

LESSON

Everyone's a Helper

This lesson helps students understand the concepts of strengths, struggles and what it means to help.

Grade Level K-2, 3-5

Subject: Reading & Language Arts, Social Studies, SEL, ELL / ESL

Social Justice Domain: Identity, Diversity

OBJECTIVES

Activities will help students:

- Understand the concepts of strengths, struggles and what it means to help
- Read and write short paragraphs about themselves and their classmates
- Create visual representations of the concepts they discuss
- Develop an understanding of community
- Feel safe and supported in their classroom community

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are “strengths” and “struggles”?
- What does it mean to really help another person?
- Why is it important to think about when we need help as well as how we can help others?
- How can you use your strengths to help other members of your classroom community?

MATERIALS

- Handout: Sometimes I HELP, Sometimes I NEED Help (3-5), Sometimes I HELP, Sometimes I NEED Help (K-2)

- Chart paper
- Construction paper
- Colored pencils
- Oil pastels or crayons

Vocabulary

strength [strength] (*noun*) something you are really good at and might be able to use to help someone else

struggle [struhg-uhl] (*noun*) something you sometimes have a hard time with and might need help from someone else for

help [help] (*verb*) to use your strengths to support someone else who is struggling with something

community [kuh-myoo-ni-tee] (*noun*) a group of people who share something, like an interest, a goal, or a living or working space; a group of people who cooperate and learn to work together

Procedure

1. What is a strength? As a class, make a list on chart paper of **STRENGTHS** you think you might have. These are things you are really good at. Once you have a list, turn and talk to your neighbor about how you each might use your strengths during the school day. Focus the end of your conversation on **WHY** it's important to know our own strengths.
2. What is a struggle? As a class, make a list on a separate piece of chart paper of **STRUGGLES** you might have. These are things you might have a hard time with. Once you have a list, turn and talk to a different neighbor about times during the school day when you might struggle, and how a classmate could help you. Focus the end of your conversation on **WHY** it's important to talk about our struggles in addition to our strengths.
3. Now that you have two charts, go to your table and fill out the handout, **Sometimes I HELP, Sometimes I NEED Help**. Talk with your tablemates about what you are writing. Draw a picture in each box using colored pencils; your pictures should show a situation where you are using a strength to help someone else and a situation where you are struggling and need help from a classmate.
4. Come together as a class and share your work. Go around your circle and explain how you are able to help your classmates.
5. On construction paper, "publish" the "**Sometimes I HELP**" part of your handout. Write your paragraph neatly, and illustrate it using crayons or oil

pastels. When everyone has finished publishing, put the pages together to make an “Everyone’s a Helper” quilt. This quilt can hang in your classroom all year. When you need help with something, remember to consult your quilt and see if there’s another kid who can help you!

APPLYING WHAT YOU’VE LEARNED

Think about the conversations and activities in your class around learning each other’s strengths and struggles and finding out how you can help each other. In a journal, respond to the following questions:

- Do you agree that knowing one another’s strengths and struggles helps make a community safer, stronger and more productive? Explain why or why not, and challenge yourself to use specific examples.
- Who can you imagine yourself going to next time you need help with something that is a struggle for you? Why? Who do you think you might be able to help? How and why?
- What do the words—strength, struggle, help and community—mean to you? Has your understanding of these words changed after these lessons? Explain why or why not.

X



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