

LEARNING FOR LIFE

UPLIFTING STUDENTS · BUILDING CHARACTER · DEFINING LEADERSHIP

THEME: COMMUNICATION

LIFE SKILLS

GRADES: K and 1st

Core Curricula: *Supplements language arts, social studies*

Focus: *Interpersonal skills*

Overview: Students need to learn that we communicate in many different ways. We communicate through words—even one word can sometimes speak volumes. We communicate through facial expressions and body language. Effective communication is accomplished through a complex series of inter-related skills that include listening attentively. Children of this age are often so eager to respond when they are spoken to that they interrupt before the speaker has completed the thought. Other times, they have problems accurately communicating their feelings and emotions. Good communication skills are important in relationships with friends and family, and at school.

Goals: Students will learn to communicate accurately and honestly using different communication modes.

LESSON PLAN:

Tell students: *Today, we're going to learn about some ways to communicate. Ask: Can you say the word "communicate"? Tell them: "When we communicate, we are sending a message to someone else. We might be speaking to them, or we might be communicating through writing. We may even communicate with them by the expressions on our faces, or our body movements.*

Communication means sharing our feelings and our thoughts with others. How many of you like to share? "When we share in this way, by sending messages about how we feel and think, we want to be sure we are sending the right message.

We can send someone a message by talking to people, or by using our hands or our eyes, or even by moving our heads. For example, sometimes when we mean "yes," we do this. Nod your head up and down to show "yes." When we mean "no," we do this. Shake your head back and forth to show "no." This is communicating without words.

Another way to communicate without words might be to point. For example, if I wanted you to move to the other side of the room, I could communicate that by pointing. Point to give the example. In this game, we are going to communicate with each other without using words.

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Activity 1: Tell students: *I am going to name a feeling or an action. I want you to communicate that feeling or action to me and to the others without using words or sounds.*

Students should respond appropriately as you call out the following feelings or actions.

1. *You are happy.* (Students should smile.)
2. *You are sad.* (Students may show this emotion in different ways-frowning, looking downcast, etc.)
3. *You are cold.* (Shiver, clutch body with arms, etc.)
4. *You are warm.* (Fan self, wipe face, etc.)
5. *You don't know the answer and you are thinking.* (Make expressions of pondering, bewilderment, etc.)
6. *It is your birthday, and your parents give you a surprise party.* (Make expressions of surprise, happiness, etc.)
7. *You are scared.* (Pull body inward, clutch chest, etc.)
8. *You want everyone to be quiet because it's too noisy for you to study.* (Put fingers to lips with "shh" motion.)
9. *Someone is talking to you, but you can't hear what he or she is saying.* (Lean toward person, cupping ear with hand.)
10. *You have the correct answer and you want the teacher to call on you.* (Raise hand.)
11. *You want to tell your friend that the book is over there.* (Point to that location.)
12. *You want your friend to give you your pencil.* (Stretch out hand.)
13. *You want your puppy to come to you.* (Motion with hands pulling toward body, or snap finger and thumb.)
14. Say goodbye. (Wave.)

Tell students: *Now that you have practiced communicating without using your voices, you can see that it is important to pay attention to others not only with your ears, but with your eyes.*

Ask students: *If someone asks you to please come over to them without using words, and you are not looking at that person, how are you going to know what they are asking you? Acknowledge each response. If you want to give me the answer to a question and you don't raise your hand, am I going to know that you would like to answer that question?*

Tell students: *You can see that sometimes you may be asked to communicate or “talk” without using words, and this is what we have practiced in this game.*

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Activity 2: Using the expressions from Activity 1, ask for volunteers from the class to act out some of these feelings and actions. Some students might not feel comfortable acting out in front of the class; however, encourage as many students as possible to participate. Have the student whisper to you what he or she will be acting out. The rest of the class must guess what the student is trying to communicate.

Activity 3: Tell students: *I'm going to show you some pictures and I want you to tell me what you see in these pictures. Raise your hands when you are ready to communicate what you see in the pictures. When we are finished with this game, I'll give you copies of the pictures to color.*

Show the class each of the pictures for Activity 3. Ask students to describe what the picture is about to the rest of the class. Note how many different descriptions or answers you receive.

Tell students: *Some of you described the pictures differently from others. That's OK. This tells us that we don't all see the same things in exactly the same way. What's important is that you communicated the correct information.*

Ask: *What do we call it when we communicate incorrect or inaccurate information on purpose?*
Answer: Lying.

Ask: *What happens when we do that?*

Answers: We might get in trouble, we might not be believed, etc.

Reflection: Tell students: *We have different ways to communicate with one another. Ask: What are some of the ways you have of communicating in school? Can you ever communicate without words? Why is it important that you learn to communicate well?*

Sometimes, people say one thing with words and another thing with their face. For example, you might say, "I'm happy," but your face might show that you were sad.

Can you think of other "mixed messages"? Do you ever say one thing while your face shows something else?

Can you think of times that you might need to communicate to somebody without using words?

Do you know anybody who uses sign language to communicate to people who cannot hear? Have you ever thought about learning to communicate in sign language?