



## Education for Sustainable Development

### How to Get Started For Elementary Teachers

*An effort to create a fairer more just world starts with you.*

#### **Respect for others**

Background: The increasingly multicultural world that we live in brings together people of different ethnicities and cultures. Tolerating and accepting differences between groups of people leads to more cohesive and peaceful societies, while not understanding differences can lead to intolerance and hatred as well as escalate to violence. Promoting a culture of tolerance, respect, nonviolence, and peace can start in your classroom and contribute to a more just world for all.

What does respect for others look like in your classroom and in your community? Introduce the term “respect” in a way that your students can grasp. This may be different depending on the age/grade of your students.

Discussion:

- Can you tell me what you think the word “respect” means?
  - It may be easiest to define respect as how we feel about someone/something and how we act towards someone/something.
- Having respect means you think good things about a person or thing. You can have respect for yourself and for others. Let’s list ways we show respect for others in our school.
  - Depending on the age of your students, it may help to give an example, however, be prepared that you may get similar responses from your students and may need to probe them to think of other examples.
- Now let’s think of ways we can show respect in our community. Like when you are at the park or at the grocery store?
- Can you think of a time when you saw someone act in a way that was not respectful of another person?
- How do you feel when someone doesn’t show you respect? Would you feel sad or angry?
- How does treating others kindly help make our school a better place?
- How does treating others kindly help make our community a better place?

#### **Respect for the environment**

Background: Planet Earth is an amazing place, providing water to drink, air to breathe, food to eat, and energy to keep us warm, cook our food, and fuel our industry. Because there are so many of us on Earth (7.3 billion people) we need to be careful of how we use Earth and to be sure that we don’t abuse the Earth. Caring for Earth can begin in your classroom.

Schools have a large amount of materials flow through them—paper, food, cardboard, plastics. Disposing of all of this stuff in the garbage can is expensive. It costs communities about \$50 - \$100 or more per ton to dispose of garbage than to recycle this waste. That money could be better spent, for example on schools or social services. Every item that you recycle saves your community money. Additionally, recycling saves energy. For example, making an aluminum can from recycled aluminum results in 94% energy savings. It also prevents additional mining of bauxite ore and all the pollution that accompanies mining and refining.

Discussion: Our school has a recycling program.

- What does it mean to “recycle” something?
- Our school does recycle. We recycle paper, aluminum, glass, etc. Why do you think everyone in our school should use the recycling bins?

- How is it good for the environment?
- Did you know we actually have to spend money to have our trash taken away? Does it make sense to spend money to get rid of our garbage?
- What could we do to reduce how much money we have to pay to have our trash taken from our school? What about our community?
- What can you (and your family) do to have less garbage at your home?

## Respect for culture

Background: The United States of America is largely a nation of immigrants. American culture is the result of blending together traditions from countries around the world. Part of being an American citizen and citizen of the world is respecting other people's cultures and traditions.

Discussion:

- Present something (this could be an idea) unfamiliar to the students. How can you treat someone/something kindly even if this person or thing is new and different?
  - For example, you could tell the students you were thinking of getting a lobster for a pet. Ask how they could react to this comment in a kind way even though the idea of having a lobster as a pet may be new or different to them.
- I want you to pretend that a new student from Africa (or another new/different culture) started attending our school.
  - What could you do to treat this new student with kindness?
  - How do you stop yourself from being unkind to this student if their clothes, hair or skin are different than yours? (Not laughing at her/him.)
  - How do you stop yourself from being unkind to this student if they bring a snack to share with us that tastes strange and we've never eaten before? (Take a small bite and swallow it. Do not spit it out, make funny face, say yuck, or throw it in the garbage.)
  - How do you stop yourself from being unkind to this student if the student talks differently than you do? (Listen carefully and politely ask them to repeat what they said or ask a question if you don't know what they mean).
  - How would you feel if you were the new student and someone didn't treat you with kindness?

By learning and practicing this now, it will be easier for you as an adult to work with or live next to people from other countries.

## Respect for yourself

Background: Society is made up of individuals. We have a responsibility to care for ourselves so that we can contribute to the well-being of our school and our community.

Discussion:

- What can you do to take care of yourself so that you can be a good member of our school?
  - Possible answers: wash your hands so you don't get sick and can attend school.
  - Get enough sleep so you wake-up in time to catch the bus.
  - Learn everyday so that I can teach younger students in the school.
- How can you care for yourself when you are a grown-up so that you can be a good adult in your community? You may want to ask more questions after students respond (see below).
  - Possible answers: Stay healthy by \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - Stay away from drugs and alcohol so you can take care of your family and go to work.
  - Read the newspaper so you can be informed to vote.
    - Why is voting important?
    - How does reading the newspaper help you with voting?