



Basic  
Lesson  
Plan

6

## Disagreeing Appropriately

Students often find themselves in conversations where they disagree with the opinion of the person with whom they are speaking. Many times, children choose to argue, yell, or use some form of physical aggression to show the other person that they do not agree with his or her opinion. Teaching students to disagree appropriately provides them with a skill for handling situations in which they find themselves “at odds” with the opinions of others.

**The goal of the lesson is to teach students the appropriate behavioral expectations for the skill of “Disagreeing Appropriately.”**

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of “Disagreeing Appropriately.”
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different places and different people.

### Materials

Index cards

### Introduce the Skill

Write the following statements on the blackboard and ask students to read them silently.

- Allen believes that tacos are much better than cheeseburgers.
- Maria believes that you can only be happy if you have a lot of money.

- Tracy believes that *Lord of the Rings* is better than *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.
- Jennifer believes that rap music is better than rock music.
- John believes that playing basketball is more fun than skateboarding.

**SAY:** "You've had a chance to read the statements on the board. Choose the one that you disagree with the most."

**ASK:** "Would someone like to share his or her opinion?"

Allow students to answer.

### **Describe the Appropriate Behavior**

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of "Disagreeing Appropriately." As students share their opinions, write the following steps of the skill on the blackboard:

1. **Look at the person.**
2. **Use a pleasant voice.**
3. **Tell why you feel differently.**
4. **Give a reason.**
5. **Listen to the other person.**

**NOTE:** Steps also can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Please adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

**SAY:** "These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of 'Disagreeing Appropriately' in this class and building."

### **Give a Reason**

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to disagree with someone using these steps. Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- It might keep an argument or fight from happening.
- When you talk to someone this way, you avoid making the person mad.
- You have to show respect to get respect.

### **Practice**

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.



## 2. Journaling ideas

- Ask students to write about a time when they disagreed appropriately with someone and didn't end up fighting.
- Ask students to write about a time when they disagreed with someone and it made them or the other person mad.

## 3. Role-play

- Pass out index cards.
- Ask students to write out a "script" for their personal disagreement with one of the statements you wrote on the blackboard earlier. Instruct the students to write out their disagreement using the steps you discussed during the lesson. For example, if they disagreed with John, they would start by writing John's name on the card. They could then write a statement of understanding, like "I can understand that you think playing basketball is more fun than skateboarding." Next, they could write what they think or feel about John's opinion and why they think or feel that way; for example, "I think skateboarding is more fun than playing basketball because with skateboarding you don't just go back and forth on a court. You can jump ramps, speed down hills, and jump curbs, too."

**NOTE:** Give students about five minutes to complete the activity.

- Once students have completed their scripts, ask them to read their scripts to the person next to them. Instruct the students to take turns reading.
  - Allow some students to demonstrate the skill for the class using their scripts. Debrief the steps with the rest of the class.
4. **Use the following story to illustrate why it is important to consider time and place when using the skill of "Disagreeing Appropriately."**
- Ask the students to listen to the story carefully and be ready to answer the following questions: 1) What did Brandi do well when disagreeing appropriately? and 2) What could she have done better to improve her chances of being heard?

Brandi's mom wanted Brandi, her sister, Tonya, and her brother, Tim, to eat together today at 6 p.m. They never eat together, and Brandi's mom thought it would be good for a change. Since she was short on time, she made her plans without telling the kids ahead of time. But Brandi had already made plans to have pizza with some of her friends and to go to a new movie afterwards.

While Brandi's mom was talking on the phone, Brandi approached her and calmly said, "Mom, can I talk to you for a second? I know you want all of us to eat together, but tomorrow would be better for me since I already made plans with my friends to go out for pizza and to the movies." Brandi's mom covered the phone with one hand and said, "Brandi, I'm on the phone. Just go get your hands washed and get ready for dinner. Now, please." Brandi, upset inside, walked away muttering, "I can't believe this. She never has time to listen to me."

- Review the steps of "Disagreeing Appropriately" after you read the story and ask the two questions listed earlier.
- Discuss the importance of thinking about time and place when disagreeing with someone.

**ASK:** "Why do you think it is important to consider the timing and the place when choosing to disagree about something?"

**NOTE:** Possible responses might include, "So it doesn't put the other person in a bad spot," and "So you don't interrupt and the person gets mad."

5. Ask for volunteers to act out the steps of "Disagreeing Appropriately."
6. Ask students to help identify how the steps of "Disagreeing Appropriately" might change when the skill is used with different people (e.g., a store clerk, the minister at church, parents, etc.).

**SAY:** "Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of 'Disagreeing Appropriately' for the rest of the week."

**NOTE:** Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.



**Other Ideas for Practice**

**NOTE:** As you develop other ideas for practicing the skill, write them here and share them with other staff members in your building.

**For younger students (K-5), use literature to lead a discussion on how to disagree appropriately.** Books by popular children's author Julia Cook, including *I Just Don't Like the Sound of No!*, are recommended.

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2. Use a pleasant voice.

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