

MODULE 6

FAIRNESS

WHY FAIRNESS?

Children's ability to judge what is fair regarding their interactions with others is an important part of pro-social development. Research shows that understanding fairness helps children recognize tolerance towards others.¹ As well, social competence is related to children's accurate judgments of what is fair.² Thus, fairness is an important concept for children to learn as it not only helps them develop a sense of tolerance and justice, but it plays a role in their healthy development of appropriate and just behaviour towards their peers.

GOALS

To help your students understand fairness and equal behaviour.

To help your students recognize fair behaviour in others and nominate each other appropriately.

To help your students challenge themselves to be more fair individuals within a more fair classroom, as a more fair school.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Ten pennies, two nickels, one dime

Paper cut into small pieces

Markers

The authors of this manual recognize that you are the expert of your classroom and if you wish to add to this lesson any of your own activities or materials related to this module's theme, please feel free to do so.

¹ Wittenberg, R.T. (2007). The moral dimension of children's and adolescents' conceptualization of tolerance to human diversity. *Journal of Moral Education*, 36(4), 433-451.

² Vandiver, T. (2001). Children's social competence, academic competence, and aggressiveness as related to ability to make judgments of fairness. *Psychological Reports* 89(1), 111-121.



BUILD CHARACTER
BUILD SUCCESS

Introduction

Ask your students if they know what fairness means. Brainstorm together a definition for the classroom, along with examples of fair behaviour. Organize these behaviours in terms of how to be a more fair a) individual, b) classroom, c) school (see table below). Post this list in your classroom over the next month to help your students remember what being fair means. Here are some ways to help them define fairness and playing fair:

For younger students

- Treating everyone equitably: Not everyone can receive the same so it is important to give each person what they need
- Including everyone
- Letting everyone have an equal opportunity
- Not favouring one person over another person
- Playing by the rules
- Treating everyone according to the same rules

For older students

- Being free of favouritism or bias
- Being just and impartial to all
- Acting in line with the rules
- Being consistent with following the rules



What Fairness Looks Like ³

Acting in a fair manner may include the following:

- Taking turns
- Following the rules of a game or sport
- Not underestimating others, giving everyone a chance to participate by asking them to join the activity
- Treating each person you meet with the same kindness, despite any personal biases or prejudices you might have
- Considering all points of view before making a decision
- Listening to others politely and without judgment
- Making a fair compromise when there is a disagreement
- Giving someone a second chance when he or she makes a mistake and that person learns from his or her mistakes
- Being open-minded by getting to know people who are different
- Treating people without favouritism, so if you help one person, think about helping someone else as well
- Sharing what you have (game, toy, food) with others so everyone has equal access to it
- Including anyone who wants to play in a game or recess activity



³ Adapted from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Build Character Build Success website.

CHALLENGE: HOW TO BE A MORE FAIR...

Individual

Taking turns

Asking permission

Following rules well

Inviting others to join in games or to hang out

Sharing toys or games with others equally

Classroom

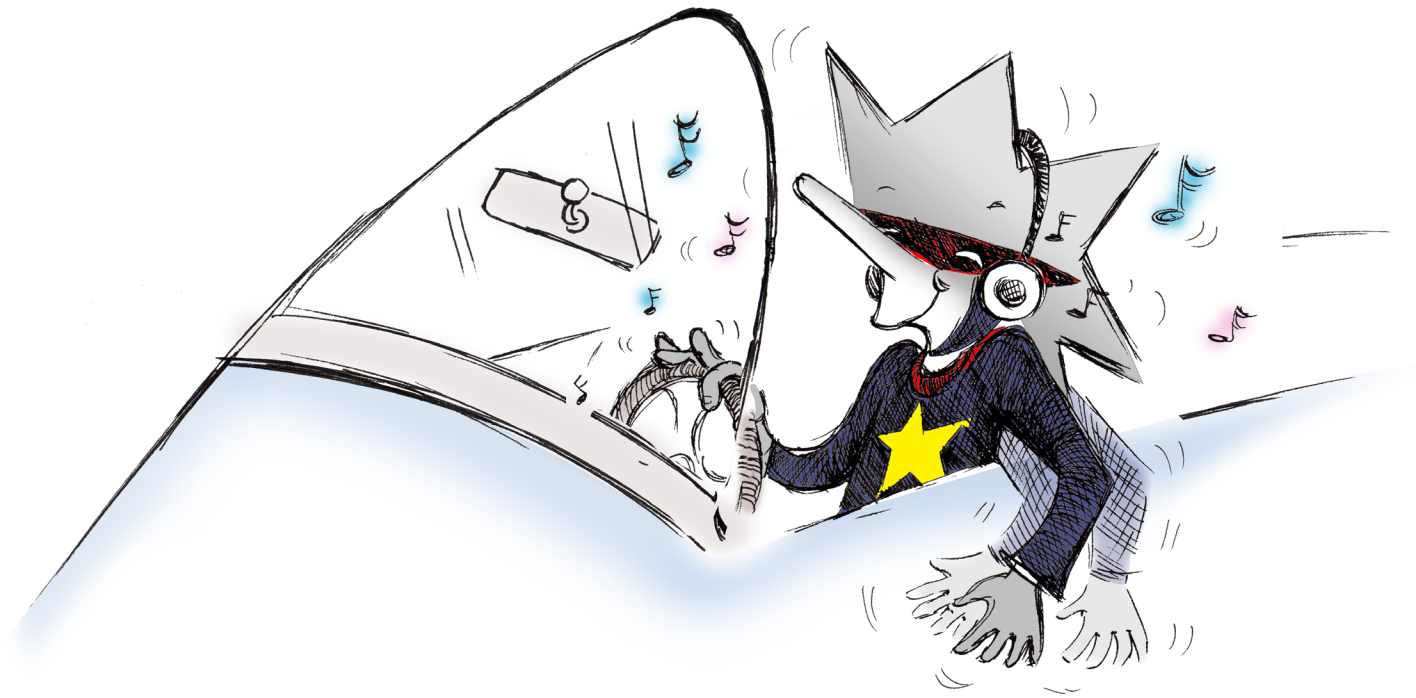
Helping decide fair classroom rules with the teacher and following them

Working with different people during group work

School

School rules and expectations are made clear by the principal with fair consequences

School activities are inclusive and available to as many students as possible



Quazar Video Questions

NOTE: These video clips are snapshots of the character attribute. They are not meant to be complete lessons, but simply to bring awareness of the attribute to your students. Here are some follow-up questions, as well as possible answers for the second Quazar video's questions to help your students think about fairness:

Video 1 Questions

1. When do you see people being treated unfairly (not equal to everyone else)?
2. How can we make everyone feel equal in our classroom?
3. How can we make everyone feel equal in our school?
4. What should you do if you see something that does not seem fair?



Video 2 Questions

- 1) Why were the students disagreeing about the Strut Your Style Parade? Why did everyone think it was not fair to play hip-hop music during the parade?

A: The students were disagreeing because they each wanted their favourite music played during the parade. They did not think it was fair that one group's favourite music be chosen over another group's.

- 2) Before coming up with a solution, what did Quazar do that showed he was being fair to everyone?

A: Quazar listened to everyone's point of view. He let everyone have a turn explaining the situation, and tried to understand the problem and everyone's opinion.

- 3) Quazar's solution was to play a completely different type of music than anyone had mentioned. Did Quazar show favouritism in making his decision?

A: No, Quazar did not show favouritism for any one type of music that the students wanted to play. He listened to all of the points of view before making a decision and decided to choose a new type of music, instead of having to choose one from the options the students gave him.

- 4) Why is it sometimes important to have someone else like Quazar come and help make a decision when there is a disagreement? Who is someone you could ask to help you make a fair decision?

A: Sometimes the people who disagree can't be fair because they have a bias about how they would like the disagreement to be settled. A person coming from the outside is more likely to be impartial and help make a fair decision by listening to all sides of a story. You could ask a teacher or a parent to help you if there is a disagreement.

- 5) Do you think Quazar's decision is a fair compromise? Why/why not? Do you think there could have been another fair compromise?

A: (Discuss different points of view)

Classroom Activities

For younger students

1) This activity is meant to help children understand each person's value and the importance of treating others equally. Gather students around and show them three stacks of coins: ten pennies, two nickels and one dime. Explain to your students that each stack of coins is different, but each has the same value and so should be treated equally and fairly. Explain to the children that this is the same with people. We are all different, but we all have the same value and we all deserve to be treated equally and fairly. Ask your students to name some examples of traits that give people value. Are traits, or superpowers, just like Quazar has. These might include talents, personality traits, or other things that make people special. Have each student draw a picture of the trait that gives him/her value. Highlight the fact that because each person has value, it is important to treat everyone fairly and equally; no one is better than anyone else.

Here are some examples of traits that give people value in case your students are having trouble thinking of one:

- Being a good friend
- Being a good listener
- Playing an instrument well
- Being a good writer
- Being good at video games
- Being a good brother/sister
- Being good at a sport
- Having a good sense of humour



2) Explain to your class that being fair is hard and that juries in the court system work hard to come up with the fairest decision when a crime is committed. Tell them that the class will work together as a jury to decide the fairest consequence for a series of problems. Have one member of a jury pick out a "crime" from a hat and read it to the class. Have the class discuss as a group what they think an appropriate consequence would be. Have students explain why they think their consequence is the most fair. Point out to the class that giving everyone the same, or equal, consequence is not always fair. Why is it fair for a punishment to be more severe for a more serious problem? Is it easy or hard to be fair?

Here are some examples of "crimes" that students can choose from:

- Losing a library book
- Not cleaning your room
- Taking food from the cafeteria without paying
- Fighting in the hallway
- Cheating on a test
- Copying someone's homework and saying it is your own
- Calling someone names

Classroom Activities

For older students

1) Assign your students to six random groups. Tell them you will be assigning them each a historical topic related to treating people with fairness and equality and they are to do a brief search on the internet, come together as a group to discuss, and report back to the class about what they have learned on the subject. This assignment can be assigned as homework or can be completed during class time if computers are available. Students will be researching the following subjects:

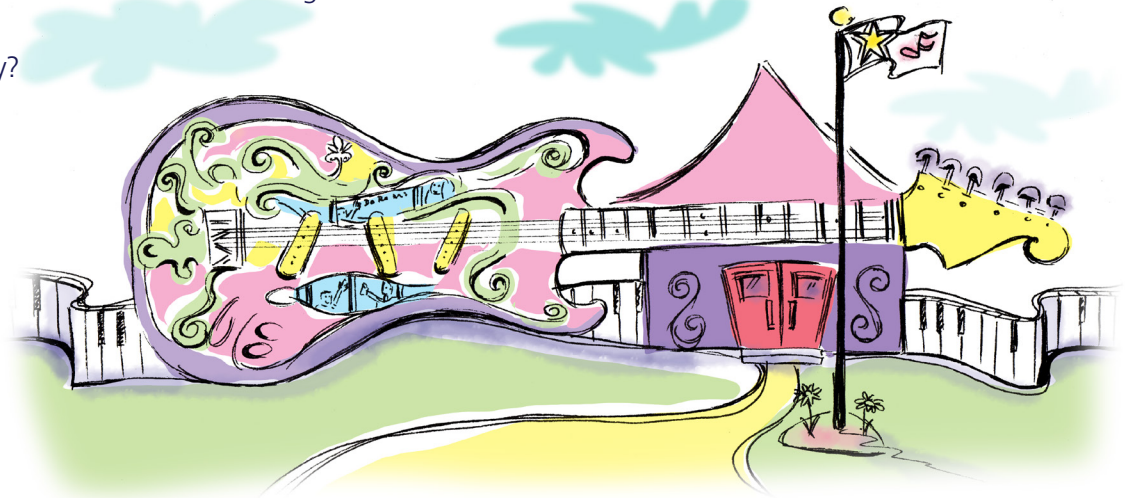
- Slavery in the United States
- Apartheid in South Africa
- Black rights
- Women in sports (can choose one or the Olympics)
- Women and the vote in Canada
- The Caste system in India

Students should think about the following questions when reporting back:

- When was this an issue?
- What year was it resolved?
- Who was a major historical figure related to this topic?
- How does this issue relate to treating people fairly?
- Was this issue resolved?
- Is this still an issue today?

2) Explain to your class that being fair is difficult and that juries in the legal system work hard to come up with the fairest decision when a crime is committed. Break students up randomly into two groups and tell them they will act as a jury to decide the best punishment for a series of "crimes." Have one member of a jury pick a "crime" from a hat and read it to the class. Have the juries discuss as a group what they think an appropriate punishment would be. Have a spokesman for each jury report to the class the final decision. Are the punishments the same? Have each jury explain why they think their punishment is the most fair. Point out to the class that giving everyone the same, or equal, punishment is not always fair. Why is it fair for a punishment to be more severe for a more serious "crime"? Here are some examples of "crimes" that students can choose from:

- Fighting in the hallway
- Kicking someone intentionally during a sports game
- Stealing a pop from the corner store
- Vandalizing school property by breaking a window
- Skateboarding in a 'No skateboard' zone
- Copying someone's work and saying it is your own
- Not cleaning your room
- Cheating on a test



Quotations About Fairness

These quotations can also be posted in the classroom to remind students about the importance of being fair:

"Play fair. Don't hit people. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody."

~ Robert Fulghum (Author)

"It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself."

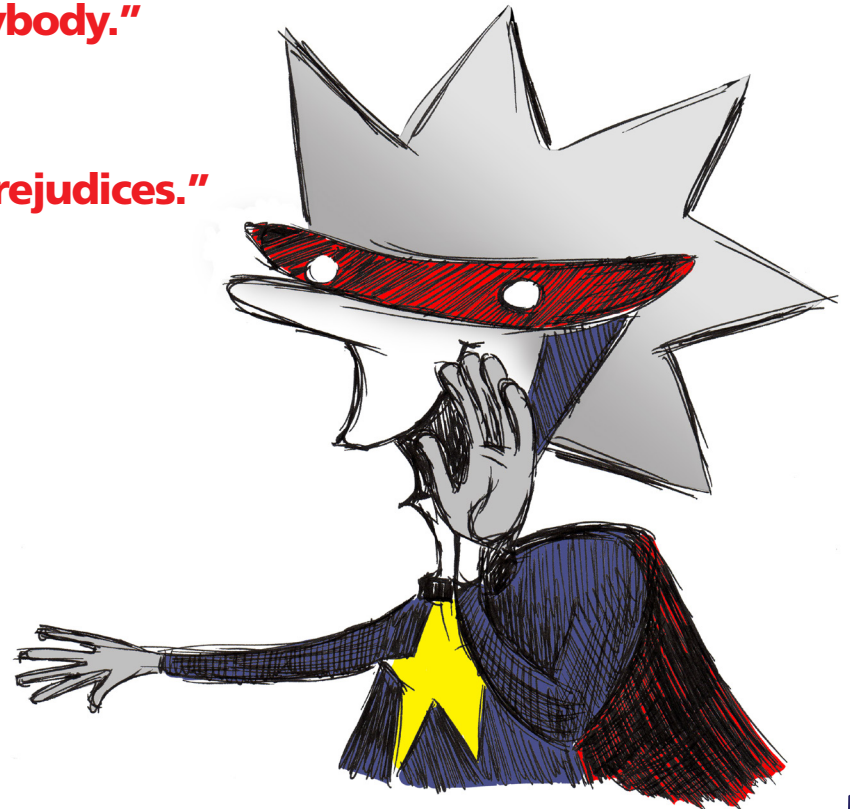
~ Eleanor Roosevelt (Former First Lady of the United States)

"I've always felt that when I do something in the name of fairness, it's not just for me, it's for everybody."

~ Janet Peckinpaugh (Actor)

"Fairness is man's ability to rise above his prejudices."

~ Wes Fessler (Author)





Fairness Reading List

The following books explore the theme of fairness for children of different ages and can also be used to help teach students about fair behaviour:

Grades K-3:

- *Clifford and the Grouchy Neighbours* by Norman Bridwell
- *Me Too!* by Mercer Mayer
- *Franklin Says Sorry* by Paulette Bourgeois

Grades 3-5:

- *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst
- *Chester* by Melanie Watt
- *Willow's Whispers* by Lana Button

Grades 6-8

- *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* by Judy Blume
- *What Does Peace Feel Like?* by Vladimir Radunsky
- *Eleanor Roosevelt: An Inspiring Life* by Elizabeth MacLeod

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FAIRNESS - GLOBAL COMPETENCIES ACTIVITIES

Learning Skills include: Responsibility, Collaboration, Self-Regulation

Fairness is about treating everyone as equals without favouritism or discrimination. Fair treatment ensures a sense of belonging and safety within the classroom.



Activity One

Worksheet (See following pages)

Have students complete the worksheet attached. There is an option to draw or write about examples of fairness.

Activity Two

Trivia Game

Use a deck of age appropriate trivia questions. Randomly divide the class into 3 teams, let the groups choose a team name. Rotate which group gets to answer the question. When a team gets an answer wrong the next team goes. The first team to 10 completes the game.

Explain how this group requires fairness because students (1) need to take turns, (2) the groups are randomly designed, (3) the questions are shuffled and randomly asked.

Activity Three

Fair or Unfair Game (See following pages)

Provide each student with a fair or unfair card. Read out scenarios one at a time. Tell students to flash the card to indicate if the scenario is fair or unfair. Alternatively, you could have students raise their hands to vote on whether it is fair or unfair.

FAIRNESS WORKSHEET

Fairness is about treating everyone as equals without favouritism or discrimination.

Draw a picture of someone treating you with fairness.



FAIR OR UNFAIR GAME

Read these examples to the class one at a time or make up a list of your own examples.
Have students vote with the cards on the next page.

FAIR

Julie's friend gets served a bigger slice of cake

Emmet's older sister stays up later than him

Raj has to do all his homework before watching a show

Ginny's soccer team can't play because they are short too many players

UNFAIR

Suzie never gets to pick the show to watch

Gerald is always the first person to pick the good toys

Marie has to clean up someone else's mess

Erik never participates in group activities

FAIR OR UNFAIR GAME

Make copies of the cards and cut them out.

FAIR

UNFAIR