

C5

LESSON 5
CHILDREN
V.1



social

“I FEEL”: COMMUNICATING NEEDS AND WANTS CHILDREN LESSON 5: SOCIAL PEACE 2

AGE(S)

Recommended for ages 7-12

TIME REQUIRED

45 minutes

TEACHER PREPARATION

To prepare for this lesson...

- Read the “[5 Spheres of Peace](#)” NPA Framework focusing on social peace sphere
- Read the [Teacher’s Guide](#) for preparation and reflection questions

MATERIALS

- No materials required for this lesson

LEARNING GOALS

- Using “I feel” statements to express their emotions, students will experience communication skills that can be used to effectively communicate emotions, needs, and wants

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Through group dialogue, students will choose responses to conflict that best communicate wants, needs, and feelings
- Students will create “I feel” statements to express emotions

INTRODUCTION

In [lesson 4 \(social peace 1\)](#) students learned that all people have needs and wants. The ability to communicate needs, wants, and emotions in ways others can respond to peacefully is important in building social peace. When a conflict arises, expressing emotions using “I feel” statements can open up the conversation rather than put others in a defensive or reactive position. Using the words “I feel” communicates feelings clearly without blaming others for your emotions. Children can recognize the usefulness of “I feel” statements when they are given examples of responses to conflict: one using an “I feel” statement, the other without. This exercise will engage students in thinking about how they communicate their feelings during a conflict. It will also give students the opportunity to practice using “I feel” statements.

“I feel” statements are tools for children to use as they begin to communicate their emotions. As children get older and become more aware of how their feelings impact others, they may use “I feel” statements to try and manipulate others into doing what they want; for example “I feel like you don’t care about me because you won’t give me your doll.” “You don’t care” is not an expression of an emotion. A more proper expression might be “*I feel frustrated* when you don’t share

your doll.” When introducing these skills in a classroom environment, be aware of when this occurs and intervene. Help students recognize their own behaviors and intentions. Inform students that it is important to communicate wants and needs with one another in an environment of mutual respect and care; trying to manipulate or control another person will only create more conflict.

Communicating emotions and listening to others is a skill developed with much practice over time. This lesson is merely an introduction to the important communication skills needed to sustain peace within relationships.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can we communicate our feelings to others?
- What feelings might be difficult for others to hear and how might we communicate them?
- What tone of voice might we use? What kind of body language?
- Are there words that can be helpful? Are there words that might be harmful?

OPENING DISCUSSION

Remind the class of lesson 4 (social peace 1) on needs and wants. Last week we discussed how people share some needs and wants. Sometimes when people share the same needs or wants problems or conflicts can arise. Can you think of time when you had trouble sharing something? What was it? What happened? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? What did you say? Do you think that helped the situation?

Explain to students that it can be hard to know what to say to someone who has hurt our feelings. Other people aren't always aware of what we want or need. Often they don't know how it makes us feel when these wants and needs aren't met. In order for us to solve our problems peacefully we need to communicate our wants, needs, and feelings to others in a way that doesn't hurt the other person.

Use the guiding questions above to explore the concept of communicating our emotions with others.

ACTIVITY 1: RESPONDING TO CONFLICT

1. Ask students to listen to the examples below. Tell them to help the people in the stories by picking the response that will best communicate their wants, needs, and feelings. Listen to both options before choosing.
2. Read each situation and both response options. Let student volunteers pick between the two responses. Ask them why they think this response was a better way of communicating their wants, needs, and feelings.

Situation One: The Case of the Green Pencil

There were two children sitting at a table. Both were drawing quietly. One child was drawing big beautiful trees, the other a field of wildflowers. It just so happened that at the very same moment, both children looked for the most important color to complete their masterpieces. They needed the green pencil. Their eyes glanced toward the shiny green color lying in the middle of the table. They saw each other eyeing what they needed most in the world. Hands flew out and the fastest child grabbed the pencil. The second child, with nothing in hand looked sadly in the others' direction and said:

Option 1:

“You always do that! You always grab things from me, and I hate it. You are so mean, you never want to share!”

Option 2:

“I feel really sad. I really needed to use that pencil.”

Situation 2: Your Favorite Food

You arrive home from school and all you can think about is the cheesy crackers waiting for you in the cupboard. You are so hungry you can almost taste your favorite crackers even before you reach for the box. You grab for the box and open the lid only to discover nothing left inside. As you look over to the dining room table you can see your sister snacking on the

RESOURCES

- [Women and Children's Health Network - Conflict Resolution](#)
- [Center for Nonviolent Communication – Materials for Educators](#)

last of the cheesy crackers. She knows this snack is your favorite, and still she chose to eat the last of them. You feel a rush of anger and disappointment. You turn to her and say . . .

Option 1: “You know I love those crackers and you ate them anyway without asking me if I wanted some. I am never going to share with you again.”

Option 2: “I feel really hurt, the last of my favorite food was eaten and I wish you would have asked me if I wanted some.”

After the two situations have been discussed, bring it to the students’ attention the responses that best communicated the person’s wants, needs, and feelings started with the words “I feel.” By telling others directly how you feel, rather than blaming others by using “you did” statements makes a big difference in how the other person might respond. Ask students how they think the second person in the conflict might respond to each of the given options.

ACTIVITY 2: CREATING “I FEEL” STATEMENTS

Have students listen to or read the situations below and create their own “I feel” statements to respond to these conflicts. Remind students to use the words “I feel” to start their responses and to avoid blaming others for their feelings. After reading each, ask students to think about how this situation would make them feel before they respond. If students struggle to label their emotions, write down a list of challenging emotions on the board for students to reference. Some examples may include: frustrated, angry, hurt, lonely, distracted, irritated, anxious, annoyed, scared, powerless.

Situation One: You are playing a game and someone throws a ball towards you. It hits you in the head, which is against the rules.

Situation Two: You are studying hard in the living room at home. Your brother comes home and starts to sing loudly in the room next door. One, two, three minutes go by and he is still singing at the top of his lungs.

Situation Three: You are writing an original story for school about a carrot that comes to life and eats rabbits. You are so excited about your unique idea you call up your best friend and tell her about the story. The next day in class, when the teacher asks for volunteers to read their stories your best friend raises her hand. She shares a story about a mouse that eats cats. Everyone loves the story. You however think your friend stole your idea and changed it just enough to make it seem original.

Situation Four: Your best friend recently joined the soccer team. In the past, you spent all of your extra time together going to movies, listening to music, and playing video games. Now you rarely see him. You noticed he has been spending more time with his soccer teammates.

Situation Five: You and your sister received a joint present from your grandparents, a beautiful bike. So far you have both been able to share the bicycle without any problems. Today is different. You want to take the bike to your friend’s house but your sister wants to ride it around the neighborhood.

CLOSING

Have students share their responses to the five different scenarios.

- Ask students if they think using “I feel” statements could be helpful when they have conflicts with their friends or brothers and sisters?
- How does communicating our feelings help us have more peaceful relationships with other people?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Use a comic strip from the Internet or a local paper. White out the dialogue between characters and pass out copies to the students. Have students write in a dialogue using “I feel” statements in their storyline.

REGISTRATION, FEEDBACK & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Use of this curriculum is free – no registration is required. However, we encourage you to take 3-5 minutes to complete our [registration/feedback form](#) so we may know how and where the curriculum is being used, what is most effective, and how we can continue to improve it.

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