

Respect or Disrespect?

We must build a new world, a far better world - one in which the eternal dignity of man is respected. ~Harry S. Truman

Overview

In this activity, students will continue to explore and add to the classroom expectations, gaining the understanding that part of being a responsible member of a community is being respectful and handling conflicts in an appropriate way. Through role-plays and discussion, students will examine specific behaviors and choices as they relate to respect in school and develop an understanding of how each individual's actions determine the climate of a classroom.

Grades

6-8

Activity Type

Partner

Whole class

Materials

- Respect or Disrespect Role Plays, attached

Duration

45 minutes (varies depending on the number of roll plays presented and extent of discussion after each; role-plays and discussion can also be split up over various class periods)

Preparation

Ideally, students will have been introduced to classroom expectations prior to this lesson, allowing this activity to serve as additional exploration of such (see the Consortium's "The Ideal Classroom Community Member: Establishing Expectations for Classroom Behavior")

Procedure

What is Respect?

1. Call student attention to their "ideal classroom community member brainstorm" from the Consortium's "The Ideal Classroom Community Member: Establishing Expectations for Classroom Behavior" and ask students if they have thought of any other details to add inside or outside the human outline.

Teacher Note: If this activity is being used independently from "The Ideal Classroom Community Member: Establishing Expectations for Classroom Behavior," teachers should begin the lesson by drawing a circle on a large piece of paper displayed for all to see. Write the word **RESPECT** in the middle of the circle, and ask students, "What is respect?" Encourage them to brainstorm the word, what it means, actions associated with it, etc. As students comment, write their thoughts within the circle. (You may wish to have students jot down a list independently first, then have them share their thoughts in class discussion.) Once a substantial list is created, ask students/participants: "What is disrespect?" Using the same process as above, write student thoughts on disrespect outside the circle. Throughout the process, ask clarifying questions if you see an aspect that is missing. (For example: "I don't see any mention of gossiping. Would that go inside the circle or outside?") When finished, transition to discussion using the questions noted in Step 2 below.

2. Once students have had time to add to their brainstorm, discuss:
 - The basis of our Community Expectations is the word “respect.” Why is it important to be respectful to one another?
 - How does it feel when people are disrespectful?
 - Why do you think some people disrespect others? (You may wish to focus on particular types of disrespect noted in the brainstorm, such as bullying, teasing, gossiping, etc.)
 - If you had a choice of being around people who represent the characteristics listed inside our brainstormed classmate [or circle] or outside, who would you choose and why?

Exploring Respectful and Disrespectful Behavior

3. Explain to students that they will be examining respectful and disrespectful behavior by acting out partner role plays:
 - Tell students that once they are partnered up, they should take 5 minutes to discuss and practice their role play.
 - Explain that they will then be presenting their role play in front of the class and that they should do so as serious actors. The purpose is not to be funny and make classmates laugh; the purpose is to illustrate the scene assigned to the best of your ability.
 - Students do not have to memorize their lines but they should do their best to “act” the scene, rather than just read it.
 - Finally, review expectations for partner work, divide students into pairs, and give them one of the attached role-plays. (Teachers are encouraged to edit and adapt these role-plays to address issues most relevant to your class.)
 - Ask students if they have any questions and let them get started.
4. Once students are ready to present, review expectations for being a respectful audience member. For example:
 - Pay close attention. Look at and listen to the presenting students.
 - Send positive vibes! Remember, some of us get very nervous speaking in front of others!
 - Do not work on your own presentation while others are presenting.
 - When the presentation is over, clap loudly to say “thank you” and “good job.”
5. These scenes are meant to be quick, visual “jumping off” points for discussion regarding appropriate class behavior. After each pair presents, use the provided questions to facilitate in depth student discussion. If students note behaviors (positive or negative) in the discussions that were not written inside or outside the human outline (or circle), ensure they are added in the appropriate place.
6. Once you have gone through the role-plays and discussed, sum up the experience by asking:
 - Why is it important to follow our Community Expectations?
 - If we all agree to work on being respectful to one another each day, what will our classroom be like? What will learning be like? What types of activities will we be able to do? (Discuss how respectful behavior will create a safe, caring classroom community where students can be trusted to safely leave their seats and work in partners/groups, etc.)
 - If you disrespect someone, what should you do once you realize it?
 - If you are disrespected, what is the best way to handle it?
 - If we all practice respect as citizens of this classroom, how might our entire school community begin to change?

Additional Activities

- **Personal Role Plays:** Allow students to create their own role plays based on specific experiences they have had or seen at school that deal with respect and disrespect. Use the same process as outlined in the activity to allow students to explore different choices that can be made when dealing with difficult situations.
- **The Power of Words:** This curriculum by Teaching Tolerance provides activities for examining the language of ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation bias; available for free download at: http://www.tolerance.org/teach/web/power_of_words/index.jsp.

Respect or Disrespect Role Plays

Roll Play 1

During a lesson, a participant makes a rude comment out loud.

Teacher: Alright class, please take out your text book and turn to page 103 to begin today's lesson.

Student: *(smacking teeth and sighing loudly)* Man, this is BORING! This class really BLOWS!

Discussion points for Roll Play 1

- Was this respect or disrespect and why? In what way did this go against our agreed upon Community Expectations?
- Who was disrespected in this scene? *(Make sure to point out the teacher and the other students were disrespected, since the rest of the class was disrupted by this outburst.)*
- How might negative energy such as this affect the climate of our class?
- The student hadn't even given the teacher time to do anything before he/she was saying "I'm bored." Why is it important to give everything a chance and try new things?
- Sometimes in class we might have to do things that you consider "boring." Why do you think this is the case?
- If you are bored in class, what might be a better way to address your feelings with the teacher than this?

Roll Play 2

A student is talking while the teacher is delivering a lesson.

Teacher: We're going to continue discussing the American Revolution today. Yesterday, we left off with the Battles of Lexington and Concord...

Student: *(whispering to another student, trying to get their attention)* Hey, hey...Psssst! Did you hear about Jasmine making the volley ball team?

Teacher: Excuse me, could you please stop talking during the lesson?

Student: Oh, I'm sorry Ms. Smith. It won't happen again. *(student returns to work and pays attention)*

Discussion points for Roll Play 2

- Was this respect or disrespect and why? *(Make sure that students understand that while it was disrespectful to the teacher and other students to talk during the lesson, the student who was talking took responsibility for his/her actions in a respectful way and apologized.)*
- Does this happen sometimes in your classes, when students are talking while the teacher is presenting a lesson? When a student is asked to stop talking and he/she responds in a disrespectful way, what might happen? *(Discuss consequences that might be given and how the situation can unnecessarily escalate.)* Thus, what is the easier choice to make when you get caught doing something you aren't supposed to be doing - a respectful response or a disrespectful response and why?
- Why is it important to be mature and take responsibility for your actions?
- If you really need to speak with a friend about something, when would be a more appropriate time to do it?

Roll Play 3

Two students are sitting at lunch and gossiping about a girl across the cafeteria.

- Student 1: I really can't stand that girl (*pointing across the cafeteria*). She is such a DORK.
- Student 2: Yeah, I know. I mean, how many zits can one person have on their face?
- Student 1: Tell me about it. It looks like she would at least buy some descent clothes. And seriously, she really needs some make-up with a face like that.
- Student 2: I would just die if I had to sit by myself at lunch everyday like she does.
- Student 1: (*laughing*) Yeah, how embarrassing.

Discussion points for Roll Play 3

- Was this respect or disrespect and why?
- How would you characterize these two students? Why do you think they were saying these mean things? Why do think people gossip?
- Although we didn't meet the student they were gossiping about, how do you think she felt?
- Why can gossip be as hurtful to someone as physical violence?
- How could we change this scene to represent a respectful response? (*If students don't point this out on their own, highlight the fact that since the girl being gossiped about was sitting all alone, someone could invite her to join them.*)
- While we don't have to be best friends with everyone we meet, what are our responsibilities to one another as members of the same school community?

Roll Play 4

A student is having a hard time on a Math assignment and is ready to give up, when another student offers to help.

- Student 1: (*working on an assignment, and obviously having a hard time*) I give up! I can NOT do this math work. I hate it! It's just too hard and I'm not smart enough. I'm so stupid when it comes to math.
- Student 2: Come on, knock it off. Don't say that about yourself. You know you're smart.
- Student 1: That's nice to say, but seriously...I give up.
- Student 2: No, you aren't going to give up. I'll help you. Let's work together, OK?
- Student 1: I don't know...
- Student 2: I'm sure I can help you understand. I also had trouble at first and now I get it. Come on, pull up your desk.
- Student 1: Well...OK. Thanks. (*Starts working along with Student 2.*)

Discussion points for Roll Play 4

- How would you describe Student 2? In what way was Student 2 being a positive leader?
- Do you see people sometimes give up or stop trying in your classes? Why do you think they do this?
- When we see our class mates struggling, what choices can we make to assist them? (*offer assistance, study together, let the teacher know, ask if you can work together, etc.*)
- Assuming some of you have done nice things before, how does it make you feel to know you have helped someone else?

Role Play 5

Two students are working in class when they notice a fight in the hall.

- Student 1: *(looking up from his work)* Hey! Check it out! There's a fight in the hall...awesome! *(Gets out of seat and heads for the door to see what is happening)*
- Student 2: *(following student 1)* This is going to be good! Fight! Fight! Hit him hard!
- Student 1: I hope Jason wins!
- Student 2: No way man, my money is on Tyrone!
- Student 1: *(bouncing with excitement and yelling to other students)* Hey, everybody! Fight in the hall! Fight in the hall! Check it out!!!

Discussion points for Roll Play 5

- Name everyone in this scene who broke Community Expectations. *(Make sure to discuss not only the disrespect of the students fighting, but also that of the instigators in this scene.)*
- Do people sometimes fight in our school? In what ways do people instigate fights? *(Discuss how gossip, horseplay, watching a fight, cheering on a fight, taking sides, knowing about a fight and not getting help, etc. are all forms of instigation.)*
- Why is instigating a fight just as bad as participating in one?
- What does it say about our school community when there are fights? How might our school appear to others if we have a reputation for fighting here?
- Let's imagine that this situation took place in our school while our Superintendent was here for a visit. How might he/she view us and our school based on this one event? *(remind students of their discussion of first impressions on Day 1 of school.)*
- If we are feeling upset or angry enough to fight, what choices do we have other than resulting to violence?
- What is our school's policy on fighting? *(review the policy with student and allow them to ask questions)*
- If we think a fight is going to occur, or know that a fight is happening, what is our responsibility? How should we respond? *(Make sure students understand that they should never place themselves in danger – i.e. trying to break up a fight physically. Rather, they should alert an adult. Also discuss with students the importance of letting adults know when violent acts may be about to occur or occurring – this is not being a “tattle tale” or a “snitch;” this is being mature and responsible.)*

Roll Play 6

A student has issues with the group he/she is assigned to work with.

- Teacher: Alright class, let's break into the groups that I assigned you and get to work.
- Student: Ms. Smith, I do NOT want to work with Jake. He gets on my nerves big time.
- Teacher: You only have to work with your group for 30 minutes in this activity.
- Student: I don't care if it's 5 minutes. He's a geek and I can't stand him. I'm not working with him. *(Yelling across the room to Jake)* Jake! You need to find somewhere else to sit. You're not working in my group!

Discussion points for roll play 6:

- Was this student following the proper expectations and procedures for group work? Explain.
- Who was disrespected in this scene? *(Make sure students point out the teacher, Jake, and the whole class was disrupted).*
- How might negative energy such as this affect the climate of our class?
- Generally, we like to work in groups. However, if students respond like this, are your teachers going to want to plan group activities for you? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to be willing to work with any one of your classmates? *(Make sure students understand this is a mature, professional skill, since once in the work place, working with people you don't choose to work with is common.)*
- If in the most serious case, there is a valid reason that you cannot work with someone assigned to your group, what would be a more appropriate way to handle it?

Roll Play 7

A student comes to class tardy and the teacher is furious.

- Student: *(enters class late)*
- Teacher: Are you aware that you are tardy?
- Student: Yes, I'm sorry.
- Teacher: *(yelling)* Sorry isn't good enough! You were late last week as well!
- Student: I really am sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt class...
- Teacher: I don't care what you meant! Get OUT! NOW!!! *(student leaves)*

Discussion points for roll play 7:

- Was this respect or disrespect and why?
- Who was disrespected in this scene? *(Discuss while it is important to be to class on time, and that arriving late is disrespectful, in this case the teacher was disrespectful in the way he/she handled the situation.)*
- Do teachers sometimes become so frustrated that they react like this? Why do you think some teachers might lose their tempers at times? *(Encourage students to understand various stresses teachers face.)*
- If you feel disrespected by a teacher, how might you handle it? *(Discuss options such as talking to that teacher at a later point. You may also want to take this opportunity to tell students that you prefer they come to you if they ever feel disrespected by you. Often times, it can be frustrating for teachers to hear from a parent that the child is feeling "picked on," without having heard anything from the student first. Let students know the extent of your open-door policy.)*
- While it is disrespectful to be tardy, did this student respond in a respectful way? *(yes!)* If the student had responded by yelling back, how might the situation have escalated?
- Do students always take responsibility for being tardy? *(Highlight the fact that when students are late, yet argue, they waste everyone's time and escalate the situation.)*

Roll Play 8

A student is trying to work while another student keeps bothering him/her.

- Student 1: *(working quietly on an assignment)*
- Student 2: *(tries to get Student 1's attention)* Hey. Hey! I'm talking to you.
- Student 1: *(continues to work and ignores the other student)*
- Student 2: Hello? Stop being such a nerd. *(begins to make faces at student 1)*
- Student 1: *(shakes head and keeps working)*
- Student 2: I said I'm talking to you, nerd! Hello???
- Student 1: *(Yells in an outburst)* Will you just SHUT UP and LEAVE ME ALONE?!?

Discussion points for roll play 8:

- Who was disrespected in this scene? *(Ensure students discuss that both students were disrespectful, Student 2 in badgering the other, and Student 1 in the way he/she finally responded. Not to mention, this would have likely disrupted the remainder of the students.)*
- While it's understandable that Student 1 lost his/her temper, what would have been a better way to respond?
- Why is it disrespectful to tell someone to "shut-up"? What is a more respectful way to get the same message across? *(i.e. "Could you please stop talking?")*
- If you are being bothered by another student, what is the best way to handle it? *(Discuss options such as trying to keep your cool and respectfully asking them to stop, try to remove yourself from the situation, speak with the teacher, etc.)*
- Sometimes, when you are unable to resolve a conflict yourself, it is necessary to involve the teacher. What is the difference in asking your teacher for help and being a tattletale or "snitch"? Why is it important that we agree to ask for help when needed, and not call one another ridiculous names like this? *(Discuss with students how often times the people mistreating others or bothering others are the ones who throw out insults such as "tattletale" or "snitch." They know this is the best way for them to do whatever they want to do – no matter how mean, insulting, bothersome, or dangerous – without getting in trouble and having to face the consequences. It is this important each member of the classroom community agree upfront to not give aggressive students this power. Rather, they must follow the community expectations the class agreed upon, just like everyone else.)*

Roll Play 9

The class is taking a test when a student tries to cheat off her friend's paper.

- Student 1: Psst! Hey, Carrie...let me see your answer to number 3 on the test.
- Student 2: *(shakes head frantically while looking around to see if the teacher is watching)*
- Student 1: Seriously, let me see your answer! Move your cover sheet. No one will know.
- Student 2: I really don't want to cheat – it's dishonest.
- Student 1: If you don't let me see your answer, I'm not your friend anymore...I mean it!

Discussion points for roll play 9:

- How were Community Expectations broken in this scene?
- Why is it wrong to cheat? *(Discuss how not only is it dishonest, it doesn't actually help you to cheat. Student 1 may get a better grade on the test, but he/she doesn't know how to do the work – which will likely be a problem for him/her in the future (i.e. on a final exam, on an End of Course Test, etc.)*
- Is Student 1 a good friend? Why or why not?
- Did Student 2 do the right thing by denying his/her friend the right to view his/her paper? Why or why not? Why might this have been a really hard thing for Student 2 to do? *(Discuss the definition of peer pressure with students and how they should be aware of when it is at play.)*

Roll Play 10

Using disrespectful words.

Student 1: Hey, have you heard this new band? I think they are really great! Take my headphones and listen.

Student 2: Are you kidding? This band sounds so GAY. They sound ridiculous!

Student 1: You think? I really like them.

Discussion points for roll play 10:

- Did disrespect occur in this scene? Explain.
- Do you hear people in school saying things like, “That’s so GAY”, “You are acting GHETTO”, “That is RETARDED”, etc.?
- Sometimes if you hear comments like these commonly, you might assume they are harmless. Why are comments like this actually disrespectful? (*Students begin using language like this based upon hearing it in everyday speech. Some don’t realize that in actuality, such language is quite disrespectful. For example, in this scene, being gay was equated as something that is negative.*)

Teacher Note: For further exploration of this topic, see the Consortium’s lesson “Symbols and Words of Hate” or “The Power of Words,” a curriculum by Teaching Tolerance for examining the language of ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation bias – available for free download at http://www.tolerance.org/teach/web/power_of_words/index.jsp.

Role Play 11

Students are supposed to be working on a partner assignment.

Student 1: OK, let’s get started. We’ve only got 15 minutes to do this set of questions.

Student 2: (*Head is down on desk*) Whatever, this is totally boring.

Student 1: You might not be so bored if you help me do some work.

Student 2: (*yawning*) Can’t you just finish them without me? You are better at science than me anyway.

Student 1: How do you expect to get better in science if you don’t pay attention and do the work? Can you please help me?

Student 2: Alright, alright. Which one do you want to start with?

Discussion points for role play 11:

- What took place in this scene? Was Student 2 following expectations for partner work?
- Have you ever been working with a partner or group that’s made one person do most of the work? How do you think this would feel? Why is this unfair?
- How did Student 1 do handling the situation? Had he/she made the choice to yell at Student 2, how might things have turned out differently?
- If Student 2 responded differently and didn’t finally agree to do their fair share of the work, what could Student 1 do?
- If people in our class behave like Student 2, not participating and following expectations, do you think there will be more or less opportunity for partner and group work? Explain.

Role Play 12

Taking responsibility for your actions

Teacher: Alright class, please pass in your homework and then we'll head down to the assembly. Please remember that if you didn't complete your assignment last night, you'll have to finish it now rather than attend the presentation downstairs.

Student 1: That is so stupid! I did my homework. I just can't find it.

Teacher: I'm sorry <insert name>, but everyone knew what was expected of them to be able to attend the assembly. This is also the third time you haven't had your homework this week, so this will be a good time for you to catch up on work.

Student 1: But I did it! It's not my fault if somebody took it or if fell out of my bag! This is not fair. I want to go to the assembly.

Teacher: You are going to use this time to get caught up; getting those assignments turned in will help your grade.

Student 1: This is the dumbest class ever. I don't want to do any stupid homework. I WANT to GO to the ASSEMBLY!

Discussion points for role play 12:

- What did you witness in this scene?
- Was it the teacher's fault that the student didn't have their homework? Whose fault was it?
- Why do we sometimes blame others for things that are our own fault?
- Did Student 1 make the right choice in the way they responded to the teacher? Explain.
- Why is it important to take responsibility for your actions?