

THE PICNIC

Objective

This activity was designed to allow students the experience of discussing differences and similarities between people with and without disabilities.

Materials

- Copy of story “The Picnic” (included)
- Cut outs of Susan, Rachel and Jeremy
- Surface to display the children in the story

Teacher Preparation

Make copies of Susan, Rachel and Jeremy. Color, cut-out, laminate.

Activity

1. Read “The Picnic” to the students. As the children in the story are mentioned, present the cut-out of that particular child (shown without disabilities) to the students.
2. When you have finished reading the story, and all three children have been introduced, display them together and ask students how the three children are alike (same age, same school, all like picnics, same neighborhood, etc.)
3. Ask how the three children are different.
4. Ask the students how the differences affected the children. For instance, Rachel, who thought she was the “perfect” size, was too small to go over the wall and too large to fit through the opening.
5. Display Jeremy, by himself, with his jacket on. Remove the jacket and ask students if Jeremy, with the jacket, is the same person inside as Jeremy without the jacket.
6. Explain to the students that you will go over the story again, but with some changes this time.
7. Review the following parts of the story, using the **children with disabilities** cut-outs, asking how specific differences might change the story, or if they do:

- a. When the children are first meeting each other and making friends, could they still greet each other the same way? Could they still be friends? (Yes)
 - b. Could Rachel still play hopscotch with leg braces? (Yes)
 - c. If Jeremy were in a wheelchair, would he still be able to hide behind the bush to scare Rachel and Susan? (Yes) Is Jeremy still the same person inside when he's in a wheelchair? (Yes)
 - d. What would happen when they came to the wall (broken arm, wheelchair, leg braces)? Would they have to enter the park in a different way? (Yes)
 - e. What would happen when they came to the stairs? What adaptation could be made at the water fountain to make it accessible to people with disabilities (ramp)? Discuss environmental barriers for people with disabilities (stairs, narrow aisles, no elevator, etc.).
- You may modify the story by showing one of the characters as looking non-disabled but having a hidden disability such as a hearing impairment, speech impairment, visual impairment, etc.

Discussion

Emphasize how the children were no different than they were originally:

- They still wanted to make friends and have fun.
- Their differences changed only how they might approach certain situations and tasks. Some differences make ordinary tasks a little more difficult.

For instance: If a student breaks the arm he/she writes with, he/she may have difficulty getting through ordinary school work which requires writing.

Similarly, a student who utilizes a wheelchair may find it more difficult getting to school if there are steps leading up to the building.

Review the presentation, emphasizing that some differences may seem to set people apart from one another, but it's what is on the inside that really counts.

Discuss the fact that no matter how different a person becomes on the outside, he or she still has feelings, interests, goals, etc.

* Adapted from Department of Special Education, University of Kansas, *Severely Handicapped Integration Program*, Elementary Curriculum, 1983

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Susan just moved into the neighborhood. She was excited about summer and all the fun things she would be able to do in her new neighborhood. There was a zoo, a big swimming pool with a slide, a large park, and so many other interesting things for her to explore. "First," she thought, "I will find a way to meet new friends so I will have someone to share all these things with." Susan decided that the best way to meet some of the kids in her neighborhood would be to pack a big picnic lunch and then invite whomever she met on the way to the park to come along with her. She got out the picnic basket and filled it with sandwiches, fruit, cookies, drinks and a blanket to sit on. "All the right things for a picnic!" she thought, and off she went down the street looking for someone to invite. As she walked past a hedge, she noticed a girl playing hopscotch on the sidewalk. "Hi," said Susan. "My name is Susan and I'm going on a picnic. Would you like to come?" "Sure! My name is Rachel. I love picnics! Are you new around here?" As Susan and Rachel walked toward the park, they talked nonstop. They discovered that they were both the same age and would both be going to the same school in the fall. They were so busy talking that they didn't notice Jeremy hiding behind a bush, just ahead, waiting to scare them as they walked past.

"Boo!" yelled Jeremy, as he jumped out in front of the girls.

"Oh you rat, Jeremy!" cried Rachel. "How could you do such a mean thing?"

"I just wanted to play," said Jeremy. "Where are you going?"

"We're going to the park for a picnic. Would you like to come?" asked Susan.

Jeremy joined the girls, and as they walked toward the park they learned that Jeremy, too, was the same age and would go to the same school.

"Well, I'm kind of short, so people think I'm younger," said Jeremy.

"That's okay," said Susan. "I'm tall for my age, so people think I'm older."

Rachel said proudly, "I'm just the 'perfect' size!"

As they came near the park, Jeremy told them about a short-cut they could take. All around the park there was a high brick wall. Jeremy knew a place to get through. He led them to a hole in the wall where some bricks were missing. He was small enough to fit through, and Susan was tall enough to climb over. Poor Rachel, being the "perfect" size, was too little to climb over and too big to fit through the hole in the wall. How could she get into the park? (*Ask students for suggestions.*)

Finally, they were all in the park and were getting pretty thirsty from their walk.

"I know where there is a drinking fountain," said Rachel. "After we get a drink, we can look for a spot to have our picnic."

Rachel took them to the drinking fountain which was at the top of some stairs. They all climbed the stairs to get a drink and then went to look for the perfect place for their picnic.

They decided on a spot in the rose garden, under a big tree. Susan started unpacking all the treats she had brought, while Rachel helped Jeremy spread out the blanket.

As they ate, they took turns telling stories about school and their friends. Rachel and Jeremy had lots of questions for Susan. Susan was happy to have met such nice friends. They sat and talked about all the fun things they would be able to do together during the summer and their hopes of being in the same classroom when school started in the fall.

The End