

## Defining Roles

The following lesson is from the **A World of Difference® Institute Anti-Bias Study Guide (Elementary/Intermediate Level)**. New York, NY: Anti-Defamation League, 2000

### RATIONALE:

The purpose of this lesson is for students to recognize the roles that people play when incidents of prejudice, discrimination and scapegoating occur. The lesson also provides an opportunity for students to consider their own experiences with biased behavior and the roles that they have played.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Students will identify elements of a story about prejudice.
- Students will define the roles of target, perpetrator, bystander and ally.
- Students will share their experiences in the roles of target, perpetrator, bystander and ally.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Materials: overhead projector, overhead transparency, chart paper, Four Squares handout, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Time: 60-90 minutes
- Techniques and Skills: listening or reading for information, developing empathy, art skills, small and large group discussion, vocabulary building
- Key Words: bias, migrant, charity, stereotype, prejudice, exclusion, target, perpetrator, bystander, intervene, ally

### PROCEDURES:

1. Tell students that you want them to think of a time when they had to meet many new people, for example, maybe their family moved and they had to go to a new school where they didn't know anyone or perhaps they joined a new club or team. Have students remember how they felt during the experience. Ask students to recall what people did to make them feel welcome or what people did to make them feel uncomfortable.
2. After students have shared some of their experiences, tell students that they are going to read a story about someone in a similar situation. Explain that you want them to think about how the story is an example of (exclusion, stereotyping, and prejudice). [NOTE: The story should be prepared on an overhead transparency for students to read silently or for volunteers to read aloud.]

### THE NEW GIRL

Juanita was new to the school; her family had only recently moved into the area. Because Juanita and her family were migrant workers, she was used to starting over in new places, but even so it was always hard to meet new friends and get used to new teachers. It was also difficult for Juanita to keep up with her studies because she moved often and because she had to care for her brothers and sisters when she came home from school while her parents worked.

As Mr. Borden introduced Juanita to the class, some students in the back of the room began to giggle. One student whispered loud enough for others to hear, "Look at that outfit! Does this girl get her clothes from charity, or what?" Others joined in the laughter. Juanita knew the laughter because she had heard it many times before. She knew the kids laughed at her clothes because they weren't the latest style, and when they found out what her family did for a living she would be nicknamed "lettuce picker." It had all happened before. Mr. Borden paused for a moment while the giggling stopped and then continued by saying, "let's all make Juanita feel welcome."

As the day continued, Juanita felt anything but welcomed. There was a group of girls who giggled every time they looked her way, and when it was time to divide into small groups to work on an assignment, no one in the group even talked to her, in fact, everyone acted as if she were invisible. When lunchtime came, everyone began running to the cafeteria. A few of the girls, who had been laughing at Juanita all morning, brushed by her and one of them said, as if to no one in particular, "Hope she knows there's no free lunch program at this school." This seemed to be the funniest thing the other girls had ever heard, but as they laughed and continued walking, one of the girls, named Stephanie, said, "C'mon, leave her alone, she hasn't done anything to us."

3. Have students consider the elements of this story by having a whole-group discussion using the following questions:
  - How did you feel listening to this story?
  - Do you think events like the one in this story really happen? Explain your thinking or give an example of an incident similar to Juanita's situation.
  - Juanita says that she felt "invisible." What do you think she meant by that? Have you ever felt as if you were "invisible?" Describe the situation.
  - Does this story include examples of stereotyping? If so, what are the stereotypes?
  - Is this story an example of prejudice? Explain.
  - Is this story an example of exclusion? Explain your thinking.
4. Draw the diagram below on a piece of chart paper and review the terms and definitions with students.  
TARGET(someone who is the focus of mistreatment) PERPETRATOR(someone who says or does something against another person) BYSTANDER(someone who sees something happening and does not say or do anything) ALLY(someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TARGET</b> (Someone who is the focus of mistreatment)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERPETRATOR</b> (Someone who says or does something against another person)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BYSTANDER</b> (someone who sees something happening and does not say or do anything.)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ALLY</b> (Someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else.)</p>

5. Have students identify who in the story they just read fits each role. The following questions can help guide the discussion:
- How have you ever heard the word "target" used?
  - In this situation, what does the word "target" mean?
  - Was there a target in this story? If so, who?
  - What does the word "perpetrator" mean?
  - Was/were there a perpetrator(s) in this story? If so, who?
  - What does it mean to be a "bystander?"
  - Was there a bystander(s) in this story? If so, who?
  - Have you ever heard the word "ally" before? Explain how you heard the word being used.
  - What are some words that come to mind when you hear the word "ally?" [NOTE: Teachers may want to create a web of students' responses on the chalkboard or on chart paper.]

- Was there an ally in this story? If so, who was it? What did the person do?
- Do you think that most people, at one time or another, have been in each of these roles? Explain your thinking.
- Which of the four roles do people get to choose? (i.e., perpetrator, bystander, ally)
- Which of the four roles do people have no choice about? (i.e., target)

[NOTE: Return to the diagram and write "no choice" under target and "choice" under the other three categories.]

6. Tell students that they are to think about experiences they have had in each of these four roles. Explain to students that they will not be asked to share all four of the experiences, but they will be asked to share at least one of the experiences. Distribute the Four Squares handout to students and supply them with crayons, markers or colored pencils. Explain to students that as they remember a situation when they were in the target role, they should draw a picture representing what happened. Then ask them to do the same thing for the perpetrator, bystander and ally roles. Encourage students to complete all four squares; however, if they have no experience with one of the roles, tell them to leave it blank.
7. Divide students into small groups of about four students each. Explain that each student in the group is to explain one of his or her pictures to the small group. Have students tell enough about the situation so that group members will understand the event and understand why the person telling the story identified it as the role he or she had. Remind students to listen without interrupting the speaker. Review ground rules and listening skills with students if necessary.
8. After all students have shared one of their stories in the small groups, have a whole-group discussion using the following questions:

- How did you feel sharing a story with your classmates?
- How did you feel listening to other people's experiences?
- Which square did you choose to talk about with your classmates? Which square(s) is (are) easier or harder to talk about and why?

Modified Procedure: Prepare four signs - target, perpetrator, bystander, ally - and post them in the four corners of the classroom. Have students go to the corner of the room that represents the role they decided to share with their classmates. Have students talk in their groups about why they chose to discuss that particular situation. Then have students discuss which roles are easier or harder to talk about and why.

- Did you notice any similar themes in the stories that were told in your group? (e.g., most were about name-calling)
- What are some ways, if any, that students in this school are targets of prejudice and other unfair acts? (e.g., called names, laughed at, excluded)

[NOTE: Remind students not to use the names of students in the class or school, but to consider the unfair behaviors that are directed at some students. Write students' responses in the "target" block on the chart paper.]

- Why do think people stand by when unfairness, bullying or other hurtful acts occur? (e.g., don't know what to do, don't want to interfere for fear of becoming a target)
- Why do you think some people decide to be an ally?

- What might some people need to help them move from being a bystander to becoming an ally?
9. At the end of this lesson, collect the Four Squares handouts that students developed. Save the situations that students identified to use in creating role plays in Lesson 2, Strategies to Confront Prejudice and Bias.

### **ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES:**

1. Encourage students to discuss the roles of target, perpetrator, bystander and ally with a family member and then ask the family member to share an experience he or she had in one of the roles.
2. Distribute a blank copy of the Four Squares handout to students. Have students listen to or read a story about someone who is the target of prejudice (see Selected Bibliography of children's Books) and then draw pictures in the appropriate blocks of the handout to illustrate the events in the story regarding which characters fit the various roles. [NOTE: The film molly's Pilgrim could also be used for this activity.]
3. Have students visit the Department of Justice Kids Page at [www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/bias-k-5](http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/bias-k-5). This interactive web site includes scenarios about name-calling, exclusion and prejudice, along with several ways that someone might respond to the incidents and evaluates the effectiveness of each response.
4. Have students learn more about migrant workers in the United States. Instruct students to organize their research around the following questions:
  - What is a migrant worker?
  - Who are migrant workers in the United States?
  - What is the estimated number of migrant workers in the United States?
  - How do migrant workers support the multi-billion dollar fruit and vegetable industry in the United States?
  - What are some of the health problems that migrant workers face? (e.g., pesticide poisoning)
  - Why is it difficult for migrant farm workers to obtain financial assistance from the Federal government?
  - What are some of the problems that migrant workers' children face?

Provide time for students to share their research findings with the class.

5. Have students read fiction or nonfiction about migrant workers. After reading one of the books, have students imagine that they are migrant farm workers and describe a day in their life in a poem, diary entry or short story.
 

WEB SITE RESOURCE: "Fields of Dreams," a story about a young migrant worker who dreams of one day becoming a teacher and going back to teach migrant children to read and write is available on line at [www.indians.org/welker/fields.htm](http://www.indians.org/welker/fields.htm).
6. Have students research the life of Cesar Chavez, who fought for three decades to improve the lives of Mexican-American farm workers in California. Ensure that students' research includes the role that Dolores Huerta played during the 1960s in helping to organize migrant workers into a union that became the United Farm Workers.

### **SUGGESTED RESOURCES:**

Cedeno, M. E. (1993). *Cesar Chavez: Labor Leader*. Brookfield, CT: Hispanic Heritage, The Millbrook Press.  
 Collins, D. R. (1996). *Farmworker's Friend: The Story of Cesar Chavez*. Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

de Ruiz, D. C., and Larios, R. (1993). *La Causa: The Migrant Farmworkers' Story*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Publishers.

Franchere, R. (1970). *Cesar Chavez*. New York, NY: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Roberts, N. (1986). *Cesar Chavez and La Causa*. Chicago, IL: children's Press.

Taylor, R. B. (1975). *Chavez and the Farm Workers*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

5. Draw the diagram on a piece of chart paper and review the terms and definitions with students.

<p><b>TARGET</b> (Someone who is the focus of mistreatment)</p>	<p><b>PERPETRATOR</b> (Someone who says or does something against another person)</p>
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