



Circle of Friends Lesson Plan



Lesson title: Circle of Friends

Subject and topic:

Social Studies, Segregation of disabled people

Grade level:

9th-10th

Duration:

1 hour for 2 class periods

Lesson summary:

Students will participate in an exercise and discussion on disability and segregation. In this lesson students will map out social interactions in their everyday lives. After they complete the exercise the teacher will facilitate a discussion on segregation. Students with disabilities who grow up in institutions are effectively segregated from the rest of the population, so their social circles tend to look very different from the student's in class. This lesson is split into two class periods.

Standards:

- CC.1.5.7.D
Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- CC.1.5.8.A
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CC.8.6.9-10.H
Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Describe how segregation can affect the school environment.
- Gain an understanding of how their own social circles form.
- Define segregation, as it relates to disability, correctly through completing the circle of friend's activity and discussion.
- Synthesize their own thoughts and feelings surrounding disability in the community.
- Compare different historical periods to people living with disabilities and segregation today.

Essential Questions:

- EQ1: What are the similarities and differences of people with disabilities living today and in the past?
- EQ2: How does segregation exist today for people with disabilities?

Vocabulary:

- Segregation
- Institution
- Social Circle
- Special Schools
- Nursing Home
- Paraprofessional
- Disability

Lesson procedures

Day 1:

1. Welcome students to class and remind them of the group agreements/guidelines/ rules. **(Sample ground available on disabilityequalityeducation.org)**
2. Hand 1 blank sheet of paper and some markers to each student.



3. Ask students to draw a small circle (1 inch by 1 inch approximately) in the middle of their paper (An example of this can be found on Page in Appendix A.) **(30 seconds)**.
4. In that circle ask students to think about their very closest friends. The friends and family they see every day. Ask students to color in their circle however they want. They could use different colors to represent different people or use different shapes and designs. Students could write the names of the people they are close with, however they want to represent them. Encourage them to really think about their inner circle. **(5 minutes)**
5. Ask students to draw another circle around the smaller circle (2x2 inches approximately). In this circle students will color their circle with their friends and family who aren't as close as best friends and close family. Maybe you see them every day, but you aren't super close. Perhaps you have some extended family you talk to on a regular basis, but you don't see every day. Examples are classmates, clubmates, sports team mates, neighbors, extended family etc. Ask students to draw their circle in, ask them to use their creativity, just like with the first circle. **(5 minutes)**.
6. Ask students to draw another larger circle around the two smaller ones. Ask students to think about acquaintances, extended family and neighbors (bus drivers, doctors, babysitters, cashiers, servers, hairdressers, other kids at school, second cousins, great aunts, etc.). Ask students to color in this circle as well. **(5 minutes)**.
7. Once all students are finished asking some volunteers to share their circle drawing.
 - a. Ask students to highlight some people in each of the circles.
 - b. Ask volunteers, how do you meet people in your life?
 - i. Sample answers: School, Clubs, church, band practice, martial arts, family friends, camp, etc.
 - ii. How do you get to all those places, like school and church?



1. Sample answers: Parents/guardians drive, nanny drives, public transportation, etc.
 - iii. Say “So it seems like many of you are able to get to many places and meet many people in a variety of ways. Let’s turn our attention to access. Thank you volunteers for sharing your drawings.” (5-minute discussion)
8. Ask students: Have you ever heard of special schools and residential institutions? Can anyone describe what they are? Social Studies
- a. Responses will vary greatly: Some students may be very familiar with special schools and institutions like nursing homes because they may have disabled siblings. They may have elderly family members living in these institutions.
 - b. If students need prompting for answers say” What do these words sound like: “special” and residential institution. “Special” services or institutions are not about community or togetherness, They sound like they are separate right?”
 - c. Explain “Special schools and residential institutions are for people with disabilities. Generally, a special school is one where students with disabilities go to learn instead of a school like ours. Special schools are equipped to provide services for students with disabilities. Sometimes special schools are where the students live. A residential institution is a place where some people with disabilities live. Sometimes they are called nursing homes or rehabilitation homes.”
 - d. Explain to students that often kids with disabilities, who live in institutions (hospital, nursing homes and disability residential schools) have very different circles from yours. Your circles are so colorful and full of shapes because of the variety of people you get to see every day. A student growing up in a nursing home and attending a special school may have much less interaction. They see paraprofessionals, doctors and fellow residents the most. Can anyone tell me what a paraprofessional is?



- e. Get some responses
 - f. A paraprofessional is an umbrella term for people who work with disabled people. They could be nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, support coordinators and personal assistants.
9. What do you think is the impact of growing up in an institution?
- a. Get some responses
 - b. If students are having trouble, prompt them with “special schools are separate from our school, right? If they are separate and institutions are also separate from the rest of the population, what happens?”
 - c. They are segregated! What does segregation mean?
 - i. Get some answers.
 - ii. Yes, segregation is the act of setting something apart. Where in history have we seen segregation?
 - iii. During the Jim Crow laws and that is why the Civil Rights movement began.
 - iv. Segregation is still happening now, just in a different way.
10. So, they don’t have a chance to socialize outside their group to socialize with people outside of a very small group. Sometimes their lives are controlled by the schedule of these institutions and their families. This is a type of segregation.
11. “In the next class we will talk about different types of segregation in the disability community.”

Day 2:

1. Intro: Remind students of the ground rules
2. Sometimes students must make the decision to segregate themselves or go to a mainstream school, like Courtney and Josiah in Seattle. Before I play the video, can someone define segregation from the last class?
3. What do you think mainstream means? Think about the definition as you watch the video.
4. Play the Rooted in Rights segregation video.



5. Facilitate short discussion on the video (15 minutes):
 - a. What did Courtney and Josiah have to choose between?
 - b. Was any of this surprising to you?
 - c. Imagine you had to choose between going to an academically challenging school vs. independence skills? How would this impact someone's life?
6. Discussion: So what can we do about it?
7. What can we do about disability and encouraging inclusion around us?
8. Encourage some answers
9. Think of other types of communities that have fought and are continuing to fight for equality, what have they done historically?
10. Peaceful protest
11. Donating money to disability advocacy groups like Rooted in Rights, ADAPT and DIA. All disability led organizations.
12. Join the above organizations. Lend your voice to their social media movements.
13. Call out Ableism when you see it! Ableism is the systematic oppression of people with disabilities. For instance:
 - a. If a public place is not wheelchair accessible, tell them! They may have never considered this before.
14. Any of these things will help the disability community towards a more inclusive future!
15. Ask the class: Any other concluding thoughts?
16. Hand out the anonymous student evaluation and collect it (pg. 11).
(10-15 minutes)

Related materials:

- Blank sheets of paper
- Magic marker, colored pencils or crayons
- Handout in Appendix A. (students can also draw their own circles)

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based on engagement in the lesson.



Ask your students this question related to this lesson to gauge how much they learned.

People in segregated settings have less social contact than people living in the community. Do you agree yes or no.

Thank you for bringing the conversation about disability into your classroom.

Help us evaluate this lesson plan by visiting [our evaluation page to assess this lesson](#). You will find an evaluation both for you and your students to complete there.

