



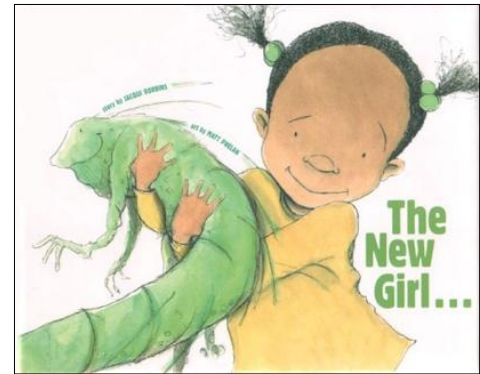
A WELCOMING CLASSROOM

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: K – 2

LENGTH OF TIME: One 35 minute session for reading;
one 35 minute session for an activity

GOALS

- To use literature to create a more welcoming classroom.
- To help students understand what makes them and other children feel welcome or unwelcome in school.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will listen to a story and identify the feelings of the characters.
- Students will apply that discussion to their own experiences.
- Students will be able to name examples of what makes them feel welcome or unwelcome in school.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. Also (RL.1.1, 2.1)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. (Also SL.1.1, 2.1)

EDUCATORS' NOTES

This lesson is designed to look at what makes students feel welcome or not welcome in their school communities. It will also help students to understand how hurtful teasing, name-calling and exclusion can make people feel with the goal of developing empathy and compassion for other students. Name-calling can be defined broadly as the use of words (or gestures, in place of words) to hurt someone.

MATERIALS

- *The New Girl ... and Me* by Jacqui Robbins
- Other book options include: *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson, *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig or *The Sissy Duckling* by Harvey Fierstein
- Chart paper or a whiteboard and markers
- Drawing paper or copies of the template, "I can help others feel welcome..."
- Markers or crayons for drawing, pencils

SESSION ONE: READING AND DISCUSSION

- Talk with your students about what the words “welcome” and “unwelcome” mean. You may choose to ask the students what they think “welcome” and “unwelcome” mean, or you may give the students a definition of the words. Let students know that “welcome” and “unwelcome” are both feelings and actions.

Welcome: When you feel good/comfortable about where you are and the people you are with; when you feel like you belong somewhere; when you help someone to feel like they belong.

Unwelcome: When you do not feel good/comfortable about where you are or the people you are with; when you feel like you do not belong somewhere; when people don’t make you feel like you belong.

- The teacher in the book *The New Girl ... and Me* uses the phrase “make her feel at home.” You may want to let your students know that the phrase “make her feel at home” means the same thing as “make her feel welcome.”
- Read the book *The New Girl ... and Me*.

AFTER READING THE BOOK

- Ask your students:
 - Has anyone ever seen an iguana? What did it look like? What did it eat?
 - What did D.J. do or say that made Shakeeta feel unwelcome or “not at home”?
 - When D.J. told Shakeeta that she looked like an iguana, what did other people in the class do?
 - How do you think Shakeeta felt when children in her class laughed at D.J.’s comment?
 - What could the other children have done to help? To be allies?
 - What did Mia do that helped Shakeeta feel welcome?
 - How do you think Mia felt after she talked to Shakeeta?

SESSION TWO: WELCOMING DRAWINGS

- Ask your students to give examples of when they feel unwelcome. Prompt them to include in their examples things that make them feel unwelcome at school, including name-calling and hurtful teasing if they do not bring them up. Record their responses on a chart entitled “I Feel Unwelcome When...”
- Then, look at this chart, review/read some of the responses, and ask your students, “What does it feel like when you feel unwelcome?” You can prompt them to think more about how it feels by using some of the examples that are on the chart. For example, you can say, “How does it feel when someone calls you a name?”
- Next, ask the students to give examples of when they feel welcome. Prompt them to include what other students, teachers and administrators can do that helps them feel welcome. Record their responses on a chart entitled “I Feel Welcome When...”

-
- Then, look at this chart, review/read some of the responses, and ask your students, “What does it feel like when you feel welcome?”
 - Have students draw a welcoming picture and write using the prompt: “I can help others feel welcome by...”
 - Display the pictures around the classroom or post them in the hall near your classroom.

EXTENSIONS

- **Community-Building Activity:** Brainstorm with your students what could make their classroom and the school feel more welcoming. From this list, have the students pick an action that they could take. Make a plan and carry it out.
- **Welcoming Chart:** Label a piece of chart paper “Our Welcoming Classroom” and post it on the wall. When you notice students doing something to make a more welcoming classroom, add their names and what they did to the chart.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Can students list examples of feeling welcome and unwelcome?
- Can students identify/list examples of actions they can take to make other children feel welcome?

ADDITIONAL BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

- *Chrysanthemum or Crisantemo*, Kevin Henkes
- *Each Kindness*, Jacqueline Woodson.
- *The Invisible Boy*, Trudy Ludwig.
- *The Name Jar*, Yangsook Choi.
- *The Sissy Duckling*, Harvey Fierstein.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM WELCOMING SCHOOLS

- [Children’s Books to Prevent Bias-Based Bullying](#)
- [Lesson Plans to Prevent Bias-Based Bullying in School](#)
- [Preventing Bias-Based Bullying – School Resources](#)
- [Welcoming Schools Professional Development Trainings](#)

Based in part on I Feel Welcome/Unwelcome in: Froschl, Merle, and Barbara Sprung, and Nancy Mullin-Rindler with Nan Stein and Nancy Gropper. Quit it!: A Teacher’s Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K-3. Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, NEA Professional Library. 1998. www.wcwonline.org

I can help others feel welcome by
