

# BEING DIFFERENT WITHOUT DISAGREEING

## Fighting against prejudice

<b>Target competency</b>	<b>Assert oneself against social influences</b>
<b>Cross-curricular competencies (QEP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise critical judgment</li> </ul>
<b>General objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the notion of prejudice</li> <li>• Recognize the discriminatory effects of prejudice on individuals</li> <li>• Take actions to counter prejudice</li> </ul>



### REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

Remember, in the last workshop, we talked about the importance of nourishing your mind and adopting helpful thoughts. Do you remember the challenge I gave you? Tell me how you did it.

\* The challenge was to try to adopt helpful thinking when faced with a difficult situation.

### THE ADVENTURES OF LEO AND CHARLIE

Sitting next to each other in front of the campfire, Leo and Charlie are enjoying their evening at camp OFF-TRAIL and discussing their day.

“Hey, Charlie, did you enjoy the baseball game we played with all the campers and counsellors? I A-D-O-R-E-D it!”, exclaims Leo.

Charlie mumbles: “Yes and no”

“Why, what do you mean?”, asks her astonished friend.

Charlie explains: “When we chose the teams, William said that girls suck at baseball and that he didn't want any girls on his team. I found that really hurtful and I saw several people look toward me and the other four girls in the camp...”

Leo tries to reason with her: “You've been playing on a baseball team for four years and you're really good! You even made our team win!”

Charlie can't help saying: “Yes, we played a great game! It's just that sentences thrown around like that, prejudices as our counsellor explained it, aren't great to hear... especially when they're aimed at us. I was afraid of being rejected just because I was a girl...”

Leo reflects: “Ohhh! I didn't see it that way.”

“And besides, Leo, do you remember how you laughed with the other guys when William said girls suck at baseball...?”, reminds Charlie gently.

Leo apologizes from the heart: “Ouch... I admit I laughed... I apologize, Charlie.”

Charlie, laughing, replies: “That's OK! But make sure you don't do it again because I also know karate!”

## DID YOU KNOW?

To be prejudiced is to formulate or repeat a thoughtless, categorical judgment about a person or group of people without really knowing them. A prejudice is always based on a stereotype, which is a ready-made opinion we've never critically examined. It's important to know that, because prejudices are transmitted to us by everything that surrounds us (our social environment), we need to become aware of them and, above all, work on ourselves to get rid of them.

Here are just a few examples:

**Racism:** a negative attitude toward people of certain races, ethnic origins or cultures.

**Heterosexism** or **Gender discrimination:** a negative attitude toward people of certain sexual orientations or gender identities.

**Sexism:** the belief that sex or gender determine a person's status.

**Ableism:** the belief that physical and mental abilities determine a person's status.

**Religious intolerance:** a negative attitude toward certain religious beliefs.

**Classism:** the belief that economic class determines a person's status.

**Lookism:** the belief that appearance and image determine a person's status.

**Ageism:** the belief that age determines a person's status.

(Kids Help Phone, n.d.)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask the students what they think a prejudice and a stereotype are. Complement the discussion with this video, scrolled to 2 min 54 sec: <https://youtu.be/lsl31fj4V0E>
2. Next, ask them if they can give an example of prejudice they've seen around them.
3. Explain the process of the Labelling Game, and facilitate it, using the information on the Supplementary sheet below.
4. Once the game is over, ask the students if, in real life, it's possible for someone to be rejected because of a label they've been given. You can fuel the discussion with the following questions:
  - Is it someone's fault if they have been rejected?
  - Do you ever put labels on people without really knowing them?
  - When others accept us, is it pleasant to be in a group? Why?
  - When others ignore or reject us, is it fun to be in a group? Why?
5. Lead the students to make the connection between the game and the fact that when we attribute a negative label to an individual or a group, most of the time we are adopting an attitude of indifference or rejection toward these people. So, to make classroom life enjoyable, we need to avoid attaching negative labels to others and recognize that everyone's opinions, tastes and interests deserve to be heard and respected.
6. Finally, ask the students what they could do when faced with a situation where there is an appearance of prejudice or discrimination. Complement their list with the following possible solutions:
  - Don't laugh when someone makes a racist, sexist or heterosexist joke (explaining what these terms mean);
  - Object when your peers express prejudiced beliefs; be an agent of change;
  - Work with a diverse group of people at school and in your community;
  - If you have questions about prejudice, talk to a trusted adult such as a parent or guardian, family member or teacher.





## CHALLENGE

Suggest the following challenge:

- Between now and the next OFF-TRAIL workshop, reach out to a new person at recess and get to know them better.

## ENABLING REINVESTMENT

To foster a caring classroom environment where prejudice is not welcome, you can invite students to create a poster listing behaviours they can adopt in their class to combat prejudice.

## READING SUGGESTIONS

- Elschner, G. (2015). *Like a Wolf*. mineditionUS.
- Woodson, J. (2012). *Each Kindness*. Nancy Paulsen Books.



## SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

### The Labelling Game<sup>1</sup>

**Duration:** approx. 20 minutes

**Warning:** This activity may be uncomfortable for some students. You can take the time to speak to students who may receive negative labels, and warn them that the label isn't about them, but that the workshop is about better understanding the impact of prejudice on the people who experience it. If you feel it's best for your students, you can also do the activity silently, simply asking them to nod “yes” or “no” to accept or decline a student's invitation.

**Materials:** You'll need thirty self-adhesive labels (or pieces of paper with adhesive tape) bearing each of the qualifiers listed at the end of this section.

#### Procedure:

- 1- Establish the context of the game:  
“You come from different cities. You don't know each other, but you have one thing in common: you've each won a plane ticket to the destination of your choice. You find yourself all at the airport when it's time to leave. Perhaps you'd like to go away with others, or maybe by yourself. Of course, it all depends on the labels the others are wearing...”
- 2- Explain to the students that each of them will be wearing a sticker on his or her back with a qualifier (e.g., funny, tender, dishonest). During the game, it's important that each student **doesn't know what's written on their own label**.
- 3- Explain the object of the game: to find one or two travel partners, **the only selection criterion being the label**. Each student must act as if the other students were complete strangers, and make their choice solely on the basis of the labels. Finally, specify that students are free to refuse invitations from other young people if they don't like their labels. They can also choose to go alone.
- 4- The students must face a wall so that you can place a sticker with a qualifier on the back of each one. You explain to the students that, once they've made their choice, they'll have to sit either alone or with their partners.
- 5- Signal the students to stand up and move around the classroom. The game stops after ten minutes or when all the students are seated. Ask the students to remove their labels and keep them in their hands.
- 6- Lead a discussion by asking the following questions:
  - If you chose to stay on your own, why did you make this choice?
  - Why were some people left out?
  - If you found partners, are you satisfied with the labels of the other members of your team? Why?



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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *Jeu des étiquettes* in Côté, D. (1998). *Acti-Jeunes: Guide à l'intention des élèves et du personnel scolaire*. Gouvernement du Québec [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/adaptation\\_serv\\_compl/qualite.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/qualite.pdf)

## LIST OF LABELS

Shy	Snob	Sensitive
Liar	Baby	Happy
Resourceful	Honest	Persevering
Likeable	Complainer	Chatterbox
Funny	Shameless	Respectful
Fighter	Friendly	Affectionate
Distracted	Arrogant	Naughty
Confused	Intelligent	Courageous
Hypocrite	Discreet	Fearful
Pleasant	Gentle	Dishonest