

No Boundaries

Lesson Plan

Adapt this one-period **lesson plan** for any grade level and follow it with a simple and powerful **service project** on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The **reflection** brings learning and service impact together.

Anticipatory Set: (10 minutes)

Show pictures of people with a variety of disabilities, such as Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller, FDR, and other non-famous people. Ask, "When you hear the term 'person with a disability' what do you think?"

Questions to guide small-group or large-group discussion, journaling, or with chart paper and sticky notes:

1. We are all different. How can our differences be something to celebrate and respect, not judge?
2. How do our attitudes impact how we interact with others?
3. How do we celebrate the achievements of people with disabilities?

Part One: (15 minutes)

Give students copies of the handout "Disability Awareness." After reviewing it, students write in their own words what "disability" means. They may brainstorm these definitions with a partner or small group. Share and discuss these definitions with the whole class.

- Create a class definition of "disability."

Note: Disability does not mean a person "can't do something/anything." It means they may need accommodations or equipment (large size print, voice activated computer, appropriate space to maneuver a wheelchair, etc.) Perhaps describe/discuss how the accommodation helps them be successful.

Variation for older students: Read and write a summary about the achievements of famous people with learning disabilities or physical disabilities. Examples: FDR, Helen Keller, Stephen Hawking, Woodrow Wilson [dyslexia]

Variation for younger students: Discuss how our similarities and differences help us understand and respect each other. Students draw themselves with a "super power," which is one thing about them that is unique.

Part Two: (10 minutes)

Share this quote and discuss how it makes us feel:

"The worst thing about a disability is that people see it before they see you." –Easter Seals

Talk about different ways people have disabilities: some are born with them, and some acquire them.

Discuss why it is essential to treat everyone with respect no matter what their abilities or opportunities.



Refer to the handout "[Diversity Awareness](#)." Discuss what that looks like. For example, it is respectful when talking about someone who is blind to say, "a man who is blind," rather than "a blind man." This puts the person ahead of the disability.

Enrichment

1. Watch the video "Brett Eastburn - No Boundaries"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yc1sS5W6J6s> Brett Eastburn was born with no arms or legs. This shows the accomplishments of someone overcoming a disability.
2. Watch the video "Just Like You: Down's Syndrome"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4p9GyWXWcw>

Discuss the following points from the videos:

- "We're all the same in one basic way. We all want other people to understand us."
- People with disabilities are everywhere. They do the same type activities as people without disabilities.

Service Project

This service project may be started in class and completed in subsequent days, either with the class or with friends and family.

Project Overview:

Conduct research by observation of the school and community to determine an action to make the place more accessible for people who benefit from adaptations.

Procedure:

The students can walk around the school, campus, and community, and look for barriers to using the facilities fully. They can interview leadership at the school and at a local nonprofit about the needs of people who have disabilities. For example, is there someone at your school who is deaf?

1. Take action to remove a barrier or to accommodate a special need. For example, if there is a person who is deaf at the school, students can teach others American Sign Language for hand spelling the alphabet.
2. Communication: Have the students write a statement of respect related to people with disabilities. (It may be a quote.) This can be shared in a decorated poster or in social media.

Alternative (longer-term) Project: Start a Best Buddies chapter <https://www.bestbuddies.org/>

Reflection:

Reflect in writing on the following starters:

- One thing I learned today...
- One thing I didn't understand...
- One thing I can do to make a difference in one person's life...

Follow-up: Discuss how our differences make our community strong.

