

Relationships, Day 4: Friendships & Dating

Special Education: Secondary, Lesson # 6

Student Learning Objectives:

To be able to...

1. Define friendship
2. Name two friends they have
3. Appropriately introduce a friend
4. Model appropriate ways to greet a friend
5. Model appropriate ways to leave a friend
6. Define dating
7. Name three things they might do with a friend (or a date)
8. Model appropriate dating etiquette

Materials Needed:

- Brainstorming space – either paper and pens, or blackboard
- One copy of the worksheet for each student

Agenda:

1. Defining friendship
2. Identify personal friends
3. Introductions
4. Greeting and leaving
5. Getting together – planning
6. Getting together – worksheet
7. Dating

A friend is someone who likes you. Someone who is not necessarily paid to spend time with you. Someone whose opinion you value, whose respect you desire, someone you enjoy spending time with.

There is a real art to making and sustaining friendships. Many subtle skills are required. This lesson will help your students to define friendship in their own terms, to identify friends they have and how the friendships were formed, and to practice friendship sustaining skills.

Dating is also introduced in this lesson, as an extension of friendship. Many of the social skills involved in being a good friend, are also involved in dating. As students mature and develop an interest in dating, opportunities should be made available for them to try out new skills in real date situations.

Once your students have graduated from high school, and are living independently, their network of friends will become a lifeline of support. Therefore it is critical to establish a knowledge base and develop social skills which help with friendship success while students are in school.

Activities

Collect magazine pictures of groups of people. Students in a class, strangers on the street or in an airport, a large crowd in a movie theatre or restaurant, and smaller groups of people who appear to be having fun with one another - playing a game, talking, going for a walk.

Ask students to point to the pictures of the friends.

1. Define Friendship

- A.** Brainstorm as a class "What is a Friend?" Write this heading on the board. Underneath the heading write student's responses to the question and some of the following, if ideas are not forthcoming from students.
- Some ideas:**
- someone who likes you
 - someone who you like
 - someone who listens to you and understands how you feel
 - someone who sticks up for you.
 - someone who likes to do things with you
 - someone who cares about you and what happens to you
 - someone who respects you
 - someone who doesn't lie to you
- B.** What makes a good friend? Discuss with your students that there are certain qualities we look for in a friend. Brainstorm as a class, or just explore the following list and add to it. Give concrete examples of each of these qualities.
1. Trustworthy
 2. Honest
 3. Easy to talk with/be with
 4. Easygoing/relaxed
 5. Cheers me up
 6. Considerate

7. Thoughtful
8. Kind
9. Makes me feel good about myself

Collect “Polaroid” or other photographs of student’s friends. Mix them up with other pictures of people.

Ask students to point to the pictures of their friends.

Then ask students to express non-verbally how they feel about their friends (smile, hug, pat on hand, etc.).

Modify to make this role-play relevant

2. Identifying personal friends

Teacher Note: Be aware that some students may not be able to readily identify friends. Prepare ahead of time by thinking about the reality of existing true friendships for all of your students. You may want to make a list based on your perceptions so that you can make suggestions if necessary.

- A. Have each student close their eyes for a moment and think about their friends. (It may help if you suggest they think about their last birthday party and who was invited.)
- B. Give students a piece of paper and ask them to brainstorm and write down a list of friends they have. Some lists will be long, others will be shorter. But each student should be able to come up with at least one or two names.
- C. Have students select one person from their list and, without giving the name, tell the class about:
 - how they met their friend - how the friendship developed,
 - the qualities of that friend that are important to them, and
 - examples of things they do together as friends.

3. Introductions

- A. Begin by defining the term introduction. Tell students that: *“When we introduce a person to someone else, we give information. We usually tell people each other’s names, and perhaps something about the person that is useful for the other person to know. To introduce a friend to another person is a polite and friendly thing to do. Today we’re going to practice introductions.”*
- B. Start by modeling appropriate introductions. Ask teaching assistants to help with the roleplay. You will need three people.
The introducer, who knows both Sally and Anne says:

- “Sally. I’d like you to meet my friend Anne. We play tennis together on Wednesdays. Anne, this is Sally.”
- “Hi Anne. Nice to meet you”, says Sally.
- “Sally, it’s good to meet you too”, says Anne.

Alternatives:

- “Hi, nice to meet you.”
- “Hello, Mrs. Smith.”

Ask students to show you how they say hello non-verbally to other people.

Then ask them how they say hello to different people:

- a) their mother or father
- b) their teacher
- c) their friend in class
- d) the doctor
- e) the principal of the school
- f) the clerk at the store
- g) a stranger

Point out the differences and similarities in types of greetings depending upon the situation.

Repeat the exercise with saying goodbye.

- “Hi. How are you?”
 - “Hi there. Jane has told me a lot about you.”
- C. Divide the class into groups of three and number students 1, 2 and 3. Practice introductions.
 - D. Invite a visitor to the classroom and ask students to practice introductions.

4. Greeting and Leaving

- A. Begin by discussing with the class that there are different ways to say “hello” and “goodbye” to people. Ask if anyone has any ideas. Responses may include saying “Hi” or “Hello”, shaking hands, giving a hug or a “high five”, kissing someone on the hand (in some countries), kissing on both cheeks, (in other countries), and kissing on the lips. “Goodbyes” are similar to “hellos”. Some goodbyes include: saying “See you later” or “Ciao” or “Bye-bye”, waving the hands, blowing a kiss, giving a hug or a kiss, shaking hands, giving a “high five”, etc.
- B. Discuss that we choose the most appropriate way to say “hello” or “goodbye” depending on the situation. Ask students to decide as a group which approaches are appropriate/okay and which are inappropriate/not okay in each of the following situations:

Greeting a friend:

1. in the hall at school
2. at a banquet, or
3. at church.

Saying goodbye to a friend to:

1. go to lunch
2. go on vacation for two weeks
3. move to a different town

- C. Discuss that we also choose the most appropriate way to say “hello” or “goodbye” depending on how well we know the person. Ask students to decide as a group which approaches are appropriate/ okay and which are inappropriate/not okay in each of the following situations.

Saying hello or goodbye to:

1. your mother
2. your best friend
3. your grandparents
4. your teacher
5. your principal
6. your dog or cat
7. the bus driver
8. the clerk at the store
9. strangers waiting in line at the movie theatre
10. the President of the United States.

- D. Have students pay attention to their own comfort level. A hug and a kiss are not OK in any situation, unless you are comfortable with them. A high five might feel phony to some people and natural to others. “How do you do” and a handshake might feel phony to some and natural to others.

5. Getting together - planning and practicing

- Identification of activities friends do together. Ask students to brainstorm specific things they might do with a friend. This is the concrete start of the socialization network you’ll be developing, so be sure that activities are functional if at all possible. You may want to help students clarify the activities they are thinking about so that they are specific. (e.g. “movie” can mean going to a movie at a theatre, or renting a movie and watching it at home, or watching a television show - it’s important to be clear).

Write the brainstormed list of activities on the blackboard. Your list might include activities like:

- going fishing
- getting together to do homework
- playing ball with someone
- going skiing
- going to a meeting with someone
- going to church, temple or mosque with someone
 - going shopping
 - going out for pizza together
 - going to a movie
 - renting a movie
 - watching TV together
 - going out to a restaurant for a pop
 - going to a football/baseball/basketball game together
 - going to a school activity (a dance or a rally) together

Find pictures of activities you know students enjoy.

Have students make a list of places they could meet new people.

- B. Read the following case study to the class:
“One Thursday, a student (I’ll call her ‘Jody’) was finishing up her lunch in the cafeteria. A girl who was in her math class, (I’ll call her ‘Debbie’) came up to Jody and said ‘Hey, go to a movie with me on Friday, okay?’ Now Jody didn’t know Debbie very well, they had only seen each other in math class and she thought Debbie hung out with a different group of kids than she did. Jody

Roleplay this alternative case study:

***“While they were changing after gym class, Bill asked Jim if he wanted to eat lunch together. Jim nodded and said, ‘Sure Bill, sounds great’
At lunch time Jim waited by his locker for Bill, so they could go eat lunch together. But Bill was waiting for Jim in the lunchroom! They never did catch up to one another!
What a mess! Jim and Bill felt angry and frustrated”***

was kind of surprised by the invitation. She wanted to be polite, though, so she said “Yeah, sure.” Debbie then walked away. Jody was excited about the invitation and pleased to be asked to go.

The next day, Friday, Jody tried to catch up with Debbie all day. She needed to know more information about the evening: which movie Debbie wanted to see, what time it was on, which theatre it was at, how the girls would get there - all kinds of things. Jody didn’t know Debbie’s last name so she couldn’t even call her.

It was a disaster! Jody felt really disappointed. She stayed home on Friday night and watched television by herself and wondered what had gone wrong.

On Monday, Jody ran into Debbie in the hallway.

“Hey, why weren’t you at the movie?”, asked Debbie. ‘All the kids were there and we had a great time. Well, got to get going. See you later.’ Jody was stunned. She didn’t know what to think. She felt sad and left out and mad.

She decided to say “No” if Debbie asked her to do something again.

Consider:

- **What went wrong?**
- **What could Bill and Jim have done differently?**

Replay the situation using the appropriate changes. Be sure students understand how to be successful.

C. Discuss the case study with the class.**Consider:**

- What went wrong?
- What could Debbie have done differently?
- How could Jody handle the situation?
- What could Jody do if Debbie asks her to go to a movie a second time?

D. Have a large group discussion about inviting friends to do things with you. Have students consider the following questions:

1. What is an appropriate approach to use to ask someone to do something with you?
2. What information should you have before you ask someone to do something (time, date, cost, transportation)?
3. Is it an activity you think the other person would enjoy too?
4. What will you do if they say “no thanks”? Do you have a backup plan?

6. Getting together

- A. Explain to students that they are going to have a chance to practice “getting together”. Hand out the worksheet and go over each of the sections as an overview of the exercise.

Use the modified worksheet so that there are four sections. The four boxes are

- 1. Who (will I get together with),**
- 2. What (will we do), and**
- 3. I will ask my friend (in person, on the phone)**
- 4. I need to know... (logistics).**

Ask students to point to their favorite activity from pictures of activities you've cut out.

Using "Polaroid" pictures of friends, have students select a picture of a friend they would like to do their chosen activity with.

One good way for nonverbal students to invite someone, is to create an invitation using pictures - even a copy of their completed worksheet will work. Help the student deliver the invitation personally.

If students will need support in carrying out their plans, try to arrange logistics with the student to include that support.

Discuss the important pieces of information needed before you can ask a friend to get together.

You need to know:

- Who you want to ask (both first and last names)
 - How to reach your friend (phone number, friend's address)
 - What activity you want to do
 - When you want to do this (date, time)
 - Where you want to do this activity (address)
 - About transportation (how you will get there, who will drive, what bus route)
 - How much the activity will cost and who will pay for it
 - Whether you need to bring anything (bathing suit, snack)
- B. Have students select one activity from the brainstormed activity list that they would like to do with a friend sometime in the next two weeks and write it down on their worksheet in the appropriate space.
 - C. Have students think about their friends, and choose one friend they might like to do the chosen activity with. Have them write the name of the person (or draw a picture) in the appropriate space on the worksheet. In real life, these first two steps can happen in either order. One important thing to consider when choosing a friend is whether or not the friend would also enjoy the activity.
 - D. Have students think about an appropriate way to ask their friend to do the activity.
Point out that it may be rude to ask one person when you're in a large group - other people might feel left out. One good way is to wait until you are alone with the person and then ask. Another idea is to call them on the phone. Have students indicate the approach they've chosen on the worksheet. Whichever way you choose to ask, in person or over the phone, it's a good idea to plan what you're going to say before you start.
 - E. Have students consider what they need to know before they ask someone to do something. If possible, try to help students arrange their getting together for times when you know they will have any needed support (either from you or from a family member or trusted adult friend) Help them fill in the other information on the worksheet. If they don't know the answer to some of the questions yet, it's okay to go ahead and ask someone and then let them know the details of the arrangements later. It's a good idea to set up a time to call and let them know the information needed. Remember poor Jody!
 - F. Have students consider a back up plan. What will they do if the person says no? Will they ask someone else? Will they see if a different day would work. Will they see if the

person would like to do something different than they had originally planned? There are lots of options.

- G. Ask for volunteers to role-play their completed worksheet for the class. Roleplay the planning, the asking and the handling of a possible rejection.
- H. Remind students of their plans and follow up as needed. Support students by checking in with family members if they are part of the plan. **Teacher Note:** This is a powerful exercise for many students. It provides them with tools and opportunities they need in order to establish active friendships. It also lets them know that they have some control over what they do and who they do it with. It is also the formal start of the socialization network component of the FLASH unit. Provide additional copies of the worksheet for students, as well as your support, to encourage them to continue “getting together”.

7. Dating

- A. Ask students “*What is a date?*”

Discuss that a date is “*when you plan to do something with someone you care about in an extra-special way.*”

Sometimes you might have a friend who you feel you have more than just a friendship with. Sometimes this person is called a boyfriend or girlfriend, a partner, a companion, or a best friend. Sometimes, the person you have a date with will be someone you already know as a friend. Sometimes, it may be someone you’ve just seen around, someone you feel attracted to and would like to get to know better.”

- B. Ask students “*What do you do on a date?*”

Discuss that dates are very much like getting together with friends. Many of the activities you would do with your friends would also be appropriate date activities.

- C. **Date Etiquette.**

If students use the planning worksheet to prepare for a date, they should have all the information they need. Some things about dates are a little different from getting together with friends. These need additional consideration:

- the issue of who pays for a date;
- dressing and grooming; and
- practicing manners

- D. **Considering Dating.** Discuss with students that they may not feel ready to date yet. At some time in their life, though, they may find that they are attracted to someone else and would like to get to know that person better. Then they might go out on a date. It’s a good idea to talk to a parent or trusted adult when you *feel ready to date*. They can provide support and assistance as students try out this exciting new type of relationship.

Be sure to include students with more significant learning challenges in discussions of dating. Sometimes misconceptions about the nature of dating are unspoken. You have an opportunity to address these misconceptions directly.

Dear Trusted Adult,

In class we learned about friendship. We discussed definitions for friendship, learned about qualities we look for in our friends; appropriate ways to greet and leave our friends; and identified some things we like to do with friends. We also discussed dating. We defined dating, and decided that it isn't much different than friendship. Students were advised to discuss dating with their parents or a trusted adult when they feel they would like to start dating.

Students brainstormed a list of possible activities they might like to do with a friend, and selected their first choice. They would like to do this activity sometime in the next two weeks, and understand that they may need your support and permission.

It would be helpful to students, if you could support this learning by providing an opportunity for this activity to occur, and supplying any additional help necessary. Please call me if you would like to discuss this exercise, or if I can be of assistance in your planning.

Other ways you can support this learning:

- Talk about your friendships. Discuss qualities you like about your friends; activities you like to do with your friends, how you met and how the relationship has evolved over time. The following questions may be helpful:
 1. Who are your friends?
 2. Select two and describe what you like about each person as a friend.
 3. What do you think is important in being a good friend?
- Ask students to watch television for one hour and identify friendship relationships among the characters.

Once students have graduated from high school and are living independently, their network of friendship will become a lifeline of support. So it is particularly important to establish friendships while students are still in school. Your assistance in helping develop this aspect of life will contribute enormously to both self-esteem and happiness. It is worth pursuing!

If you have any questions or comments, please call me.

Sincerely,

Teacher, Principal or Nurse

NOTE: All Trusted Adult Exercises are Optional.

Getting Together - a planning worksheet

You need to know:

1. Who you want to ask
2. How to reach your friend
3. What activity you want to do
4. When you want to do this
5. Where you want to do this activity
6. About transportation
7. How much the activity will cost and who will pay for it
8. Whether you need to bring anything

Getting Together - a planning worksheet

My friend is:

I would like to:

I will ask my friend:

I need to know:

In person:



When (day, time):

Where:

How much it will cost:

Over the phone:



How we'll get there: