person’s challenge is someone else’s strength?” (i.e. good at math, challenged by math) Highlight those.
- Discuss how/why that can be. (We are all different people.)
- “Now think back to the Cromwell Center’s lemon activity. Were all the lemons the same? How were they different? Was each lemon still a lemon even though they were all slightly different?”
- Write “DIFFERENCES” on the board. “Was one lemon better than the other lemons? (No, they were just different.) So, does having differences in strengths and challenges mean someone is better than someone else? (No! Just different.)”

D. Go back to T-Chart

- “Since we agree that we have many different strengths and challenges in this class, how can we work together to help each other?” (For example, someone who has a strength in reading could help someone who has challenges with reading.)
- “Let’s make a list of ways we can help each other. We can make it a poster and hang it in the room to help us remember.”

For example:

How we can get help with our challenges?

- *Help each other practice*
- *Work with a parent, teacher, sibling, friend*
- *Try it a new way*
- *Ask someone for help*

E. EVALUATION

Have students write about:

- Their strength(s) and how they might use these strengths to help someone who struggles in that area

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or

- Why differences can be positive and why all people, despite differences, deserve to be treated with respect.

F. OPTIONAL:

- Have each student draw a picture of a way they can help someone and include a statement below the picture. Combine into a "How We Help Each Other" book that will serve as a reminder in the classroom.
- Turn the T-chart into a Venn diagram.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE CROMWELL CENTER

Dear Teacher or Guidance Counselor:

Your brief feedback on this or on any of our other lesson plans is very important. It will enable us to share results with our grant funders and help obtain future funding, and any suggestions for improvements will help us fine tune the activities to best meet your needs.

To provide this valuable feedback, please go to the form on the bottom of this page on our website: <http://cromwellcenter.org/teacher-resources/>.

Or, if you prefer, you can e-mail your comments to sgreenwood@cromwellcenter.org.

Thank you!