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LESSON

Include Someone, Make a Difference

by 826 National and Cartoon Network

Grades 3–5

TYPE

NARRATIVE

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

COMMITMENT

1 Session: 2 Hours

Presented By

Cartoon Network

This lesson is presented in collaboration with Cartoon Network’s “Stop Bullying: Speak Up” initiative and encourages students across the country to share their stories on inclusion and empathy. The lesson invites students to practice inclusion through writing in two ways: first, students will make positive choices when writing about characters who stand up to bullying and work towards inclusive resolutions. Second, students will write alongside thousands of peers across the country when offering their solution to a shared story.

A note on timing: This lesson was designed as a writing workshop, with a suggested time commitment of approximately 2 hours. Pending your schedule, grade level, and students’ background knowledge, you may opt to distribute the activities over the course of 2-5 days.

Session:

YOU WILL NEED

- 3 Cartoon Network Storyboards — Handouts (print class copies or project)
- Character-O-Matic — Handout (1-2 for each student)
- Plot Mountain — Handout (print class copies or project)

- Paper or computer for students to write
- Projector and computer with connection internet or student computers (if showing Cartoon Network clips)
- Cartoon Network video clip for “Meanwhile at Jump City School” storyboard: [Teen Titans Go!](#)
- Cartoon Network clip for “Meanwhile at the Creek” storyboard: [Craig of the Creek](#)
- Cartoon Network clips for “Meanwhile at the Bear Cave” storyboard): [Ice Bear Fun](#), [Grizz: Ultimate Hero Champion](#), and [Panda’s Profile Pic](#)

BEFORE YOU START

Determine key vocabulary words to review with your students based on their age, background knowledge, and your established culture. Here are a few key terms we’ve identified that may be helpful to spend more time reviewing with students:

- Inclusion
- Empathy
- Internal and external characterization
- Plot elements, including and may not be limited to: setting, rising action/conflict, climax, and resolution

Step 1 (15 Minutes)

You Can’t Spell Inclusion without ‘US’

To begin, tell your students that they will have the opportunity to write a story about inclusion, or including others, alongside *thousands* of other students across the country all using the same story prompts from Cartoon Network! They will write their own ending to a story that has been started for them—the ending can be realistic, fantastic, funny, or even heartwarming, as long as their resolution illustrates the power of inclusion by bringing clashing characters together.

But let’s talk about inclusion. Before students can write original, inclusive resolutions, it helps to spend a few moments talking about—and then practicing—what inclusion looks and feels like in your own classroom or group setting.

Depending on the time you have available, and the extent you’ve talked about the concept of inclusion with your students previously, you can do this through a free write, group discussion (we highly recommend [pacer.org’s educator guide](#)), or through our suggested activity, Include Someone BINGO.

Pass out or share the [Include Someone BINGO](#) handout. Note that the second version of the card lists options appropriate for distance learning. Explain the general rules: over the course of the lesson, students should keep the BINGO cards open or at their desk. Students will practice acts described on the card and checkoff boxes as they complete them. Like BINGO, the goal could be to try to get check marks straight across or down the card, but really, the broader goal is for students to practice different ways of including others and experience the positive impact that inclusion can create.

After explaining the rules, point students to the four blank boxes on the card. As a class, brainstorm other ways to include someone that are not already listed. You may choose to create a class list, soliciting at least 6-8 ideas, then ask students to choose four from the list you’ve created to fill in their cards. You may also opt to fill out the blank spaces in advance of the lesson with actions that you’d like to see your students practice.

Give students a few minutes to complete the acts of inclusion with small groups—be sure to jump into the game and model a few yourself!—then prompt students to keep the BINGO card on their desk. They should look for opportunities throughout the rest of the lesson (or the day, if you prefer) to practice including others and

continue filling out their cards.

Step 2 (15 Minutes)

Guided Practice — Storyboard as a Springboard

The next activity presents students with one of the original storyboards developed by *real* Cartoon Network writers. We recommend using the storyboard titled “Meanwhile at Jump City School”, featuring Robin and Beast Boy, to introduce and guide students through the process of writing their own resolution to a posed conflict.

You might introduce the storyboard by first asking students if they are familiar with the featured characters: *What is Beast Boy like? How about Robin from Teen Titans? In what ways are these characters different from one another?*

Then, share the storyboard, featuring these characters, with students by projecting it or distributing class copies. Remind students that this is merely the beginning of the story. They have the important job of finishing the story in a way that feels inclusive and authentic to all characters.

The narrative is fairly short, so we suggest reading it aloud two or three times:

- **First reading** — Read aloud and ask students to listen for meaning.
- **Second reading** — Ask for 3-4 student volunteers to stand and read as narrator, Beast Boy, Raven and Robin.
- **Third reading** — (optional, recommended for older students) Students re-read independently, marking 2-3 places in the story where characters made a choice that impacted others. Discuss positive and negative examples.

Pause here to review the plot elements that are present thus far in the storyboard. As a class, work together to identify the setting/exposition, rising action/conflict, and climax on the “Plot Mountain” handout.

Step 3 (20 Minutes)

Guided Practice — Writing an Inclusive Resolution

Tell students that they will write a collective ending to this story, and it should demonstrate the power of inclusion. That means that they will have to make some choices about characters’ actions and reactions. To help students make fitting choices, show the *Teen Titans Go!* clip, which features the characters Beast Boy and Robin. After the clip, work together to identify a few internal and external character traits that they noticed on a “Character-O-Matic” handout. You may model this process with Beast Boy and ask for student volunteers to help you with Robin.

Now that students understand these characters more deeply, pose the question: *what do you think will happen next?* Ask students to turn and talk to a partner or their small group to discuss ideas or jot down an idea independently in their notebooks. Then take ideas from a handful of volunteers and create a list on the board. Where possible, work to combine and expand upon students ideas so that you can incorporate 2-3 of their ideas into a single ending—you may even point out that combining excellent ideas into one collective ending demonstrates the power of inclusion!

If time allows, you may choose to model actually writing the resolution for students, pausing to think aloud and return to the plot and character guides. If time is short, craft the first few sentences together.

Step 4 (15 Minutes)

Independent Practice — Storyboard as a Springboard

Now that students have helped Robin, Raven, and Beast Boy resolve their differences, they will turn their attention to two new storyboards, each featuring new characters and conflicts. You may read both storyboards aloud for students as you did with the first, or you may direct students to read in small groups or independently.

Students should choose one storyboard and finish the story with a unique, inclusive resolution. Students will chart the beginning of the narrative in their copy of the “Plot Mountain” handout, noting setting/exposition, rising action/conflict, and climax.

Step 5 (10-15 Minutes)

Independent Practice — Character Profiles

Much like in the guided practice, students will take a step back before writing the ending and put themselves in someone else’s shoes.

Depending on the tech you have available, you may either share links to the character clips with your students or pause students as they’re wrapping work with their Plot Mountain to play the remaining character clips.

Students will create a character profile using the “Character-O-Matic” handout for at least one and up to two characters of their choice, based on the story they’ve chosen. Remind students that they should note both external and internal characteristics observed about each character. They should gather evidence to inform the choices they’ll make for characters that will contribute to an effective resolution.

Step 6 (20 Minutes)

Independent Practice — Writing an Inclusive Resolution

Working individually or in small groups, students will write original endings to the storyboard narrative with an emphasis on making a difference through inclusive choices. You may wish to review and project a few prompting questions and guidelines for students as they write:

- What action(s) might your character(s) take to include someone?
- How will your character(s) react?
- Add at least two lines of dialogue
- Add two sensory details
- Add something unexpected!

Step 7 (15 Minutes)

There’s More than One Way to Include Someone

Ask students to share their endings in pairs or small groups, then take a handful of volunteers to share their endings. Alternately, you can ask every student to share at least one line from their resolution.

If time allows, conclude with a debrief discussion that returns to some or all of the questions:

- Consider the many different ways we resolved the same conflict through writing. What does this tell us about how to include others?
- When you include someone, what is the impact? When you exclude someone, what is the impact? Ask students to share concrete examples from both the Include Someone BINGO activity, if used, and their stories.
- What can we as a group commit to when we witness instances of exclusion, conflict, or bullying? What can you commit to?

Finally, end with a call to action: charge students to amplify their voice by sharing their stories and what they've learned with someone in their world, thus building their capacity as inclusion leaders in their schools, communities, and families.

Thank you for encouraging students to share stories about inclusion and make a difference through writing. Be sure to check out other ways to promote inclusion through writing from 826 National and Cartoon Network:

- Share photos of your students' inclusive resolutions. Be sure to tag [@826Digital](#) and [@StopBullyingSpeakUp](#) and make your post public to amplify their words. Don't forget to get students' permission before you share!
- Visit [IncludeSomeone.com](#) for more National Bullying Prevention Month resources.
- See other [Social-Emotional Learning lessons](#) on 826 Digital.

Extension Activity

For students who finish early, or as an optional class extension, students may choose to illustrate their resolution on the blank storyboard handout provided and/or write an alternate ending that features a different way to resolve the same conflict.