

TANENBAUM

Religions in My Neighborhood

Teaching Curiosity
and Respect about
Religious Differences

Including: The Seven Principles for Inclusive Education



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Religious Differences



Imagine...a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.



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Chapter III (Unit 1): Beliefs about Caring for Each Other

BIG IDEAS FOR III (1)

- Many people have shared ways of caring for, sharing with and helping each other, even if they have different beliefs.
- Many people have shared understandings about the responsibilities they have toward each other and toward their shared community, even if they have different beliefs.
- These common understandings are for the collective well-being of all people in the group or community.
- The well-being of all people in a group or community depends on their caring for each other: showing concern, helping, sharing, and rejecting selfishness.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION FOR III (1)

- How do people learn about caring, sharing, and helping?

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR III (1)

- English Language Arts: 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12
- Social Studies: 3, 5, 6, 10

Objectives for this lesson – Students will:

- Develop understandings of human goodness, kindness, and caring and what they mean in everyday life.
- Think about why we need guidelines to remind us of caring and sharing.
- Compare various “golden rules” and notice similarities and differences.
- Reflect on their daily life in acts of caring and sharing.

Materials needed:

- Tanenbaum’s Golden Rule poster. The poster contains a number of different religions’ versions of the Golden Rule. It is included in the “Days 2 & 3” section of this lesson or can be downloaded for free in several languages at <https://www.tanenbaum.org/resources/golden-rule> (on the right hand side of the web page).
- Markers
- Colored slips of paper (for the extension activity)

Time needed:

3 class meetings, 30–45 minutes each

Setting the lesson:

Welcome students to this new activity. Ask students how they would explain the following words: kindness, goodness, and caring. Post their comments on white board, chart paper or an overhead projector. Explain that many different groups of people expect kindness, goodness, and caring from everyone and that this is the topic for today’s lesson.

Procedure for the lesson:**Day 1:**

To deepen understanding, follow up with questions and activities that help to understand “rules”:

- What is a rule in your family?
- Have you made any rules when you play with your friends?
- What are some of the rules in our learning community? (Encourage students to refer back to the class’s Rules of Respect.)
- Why do communities need rules?
- What are some of the rules in your community?

Consider various examples of community rules, such as: The Eightfold Path of Buddhism, The Ten Commandments (observed in Judaism, Islam and Christianity) or The Sermon on the Mount (in the New Testament). Also review your classroom Rules of Respect. Lead the children through a discussion on the similarities and differences between these various community “rules.”

After working through the entire poster with this dynamic, student-based discussion, you might also work with the students to find words, phrases and ideas that are common to each religious belief about caring and sharing with people. Some examples include: “you;” “other(s);” “do;” “peace;” and “treat.” Circle those phrases on the chart paper or transparency, or post sticky-notes on the original poster. Whatever your method, utilize a graphic indicator of words so that the students visualize the words and ideas that are similar or share common understandings.

Closure for the lesson:

Make connections between the Golden Rule and students’ daily lives. Keep the poster or chart paper on display in your classroom or learning space for several weeks. Keep a tray nearby with post-it notes and pencils. Invite students to jot down (or draw an illustration of) ways in which they have lived the Golden Rule in their daily lives. They can stick those post-it notes to the big chart paper or Golden Rule poster close to the sentence that matches their own actions.

Assessment for the lesson:

- Can students explain the reason for having community rules and guidelines?
- Do students reveal self-knowledge about their own responsibilities toward each other?
- Can students interpret similarities and differences between various versions of the Golden Rule?
- Do students demonstrate empathy for others in their learning community actions and behaviors of caring and sharing?

Chapter III (1) Extensions for group mural activity:

- Each student draws a portrait of oneself engaged in a caring or sharing activity. Cut out the figure and add it to a large paper or bulletin board to demonstrate a community of caring and sharing.
- Have the goodness or kindness rules be a gift for students who visit the garden of questions and answers about beliefs!

Chapter III (1) Extensions about our own learning to care:

Discussion Questions:

- What are your responsibilities for caring and sharing at home?
- What are your responsibilities for caring and sharing in our classroom or learning community?
- How do we learn to care for one another?
- Do we have younger siblings, elders, or family pets to care for?
- How do we learn to share?
- Where did you learn what you are responsible for?
- Can you take on more things to be responsible for? Give an example. Do you need permission to do this?