
LESSON **2**
EMPATHY

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Students will reflect on findings to build deeper understanding and determine next steps.
- Students will determine appropriate tools and develop a plan to communicate findings and/or take informed action.
- Students will read and respond according to task and purpose to become selfdirected, critical readers and thinkers.
- Students will recognize, respect, and appreciate individual differences.
- Students will respect alternative points of view.

Objectives

Students will be able to understand what empathy means.

Students will be able to explain why it is important to be empathetic toward others.

Students will demonstrate knowledge of ways they can show empathy toward others.

Students will be able to express how someone would feel in various presented scenarios.

Materials Needed

- “6 OR 9?” activity sheet for each student (“We Do”)
- “5 Steps to Empathy” activity sheet for each student (“We Do”)
- “Empathy Scenario Cards” activity sheet (“You Do”)

- “Empathy Scenario Analysis” activity sheet for each student (“You Do”)

Starter (5 minutes)

Walk to the front of the classroom to address the students and, while doing so, dramatically trip, stumble, and almost fall to the ground. Take some time to regain your composure, and perhaps say something like, “I could have fallen and really hurt myself! Gosh, now I’m so embarrassed...” Then, look up at all the students to see their responses or reactions. Tell students that you feel really embarrassed that happened to you. Then, ask students, “Do you know how I feel? How would you feel if something like this had happened to you?” After a few students respond, explain that if they know what you must feel like after that incident, then they are feeling empathy. Then, tell the class, “Today, we are going to learn about empathy and what it really means.”

Teacher Presented Knowledge/I Do (5 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever heard of empathy before today. Listen to a few students’ responses and then say, “Empathy is understanding or knowing what another person must feel or think, even if you are not the person experiencing what they are going through. You can do this by thinking of a time that you were in a similar situation. Or, if you cannot picture a time like this, then you must try to imagine what it might be like to be in that person’s position.”

Guided Student Practice/We Do (15 minutes)

Show the class the “6 OR 9?” activity sheet. Tell the students to take a minute to look at the picture. Then, have the students talk about the picture with a partner. After the students have had enough time for a discussion, ask the students, “Why are the two people in this picture arguing? If the two people put themselves in the other person’s place, do you think it would help them to understand better?” Identify the five steps to empathy using a chart or a student handout (see “5 Steps to Empathy” activity sheet). Then, tell the students that they are going to be given a scenario card and they will be asked to put themselves in the place of the person on their card by using the five steps to empathy.

Student Independent Practice/You Do (20 minutes)

Give each student a scenario card. (*You may create your own empathy scenario cards that relate to the needs of your classroom. Alternatively, you can use the scenarios provided in the “Empathy Scenario Cards” activity sheet.*) The same cards can be used with several students because they will be working on this independently. Instruct students to read their cards and put themselves in the other person’s place. Remind students of the following questions: “How do you think the person in this scenario feels? How would this situation make you feel? If you observed this situation in real life, what could you do to show empathy?” Direct students to answer the questions on the “Empathy Scenario Analysis” activity sheet.

Closure *(5 minutes)*

Call on a few students to read their scenario card and share what they wrote down on their worksheet. Then remind students, “Showing empathy for others is an important part of a classroom community. When classmates are upset or experiencing challenges, it is important that we put ourselves in their place in order to support them and make them feel accepted and cared for. Using the Five Steps to Empathy will help you be more compassionate and empathetic.”

Student Assessment

1. What does empathy mean?
2. Why is it important to show empathy for others?
3. How can you be more empathetic toward others?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Drama Extension

Have students form small groups and then perform short role-plays that show what empathy looks like.

ELA Extension

Have students write thank-you notes to their family, their classmates, or the school faculty and staff as a small act of kindness to build empathy.

Literature Extension

Read the book *One*, by Kathryn Otoshi, to the class. After reading the book, ask the students to raise their hands and explain what happened in the story. Give students time to respond, and then, tell students that in the story, One had empathy. Discuss with the class how One stood up to Red. Ask the students questions such as, “How did Red make the other colors feel? Did the other colors like Red? If not, then why did they do what he said? How did One stand up to Red? After One stood up to Red, what happened? Why wasn’t One mean to Red?” Guide students to understand that One cared about the others’ feelings. He cared about the colors that were getting bullied and the color doing the bullying. Explain that One knew what it was like to get bullied, and he was not going to do that back to Red.

Literature Extension

Explain to the students that you have a great picture book to read to them that they can relate to, and the title is *Stand in My Shoes* by Bob Sornsen. Pause throughout the reading to ask engaging and critical-thinking questions about the character and her feelings of empathy: Pages 4–5: How does Alicia define empathy? What is she asking Emily to do? Why? Pages 6–9: Why is Emily’s dad stressed and in a hurry? How does Emily empathize with him and show him that she understands his feelings? Pages 10–11: What happens to Rosie? How does Emily “stand in Rosie’s shoes” and help her out? Pages 16–17: How does Emily help Tommy to “stand in Samantha’s shoes”? What happens when Tommy does empathize with Samantha’s feelings? Pages 22–25: Who always notices how you feel? What are some ways you can be empathetic toward your loved ones? Pages 26–30: What did Emily do throughout this book? What did she learn after her day of caring for others’ feelings? What does “standing in another’s shoes” truly mean?

Music Extension

Create a song, chant, or cheer about the “5 Steps to Empathy.”

Service Learning Extension

Have students participate in a service-learning project. Students can do things such as visit a senior citizen home, collect clothes or food for a homeless shelter, serve food at a shelter, or write letters to essential workers.

5 STEPS TO EMPATHY

STEP 1: PAY ATTENTION!

- What is your friend saying?
- How would you describe his or her body language?

STEP 2: CONNECT!

- Make a personal connection to how your friend is feeling.
- When have you experienced a similar feeling?

STEP 3: IMAGINE!

- How do you think your friend feels right now?
- How would you feel if this were to happen to you?

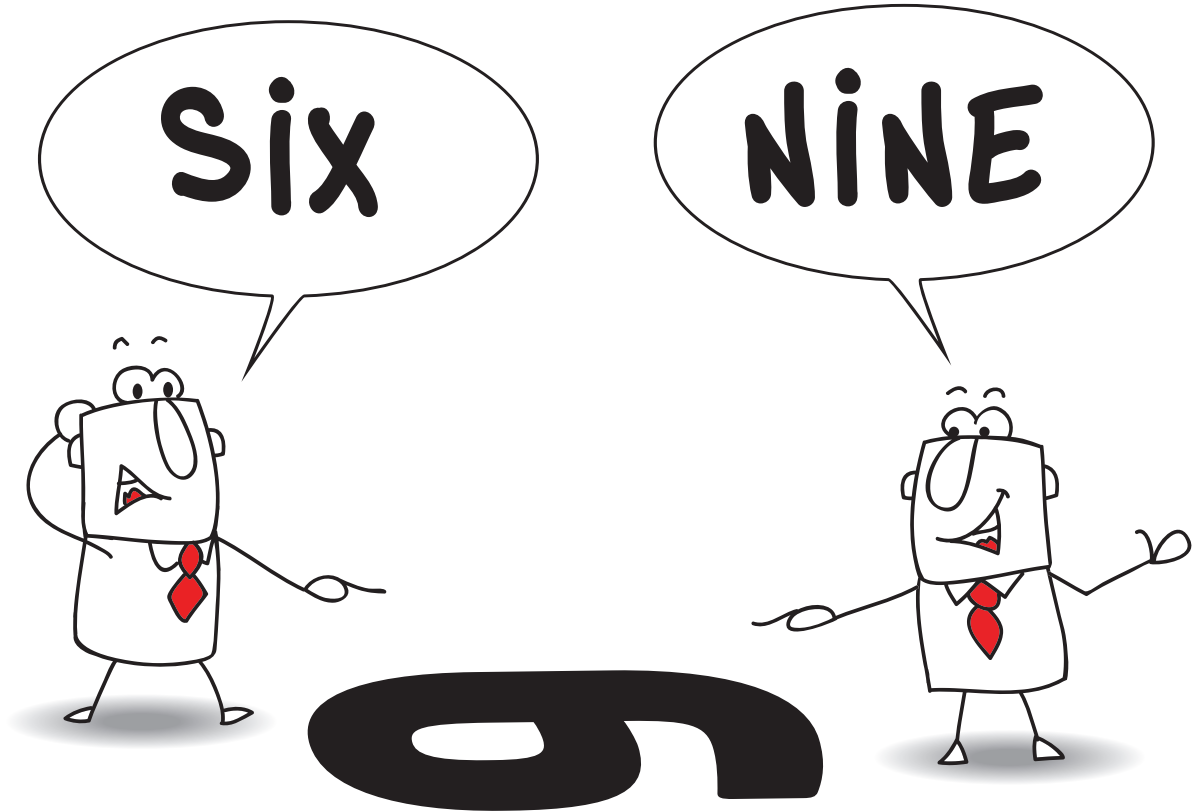
STEP 4: ASK!

- Ask your friend how he or she is feeling.

STEP 5: ACT!

- Listen attentively to your friend talk about his or her feelings. Make eye contact.
- Show your friend that you care with your words and actions.

6 OR 9?



EMPATHY SCENARIO ANALYSIS

Name: _____

1. How do you think the person in your scenario feels?

2. How would this situation make you feel?

3. If you observed this situation in real life, what could you do to show empathy?

EMPATHY SCENARIO CARDS



.....

Your best friend, Sara, is jealous of the new friend you have made, Leila. One day during the carpool line, Sara begins to snicker and make mean comments about the car Leila’s mom drives. Leila overhears and is embarrassed; you know Leila’s mom just lost her job. What should you do?

.....

Your best friend, Mateo, has started to make fun of Jayden for being a slow reader. At first you thought it was funny, but Mateo’s comments to Jayden have become meaner. In fact, Jayden is embarrassed now to read aloud to the class, and he puts his head down whenever he is called on to answer a question. Other students in the class still think Mateo’s comments and sneers are funny when Jayden has to read. What should you do?

.....

A bully at school and several of his friends are surrounding a student at recess. They are making fun of his dirty sneakers. What should you do?

.....

Children are picking teams for a baseball game during P.E. Two students are left, but the captains don’t want to pick them. What should you do?

.....

Shania is having a birthday party. The whole class is invited except for one student. What should you do?

.....

A new student comes into your classroom with bad acne and big glasses. Some of the other kids in the class start to laugh. At lunch, he sits by himself. What should you do?

.....

You are online and receive a message making fun of a classmate that has been sent to other students in your class. The classmate who is being made fun of does not know about the secret group message. What should you do?

.....

Kayla got a new haircut, and the hairdresser accidentally cut her hair shorter than she wanted it. All of your friends are saying she looks like a boy. Kayla is clearly upset. What should you do?

.....