

Lesson Plan

Avoiding Stereotypes

Book: *Understanding Differences*

Series: Spreading Kindness

Level: Pioneer

Objective

To help students understand what stereotypes are and why they can be hurtful.

Supplies

- *Understanding Differences* book
- Whiteboard

Before the Activity

Read the *Understanding Differences* book out loud to students.

Activity

Showing care for the thoughts and feelings of others is an important part of being kind. One way people can do this is by avoiding stereotypes. Have students look at the “Try It Out!” feature (“Stop Stereotypes”) on pages 16–17 of the *Understanding Differences* book. Read the text on page 16 out loud to students. Then ask the following question:

- What is a stereotype? (Answer: A stereotype says that everyone in a certain group is alike.)

To help students learn more about stereotypes and why they can be wrong or hurtful, write the following sentences on the whiteboard:

- People from Texas all talk too loud.
- Everyone in Alaska lives in an igloo.
- No one in New York is friendly.
- All people in California are lazy.

Explain that each of these sentences is a stereotype. It assumes things about people based on where they live. Discuss the following questions as a class:

- Why is each sentence not true? (Answer: There are a variety of different people who live in each state.)
- Why could each sentence hurt someone’s feelings? (Answers: Some of the sentences, such as the one about California, say mean things about people. Others, such as the one about Alaska, could make people feel bad by not matching what their lives are really like.)

- How could we change each sentence to make it kinder and more accurate? (Answers will vary but should be similar to “People in Alaska live in many kinds of homes.”)

Explain that all these sentences group people based on the state where they live, but there are many other groups that stereotypes can be based on. Ask students to use the infographic on page 17 to think of some of these groups. To help stop stereotypes, students can avoid saying that people from any of these groups are all the same.

Evaluation

Could students answer the discussion questions? Could they adjust each sentence so it was no longer hurtful or untrue?

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ reading standards for informational text, grade 1 (RI 1.2).