



Compromise

DATE:

SOCIAL SKILL OBJECTIVE: Students will learn that compromise requires an understanding of other people’s views and a willingness to come to an agreement with the other person. Someone who can compromise shows strength of character and humility, has a sense that to give a little does not mean to “lose,” and desires peace and reconciliation over conflict and a need to “win”. Instructors will use one or more of the following activities.

MATERIALS: pictures of bending tree

BOOKS: *Little Mouse on the Prairie* by Stephen Cosgrove and Robin James; *Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy* by Jacky Davis and David Soman; *Pip and Posy: The Snowy Day* by Axel Scheffler; *The Berenstain Bears and the Blame Game* by Stan and Jan Berenstain; *The Day No One Played Together* by Donalisa Helsley

ASCA NATIONAL STANDARDS: A:A1.5, A:A3.2, A:A3.5, A:B1.4, C:A1.4, C:A2.1, C:A2.5, C:C1.4, C:C2.3, PS:A1.8, PS:A1.9, PS:A2.2, PS:A2.6, PS:A2.7, PS:A2.8, PS:B1.4, PS:B1.6, PS:C1.10

SOCIAL TIMES: “Handling Change” (Something to Talk About) Volume 2, Number 6, p. 8 / “Handling Change–Plan Ahead” (The Main Event) Volume 2, Number 6, p. 2 by Kari Dunn Buron

SOCIAL SKILLS EXPECTATIONS: When discussing specific behaviors that impact relationships, ask: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How in relation to behaviors.

ACTIVITY 1: Instructors will initiate the topic of compromise by discussing the following with students:

- Are you sensitive to others’ feelings?
- Do you try to control what others do?
- Do you treat people with kindness and generosity?
- Do you think about how your actions will affect others?
- Are you ever mean or hurtful?
- Do you have difficulty sharing?
- Do you help people in need?
- How does it feel when you have to give something away when you really don’t want to?
- What does this mean? We become caring people by doing caring things.

ACTIVITY 2: Instructors will discuss the language to use when negotiating or asking for a compromise.

Negotiating a Compromise

- I see your point, however, don't you think that ...
- I'm afraid that's not true. Remember that ...
- Try to see it from my point of view.
- I understand what you're saying, but ...
- Imagine for a moment that you are ...

Asking for Compromise

- How flexible can you be on that?
- I'm ready to agree if you can ...
- If I agree, would you be willing to...?
- We would be willing to ..., provided, of course, that ...
- Would you be willing to accept a compromise?

ACTIVITY 3: Instructors will introduce the concept of “I-messages” and “blaming” messages, telling them an “I-message” is a statement about your own feelings. It says what’s bothering you and why. An “I-statement” is a format for sharing one’s feelings about a situation without accusing the other person and resulting in their reacting defensively. An “I-message” is constructive and points to a solution. A “blaming” message says what’s wrong with the other person. A “blaming” message puts the other person on the defensive and leads to more conflict. “I-messages” usually work better. Instructors will read the following two sentences and ask the class to vote on which they would find easier to hear someone say to them:

- *Example:* “It really bothers me that we can't find a way to compromise.” or “We could do a better job if we worked together instead of arguing all the time.”
- *Example:* “You're ruining our project. You're a jerk. You never do anything right.”

ACTIVITY 4: Students will explore the world of compromise. After reading Ladybug Girl and Bumblebee Boy students will reflect on the importance of everyday compromise. Students will use the pictures provided to answer the following questions.

1. How often do you make compromises on the playground?
2. Are you quick to compromise or do you stubbornly hold on to the activity you favor?

ACTIVITY 5: Instructors will ask students to describe a variety of conflicts that commonly occur at school. Discuss how the steps and rules of conflict resolution could be used.

Discussion Points:

1. Why do people have so much trouble negotiating a solution to a conflict? How might emotions get in the way of a win/win solution?

2. Could violence have been an outcome in any situation? Which one? Why?
3. What makes it easier to negotiate? What makes it harder?
4. What can you do if you and another person fail to reach an agreement that feels okay to both of you? (Answer: Call in an objective “third party,” such as a friend, teacher or counselor to serve as a mediator.)
5. Is there a difference in the way men and women experience negotiation? If so, how is the experience different for men and for women? (Answer: Women are generally socialized to accept compromise and “lose” more easily, while men are generally socialized to try and hold their ground and “win.”)
6. What are examples of situations in which you would be unwilling to compromise? (Possible answers: Situations involving religious beliefs, the law, life or death situations and so on.)
7. How easy or difficult would it be to introduce this technique for negotiating to your parent or parents? Could you use it to resolve other differences at home?
8. What current conflict could you resolve with negotiation? What solutions will you offer?

ACTIVITY 6: Using the “Creating I-Statements” sentence strips, students will take a typical conflict comment and transform it into an “I-statement”. Instructors will ask students why it is easier to hear an “I-statement” rather than a statement accusing you of something. Instructors will discuss how it can be hard to say how we honestly feel; sometimes this might make us feel vulnerable. It’s also challenging to break the habit of how we typically speak to people during a conflict.

ACTIVITY 7: Instructors will give each student a copy of the bending tree and ask them. “Is it better to bend than break?”

ACTIVITY 8: In the story The Bernstein Bears and the Blame Game Mama Bear is upset with Brother and Sister Bear because they have been arguing about who starts fights, and who causes problems. They are constantly blaming each other for everything. Then, a vase gets broken and Brother and Sister start to blame each other for the incident. Papa Bear comes in and helps clean up the mess. Then the cubs go outside to play and a window is broken, which starts the blame game all over again. Papa gets very angry. Then the bear family works together to clean up the mess. It is better to fix the problem, than to waste time blaming each other for causing it. Even when two people think it is the other person’s fault, it is often better to compromise and work together to resolve the situation. Otherwise, the “blame game” never ends.

Instructors will ask the following questions:

- In this story, do you think it helped for Brother and Sister to blame each other for the problems that occurred?
- Do you think this blaming is similar to tattling on others?
- Why do you think the “blame game” upset Mama and Papa Bear?
- Do blaming and tattling solve problems?
- When do you think it is necessary to “blame” or “tattle” on someone? At the end of the book, Papa says that even when a person is to blame for something, most of the time it is better to skip the blaming part and to put your energy into solving the problem—working together.

ACTIVITY 4:



ACTIVITY 9: Instructors will read Pip and Posy: The Snowy Day. Pip and Posy love playing in the snow, but they can't seem to agree about what kind of snow creature they should build. Pip wants to build a snow-rabbit and Posy wants to build a snow-mouse. This is a delightful story about learning to compromise. The purpose of this lesson is to teach students the importance of compromise and the consequences of not coming to an agreement. To give and take when settling a disagreement each person gives in a bit, so no one gets their way 100%.

Instructors will explain to students that compromising is a special form of cooperation—working together. When people cooperate they work together to achieve a goal. When people have different or opposing goals they can still work together by compromising, which is meeting each other half way. This way everyone can get something, even if they don't get everything they want. Ask the students to think of ways that the characters in this story could compromise when playing in the snow.

Ask the following questions:

- Why did Pip and Posy fight?
- Is it okay for them to want to build different types of snowmen?
- What mistakes do they make when arguing with each other?
- What could they do differently?
- What things are hard for us to compromise on?
- How can we develop a better attitude about settling disagreements?
- Can we see the disagreement from the other person's point of view?

Review the social skill steps for compromising:

1. Look and listen
2. Show your interest
3. Use kind words
4. No arguing, whining, or pouting
5. Do your part

ACTIVITY 6:**Creating “I Statements”**

You knocked over our project and now it’s ruined. You are such an idiot!
You went behind my back and said mean things about me. You are a traitor.
You are a liar. You told me you would help me with my homework and you never showed up!
You’re picking on me. I wasn’t the only person talking in class, so why are you only giving me detention?
You need to shut-up. I can’t do my work when you are over there talking all the time.
You left your lunch trash all over the table. You’re a slob and I’m tired of picking up after you.
You think all these stupid jokes you tell are funny, but I don’t like it when you joke with me.
You need to watch where you are going. Every day you bump into me when you try to get to your locker and I’m sick and tired of having a sore shoulder.
You are driving me crazy by tapping your stupid pencil all the time.
There is no way I am working in a group with you this time. Last time, all you did was make me do all the work. You’re lazy!
You never say please or thank you, and I do a lot to help you out.
You were late to practice again today and all of us had to waste our time waiting on you. Why don’t you grow up?

ACTIVITY 6:

Sample “I Statements” Answers

<p>You knocked over our project and now it’s ruined. You are such an idiot! <i>I felt angry when you knocked over our project because we spent a ton of time on it.</i></p>
<p>You went behind my back and said mean things about me. You are a traitor. <i>I feel betrayed when you talk about me behind my back because friends don’t treat friends like that.</i></p>
<p>You are a liar. You told me you would help me with my homework and you never showed up! <i>I felt really upset when you forgot to meet me after school because I was really counting on you to help me with my homework.</i></p>
<p>You’re picking on me. I wasn’t the only person talking in class, so why are you only giving me detention? <i>I feel like you were being unfair when you gave me detention because I wasn’t the only person talking.</i></p>
<p>You need to shut-up. I can’t do my work when you are over there talking all the time. <i>I feel distracted when you talk during class because I can’t focus on my work while you are having a loud conversation.</i></p>
<p>You left your lunch trash all over the table. You’re a slob and I’m tired of picking up after you. <i>I feel taken advantage of when you leave your trash on the table because I always have to clean it up, along with my own trash.</i></p>
<p>You think all these stupid jokes you tell are funny, but I don’t like it when you joke with me. <i>I feel insulted when you make jokes about me because it seems like they are meant to be mean rather than funny.</i></p>
<p>You need to watch where you are going. Every day you bump into me when you try to get to your locker and I’m sick and tired of having a sore shoulder. <i>I feel disrespected when you bump into me every day because you never say excuse me.</i></p>
<p>You are driving me crazy by tapping your stupid pencil all the time. <i>I feel frustrated when you tap your pencil on your desk because the noise is really distracting to me.</i></p>
<p>There is no way I am working in a group with you this time. Last time, all you did was make me do all the work. You’re lazy! <i>I feel nervous about working with you in a group because last time it seemed like I did all the work.</i></p>
<p>You never say please or thank you, and I do a lot to help you out. <i>I feel underappreciated when you don’t thank me because I think I help you out a lot.</i></p>
<p>You were late to practice again today and all of us had to waste our time waiting on you. Why don’t you grow up? <i>I feel frustrated when you arrive late because all of us have to waste our time as we wait on you.</i></p>

ACTIVITY 7: What does this Scottish Proverb have to do with compromise?
“Better Bend than Break”

