

Completely Different, Just the Same

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss how people can be the same or different.
- Discuss differences, similarities, and positive qualities across all cultures and groups.
- Discuss the concept of, and practice, treating others the way you would want to be treated
- Discuss positive and negative opinions people may have about other people or groups, even if they are not always true

Suggested Activities:

- Gather all students into a large ring. Enter the center of the ring and introduce the activity by saying we are going to explore what things we have in common with one another and what things make us unique. State one thing about yourself. Tell the students that when it is their turn in the ring, they can share one special thing about themselves: It can be a hobby they enjoy, something unique about their family, a favorite vacation spot, what kind of pet they have or a talent they have. Then it the person in the center of the ring invites others to join them in the circle if they have that in common. Then everyone returns to their previous spot in the outer ring. The next person in the ring enters and shares their own unique thing and repeats the activity.
- Dump a pile of writing utensils in the center of the table (crayons, markers, colored pencils, ball point pens, chalk, etc.). Have each student select one item and then have all students try to create a group of students whose writing utensils have something in common (could be any attribute: color, size, type of utensil, etc.). Prize goes to the largest group. Discuss afterwards what attributes they were able to find in common to include in their group. Discuss how the same applies to people and how they have many attributes if you focus on what you have in common with others to form friendships.
- Go to a large area and create a human bar graph by having students line up to show differences. Examples:
 - Hair color: Brown hair, blonde hair, black hair, red hair
 - Favorite food: Pizza lovers, seafood lovers, burger lovers, taco lovers
 - Pets: no pets, cats, dogs, cats and dogs, fish, reptiles



You Can Sit With Me

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Talk about the need to feel included. Ask if anyone has ever been new to a neighborhood, school, church, etc. and how it felt.
- Discuss what it feels to be included or excluded in a variety of relationships
- Discuss how people can be the same or different and still be friends
- Discuss how we treat others the way you would want to be treated
- Discuss positive and negative opinions people may have about other people or groups, even if they are not always true
- Discuss what it looks and sounds like to treat some with kindness and respect
- Identify differences in various family and social situations (foods, religions, celebrations, clothing styles, family size and make up, homes).

Suggested Activities:

- Play a greeting game where students sit in a circle and take turns trying to greet one another in a different way: “Hey, how’s it going?” “Hi, what’s your name?” “Wanna play kickball at recess?” etc.
- Beanbag toss conversation practice: Sit in a circle and toss a bean bag to a student and ask them a question about themselves. They answer it and then toss the bean bag to someone else that hasn’t been chosen yet and asks them a question, and it continues until all students have had a chance to practice conversation starters.



Happy, Gloomy, Angry, Scared

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion

- Discuss examples of personal emotions
- Discuss physical and emotional responses to unfamiliar situations
- Discuss what would be expected and unexpected ways to respond in different situations
- Ask for examples of personal behaviors or reactions when experiencing basic emotions.
- Describe verbal and non-verbal ways to express emotions in different settings
- Discuss and practice the strategies in the book to regulate emotions and manage behaviors
- Role play examples of strategies to express a range of emotions within the expectations of the setting.
- Talk about possible outcomes associated with verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions in different settings.
- Ask students to give examples of their “happy place” or situations or locations that feel safe.
- Brainstorm safe strategies to use in response to different emotions.

Suggested Activities:

- Brainstorm as many feeling words as possible to make a word wall of feelings. Write different situations on index cards and have students draw a card and then choose a word from the word wall or come up with their own word to describe how that situation would make them feel.
- Have students create a feelings “selfie”. Adults take photos of each student and print them out on 8X10 paper. Have students take another blank piece of paper and trace the outline of their photo lightly in pencil on blank paper. Then have students write feeling words on the light pencil lines so that they end up with a picture of themselves made with feeling words that describe the complicated emotions that each person is made of.



Think Like a Yeti

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss what kinds of things can cause a challenge
- Discuss and practice how to seek help from others
- Practice/role play how to receiving constructive feedback from others
- Ask for examples of goals for academic success
- Discuss how adults and peers can help with a goal
- Talk about examples of what action steps can be taken to reach a short-term goal.
- Discuss obstacles that can get in the way of reaching a goal and ideas for handling those obstacles.
- Brainstorm examples of goals for academic success and personal growth
- Brainstorm resources that may assist in achieving a goal
- Choose an example of a goal, and discuss what steps might be needed to reach it.
- Identify alternative strategies when one strategy doesn't work.
- Describe a time when you kept trying in a challenging situation and ask students to share their own examples.
- Explain how practice improves performance of a skill and ask students to share their own examples.
- Help students identify strategies for persevering through challenges and setbacks

Suggested Activities:

- Have students make their own bucket list of things they want to do in life.
- Have students create their own “pizza” with different “toppings” or types of goals on each slice: family goals, friend goals, school goals, hobby goals, etc.
- Have students create a “vision board” or google images, magazine photos, sketches or words that describe their life goals.
- Have students create “goal ladders” that have a long term goal at the top, and then shorter term goals on each rung of the ladder.



Just Because

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Ask students to share personal interests and qualities
- Brainstorm opportunities (lessons, clubs, hobbies, etc.) to develop skills and talents
- Talk about what skills or talents each student has
- Discuss how different each of our talents and interests are
- Talk about how important it is for the world to include all types of people with different interests and talents.
- Ask for examples of how who makes them feel special “just because” of who they are, in a variety of relationships

Suggested Activities:

- Have students create a “Me Tree”: Students draw a tree trunk and branches. Students either cut out or are given colorful construction paper leaves and write positive things about themselves on the leaves and paste them on the tree branches.
- Secret Admirer notes. Each day, each student draws a secret name on an index card. They write a short note on the index card that says something nice about that person and puts in back in the box. At the end of the day, the adults pass out the cards to each student so that each day, the student is leaving with a positive note about them from an anonymous friend.



The Best at Being Me

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss examples of students' personal interests and qualities
- Brainstorm opportunities to develop skills and talents
- Invite students to share or demonstrate a skill or talent they have
- Discuss ways that how people can be the same or different in their talents and skills
- Emphasize the need for inclusiveness and appreciation of different talents

Suggested Activities:

- Assign each student a special time to demonstrate one of their special talents or share an item or experience that demonstrates a special talent or something that makes them unique.
- 3 Stars and a Wish: Have students identify 3 things that make them special (stars) and one “wish” that represents something special they want in life.
- Let students create their own “Superhero” name and what their “superpowers” are.



How To Tame Your Monkeys

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss basic personal emotions and what feelings can interfere with peace and happiness.
- Ask for examples of behaviors or reactions you might have when experiencing basic emotions
- Discuss how all emotions are natural and important and valid.
- Brainstorm appropriate time and place to safely process emotions
- Talk about what emotions can be processed independently and which emotions might need the help and guidance of a trusted adult
- Talk about what kinds of events can impact emotions
- Brainstorm trusted adults at school and in the community and know when and how to access them
- Ask students to describe situations or locations that feel safe
- Ask for examples of how a trusted adult can provide academic, social or emotional support for assistance for self and others
- Practice strategies from the book that support safe practices for peacefulness and calmness
- Discuss verbal and non-verbal ways to express emotions in different settings
- Ask for examples of what students do that help them regulate emotions and manage behaviors
- Describe possible outcomes associated with verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions in different settings
- Apply strategies to regulate emotions and manage behavior
- Identify factors that can make it hard for a person to make the best decision when they are upset.
- Identify how personal choices will impact the outcome of a situation



Suggested Activities:

- Have students draw and name their own mental monkey(s) that interfere with their peace and happiness.
- Have students come up with their own list of monkey taming strategies that help them feel calm, safe and peaceful.
- Have students create a drawing of their own “happy place” that they can go to in their mind to find some peace and calmness. It can be a real place or a fantasy place.
- Role play how to seek help when faced with challenges or when frustrated with a task, skill or situation
- Practice deep breathing and visualizing, as described in the book

Need Someone

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion

- Discuss “interdependence” and how everyone depends on others for various things.
- Brainstorm examples of how we all depend on one another.
- Ask for examples of who you need and who needs you.
- Talk about examples of when you might need the help of a trusted adult at school and in the community, and know when and how to access them
- Discuss how to seek help from friends, family and other trusted adults when faced with challenges or when frustrated with a task, skill or situation.
- Ask for examples of interdependent roles in various relationships: who do they need and who needs them?
- Talk about how people influence each other with their words and actions.
- Ask what creates a feeling of trust and belonging in various relationships
- Brainstorm situations, challenges and situations that make us need someone and for what purpose.
- Identify reliable sources of help in various settings.

Suggested Activities:

- Have students use markers or crayons or pencil to write their name in the center of a paper and then write the names of people who they need in spaces around their name, with arrows pointing to those they need. If that person needs them too, have them make the arrow point both ways between the names. Then have them draw arrows between the names of the other people on their interdependence web, to show who needs who, adding names as they think of them
- Use mini-puzzles from a dollar store. Give each child one puzzle piece. They have to find someone who has a piece that fits with theirs. Then that pair needs to find someone who has a piece that fits with their pair, and so on until the puzzle is complete.



Float on By

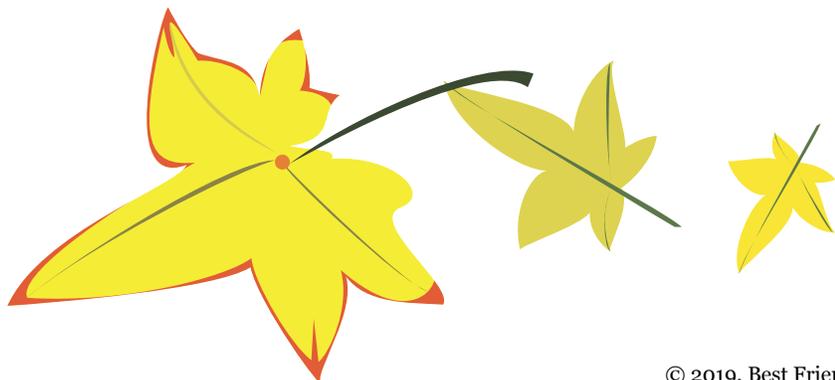
Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Identify basic personal emotions
- Recognize emotions as natural and important
- Identify a range of personal emotions
- Identify that emotions are valid, even if others feel differently
- Identify personal behaviors or reactions when experiencing basic emotions
- Describe nonverbal and verbal ways to express emotions in different settings.
- Identify and begin to use strategies to regulate emotions and manage behaviors
- Demonstrate strategies to express a range of emotions within the expectations of a setting
- Describe possible outcomes associated with verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions in different settings.
- Apply strategies to regulate emotions and manage behaviors

Suggested Activities:

- Have students practice deep breathing. Practice envisioning their thoughts and letting them go, as they listen to the YouTube reading of the book. Set aside time each day to turn down lights, let students find a comfortable spot, close their eyes and practice visualizing their thoughts and letting them pass by without becoming upset or distracted by them.



Is, Was, Will Be

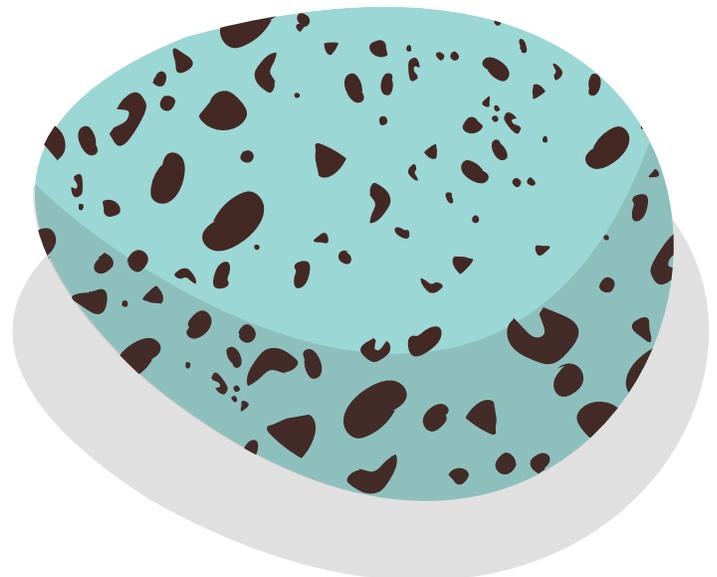
Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss how new situations may cause anxiety or uncomfortable feelings.
- Talk about times when doing something new have had positive outcomes
- Identify physical and emotional responses to unfamiliar situations.
- Identify examples of transitions and changes and how they are a necessary part of life.
- Ask students to share positive and negative changes they have experienced.
- Discuss strategies to appropriately respond in new and unfamiliar situations
- Talk about the importance of being able to manage transitions and adapt to changing situations and responsibilities in school and life

Suggested Activities:

- **The Change Game:** Have students cross their arms, then ask them to switch which arm is on top. Have them write their names and then try writing it backwards. Have them shake hands with a friend and then try it with the other hand. Talk about how hard it is to change things that we are used to. Try each activity several times until it becomes easier. Talk about how change is always hard at first but gets easier with time.



Peaceful Hearts

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Discuss basic personal emotions
- Discuss how emotions are natural and important and valid
- Brainstorm appropriate times and places to safely process emotions, independently or with guidance of a trusted adult.
- Discuss how events can trigger emotions
- Ask students to identify personal behaviors or reactions when experiencing basic emotions
- Introduce that each day the class will use one mindfulness meditation mantra to regulate and manage behaviors

Suggested Activities:

- Follow instructions in the front of the book to set aside a short time each day to read one of the verses and then practice one of the mindful mantras in the book. Do only one a day.



Talking To Myself

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Examples of “self talk”
- What is positive versus negative talk?
- How does our self talk change the way we feel?
- Ask for examples of times we sometimes talk to ourselves in negative ways and positive ways.

Suggested Activities:

- Have students listen as you say positive and negative examples of self talk. Have them stand up when they hear something positive and sit down when they hear something negative.
- Give examples of challenging scenarios and negative self talk that might occur. Ask students to talk with a partner about a positive alternative to the negative self talk.
- Teach students to “catch” a negative thought when they notice it (physically reach out and pretend to catch it), “cancel it” (physically pretend to throw it away), and “change it” (snap their fingers and say a different thought). Practice examples together.
- Role play different scenarios, assigning one partner as “Negative Ned” and one partner as “Positive Polly” or “Negative Nellie” and one partner as “Positive Pat”. Have the negative partner respond with negative self talk and the positive partner respond with positive self talk. Switch roles.
- As you read books or stories throughout the day or week, encourage students to notice when characters use positive or negative self talk.
- Challenge students to use positive self talk throughout the day or week. As the day proceeds, when you hear negative talk, remind students to “catch” the negative thought, “cancel it,” and “change it” to a positive thought.
- Create a bulletin board with examples of negative self talk on one side and examples of positive self talk on the other.
- Catch students using positive self talk and give them tickets to put in a drawing for a small prize at the end of the day.



Peaceful, Happy Day

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Encourage students to share their favorite and most challenging parts of the school day.
- Discuss the routines of the classroom.
- Talk about expectations of different times during the day (morning routine, independent work, cooperative groups, partner work, putting things away, transitioning between activities, etc.)

Suggested Activities:

- Discuss the different parts of the school day and encourage students to turn and talk about their favorite activities at school. Create a classroom bar graph on butcher paper that shows favorite school activities for the class.
- Discuss the classroom schedule and let students create an illustrated timeline of the day on butcher paper that stretches around the room.
- Let students create individual flip books, illustrating each segment of the classroom routine.
- Teach and let students practice expected routines for each segment of the day (for example, if students are expected to transition quietly between learning centers within 30 seconds, let students go to their table/center, then ring a bell and time students as they practice quietly moving to the next station. Award prizes to the table that moves the most quickly and quietly.)
- Use “call and response” for each segment of the day by stating the first segment of the verse for that part of the day and encouraging students to respond with the second segment of the verse. For instance,
- When an unexpected change occurs, the teacher says, “Heads up, we have a change!” and the kids respond, “Looks like we’ll have to rearrange!”
- when it is time to leave at the end of the day, the teacher says, “It’s riding time for us” and the kids reply, “Just chillin’ on the bus!”



Body Talk

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Identify personal emotions.
- Discuss different situations which might trigger different emotions.
- Discuss how different emotions feel in your body.
- Discuss what you do to change how your body feels when you experience emotions (deep breathing, stretching, envisioning that you are somewhere else, doing something you enjoy for awhile).

Suggested Activities:

- Have students divide a paper into 8 sections and draw pictures that show how their body feels with 8 different emotions. You can let the students select their own emotions or you can assign specific emotions, for example: excited, angry, nervous, joyous, surprised, scared, sad or embarrassed.
- Practice strategies that can help your body feel calm again (deep breathing, stretching, taking a short break, doodling or drawing, exercising, closing eyes and envisioning your happy place, practicing positive self talk). Let students create a flip book of strategies that they can use to calm their bodies.
- Throughout the day or week, have students check in with their emotions and how their bodies feel. Have them turn and talk with a partner to identify their body feelings.
- Throughout day or week, have students keep a body talk journal to track their changing emotions and how they recognized them through their body's feelings.



Home

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for Guided Discussion:

- Where were you born?
- How many places have you lived?
- What do we mean by “home away from home” or do you have places other than your own home that feel like home?
- What makes someplace feel like home?
- What is the farthest place you have been away from home?
- Have you been anywhere on a trip? How was that place the same or different from where you live? What did you like about it?
- How would life be different if you lived in the desert? In the woods? The mountains? Near the ocean? In the Arctic?

Suggested Activities:

- Have students draw a picture of their home and family, or a place and people that feels like home to them. Display student artwork to show the diversity of homes and families in the school/classroom.
- Have students select a random card with a location, and work with partners to create a diorama that shows a home, animals, climate that would exist in that location. Have student groups present their diorama and display them around the classroom.
- Create animal picture cards and let students sort the animals into the locations around the world where they would make their home.
- Throughout the days/weeks, read a variety of stories and bring student attention to the homes/families in the story and how they are different or unique from our own or those in other stories.
- Participate in a school penpal program online to connect with penpals in other locations in the world and let students correspond through mail or email to compare cultures (food, home styles, family living arrangements, clothing, school schedule, etc).
- Invite speakers from other places in the country or world to bring artifacts, photos, videos, etc. that show the speaker’s home and how it is different and similar to student experiences.



Small Things

Discussion Guide and Suggested Activities

Topics for guided discussion:

- What big and little worries sometimes bother you?
- Brainstorm problems or challenges you can control and those you can't.
- Discuss examples of small things you can do to make the world a better place (those identified in the book and also other examples generated by the students).
- Discuss how a small thing that one person does for another can make the world a better place.
- Discuss examples of kind things others have done that made a difference to you and acts of kindness you have done for someone else.

Suggested activities:

- Have students make coupon books of acts of kindness to give to another person as a gift.
- Create a “Small Things” bulletin board where students and teacher can post examples of acts of kindness they have witnessed during the day/week/month.
- Have students keep a Small Things journal where they write each day about a small thing they have done that day/week to make the world a better place.
- Start a marble jar where the teacher adds a marble every time she notices a student doing a small thing to make the world a better place. When the jar is full, have a celebration.
- Identify a specific “small thing” each day for everyone to focus on doing throughout the day. Examples:
 - Tidying up, even if it is someone else's mess.
 - Sharing materials.
 - Offering assistance to someone who is having trouble.
 - Inviting someone to join you in work or play.
 - Giving a compliment.

