

Lesson plan

Me and the others

Respectful communication

1. **Theme:** Me and the others: Respectful communication
2. **Grade:** 6th
3. **Lesson type:** combined
4. **Duration:** 45 min.
5. **Basic terms:** Communication, respect, care, tolerance, acceptance, empathy, support, emotions, feelings, beliefs, traditions, kindness, politeness
6. **Pedagogical methods:** storytelling, story-reading, presentation, discussion, dialog, reflection, group work
7. **Means:** board (interactive or otherwise), markers, laptop/computer, multimedia (screen/projector), ppt presentation, flipchart (optional), printed short story “A man with a lamp” (or a digital version – <https://www.moralstories.org/a-man-with-a-lamp/>, in English), sheets of paper, pencils/pens/markers

8. Goals:

○ Educational:

The students

- ✓ Recognize key elements of communication and respectful communication and define them
- ✓ Describe why respectful communication is important in building positive relationships at school and in the community
- ✓ Utilize respectful communication skills (active listening, polite speaking, empathy) in group activities
- ✓ Compare respectful and disrespectful behaviours in different communication scenarios, including within different religions, and discuss their consequences
- ✓ Assess their own communication style and suggest ways to improve how they express respect and understanding toward others
- ✓ Develop short scenarios of respectful communication with shared rules and values for positive interaction

○ Formational:

The students

- ✓ Recognize the importance of respectful communication

- ✓ Actively take part in class activities that promote respectful dialogue and cooperation
- ✓ Express appreciation for respectful communication and recognize its role in peaceful relationships and inclusion
- ✓ Begin to integrate respect, empathy, and tolerance into their own communication habits, showing consistency across different situations
- ✓ Demonstrate respectful communication as a personal value – treating others with dignity, supporting peers, and fostering understanding across differences, including religion and culture

9. Cross-curricular connections: Social studies, Religious studies, Literature

10. Intra-subject connections: with the lesson plans on the themes: I support others, Me and my environment and the other modules from the theme Me and the others

11. Expected results:

- ✓ Students define and explain the main concepts of communication and respectful communication, including respect, empathy, and tolerance
- ✓ Students identify and distinguish examples of respectful and disrespectful communication in given situations
- ✓ Students apply learned communication skills (such as active listening, polite expression, and constructive dialogue) in group discussions and classroom interactions
- ✓ Students demonstrate openness and willingness to listen to others' ideas and opinions, even when they differ from their own
- ✓ Students show empathy and understanding by supporting peers and responding to others with kindness and care
- ✓ Students consistently display respectful attitudes toward classmates of different backgrounds, cultures, and religions, both in speech and behavior

12. Preparation

- For the teacher: Reading the theoretical base, downloading the presentation, printing the “A man with a lamp” short story, providing sheets of paper and writing materials

13. Structure of the lesson:

Me and the others: Respectful communication

1. Communication
2. Respectful communication
 - Respect and care
 - Tolerance and acceptance
 - Empathy and support

- Respectful communication within different religions
- 3. Activity: A short story
- 4. Conclusion

14. Structure, content and timeline

1. Introduction (4 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Actualization of prior knowledge on the subject: What does the word respect mean to you, and how can you show it when talking to someone?; How do people from different backgrounds or religions show tolerance when they communicate?; Why do you think communication is important in friendships, families, or school? (2 min.)

- Introduction of new information and terms: (2 min.)

Communication is the process through which people share ideas, thoughts, and feelings with one another. It's something we do every single day, often without even thinking about it. Communication can happen in many different ways — by speaking face-to-face or on the phone, writing texts or emails, using body language like crossed arms or a smile, making facial expressions, or even using hand gestures like waving or giving a thumbs up.

Good communication helps us build strong friendships and relationships, solve problems when disagreements happen, and understand each other better. For example, if you clearly explain to your teacher that you're confused about a math problem, they can help you figure it out. Or if you tell a friend how you're feeling when something bothers you, you can work things out together instead of staying upset.

Communication is not only about the words we choose, but also how we deliver our message — the tone of our voice (whether we sound angry, excited, or calm), our body language (like making eye contact or slouching), and our willingness to truly listen when others are speaking. Sometimes listening is even more important than talking! When we pay attention to what someone else is saying instead of just waiting for our turn to talk, we show them respect and care.

- Student activity:

- Participation in the dialog, asking questions, active listening

- Methods and tools:

- Methods: dialog, storytelling
- Tools: board, marker or an interactive whiteboard (for outlining the theme and the terms; optional, for writing down student's ideas, thoughts)

2. Stating the theme of the lesson: Me and the others: Respectful communication (40 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Short presentation, focused on empathy and support and traditions that outline empathy and support in different religions (7 min.)
- Theoretical overview, performed with the presentation:

Effective communication requires several important things: paying attention to the other person, being honest about our thoughts and feelings, and speaking clearly so there's no confusion. When both people in a conversation feel understood and respected, communication works at its best, and everyone leaves feeling good about the interaction.

Respectful communication means expressing ourselves in a way that shows consideration and kindness toward others. It allows people to talk openly without fear of being judged, insulted, or ignored. When we communicate respectfully, we create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. This is especially important in school, where students work and learn together every day. Respectful communication involves active listening, using polite words, and being mindful of how our words and actions affect others. Respect begins with recognizing that every person has value. It means acknowledging other people's rights, feelings, and opinions, even when we disagree with them. Showing care in communication means speaking and acting with thoughtfulness: using kind words, listening patiently, and avoiding hurtful language. In respectful communication, we think before we speak and treat others the way we would like to be treated.

Tolerance is the ability to accept differences among people – in appearance, background, culture, beliefs, and opinions. Acceptance goes a step further, meaning that we value these differences as part of what makes our communities rich and diverse. In communication, tolerance and acceptance help us avoid stereotypes, prejudice, and exclusion. Instead of focusing on how others are different, we try to understand and learn from them. A tolerant attitude helps prevent conflicts and builds a peaceful environment in which everyone feels safe to express themselves.

Empathy means putting ourselves in another person's place – trying to feel and understand what they are experiencing. When we communicate with empathy, we listen with attention and respond with kindness. Supportive communication helps others feel understood and appreciated, especially when they face difficulties. Small acts, such as offering encouragement or simply listening, can make a big difference. Empathy and support create stronger connections and promote harmony within a group.

People around the world follow many different religions, and each one has its own special traditions, beliefs, practices, and ways of worship. Some of the major world religions include Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, among many others.

Respectful communication in this context means avoiding negative comments, teasing, or jokes about someone's faith, and instead showing genuine curiosity and openness to learning about it. For example, if a Jewish classmate can't attend a birthday party because it falls on the Sabbath (their day of rest), a respectful response would be to say, "That's interesting! I didn't know about that. Maybe we can celebrate together another day". Or if a Muslim friend is fasting during Ramadan, you might ask kindly, "What is Ramadan about?".

Other examples of respectful communication about different religions include:

- If a Hindu classmate wears a bindi (a decorative mark on the forehead), showing interest by asking, “What does that symbol mean in your culture?” rather than staring or making fun of it.
- If a Christian friend says they'll pray for you when you're going through a tough time, accepting their kindness even if you don't share their beliefs, because they're trying to support you in their own way.
- If a Buddhist student talks about meditation as part of their practice, listening with an open mind and perhaps asking what meditation feels like for them.

When we speak about religion, we should do so thoughtfully and with respect, recognizing that faith is a deeply personal and important part of someone's identity – just like their family or cultural background. What someone believes about life, the world, and their purpose can shape who they are and how they live their daily lives. Understanding and appreciating different religions helps build peace and cooperation in diverse societies and classrooms.

We can engage in a respectful communication by following these tips:

- Listen carefully before you speak
- Use kind and polite language
- Accept differences and be tolerant
- Show empathy and offer support
- Respect everyone's beliefs and opinions

Activity: A short story (33 min.)

- ✓ The teacher reads a short story called “A man with a lamp” (a moral story) to the students
- ✓ The teacher initiates a discussion with the following questions:
 - Why did the blind man carry a lit lamp even though he could not see?
 - How did the young travellers react when they saw the blind man with the lamp? Were their reactions respectful?
 - What important lesson did the blind man teach the travellers about respect and communication?
 - Why is it important to think carefully about what we say to others, especially when we don't know their situation?
- ✓ The teacher divides the students into small groups (2-3 students) and instructs them to think of a situation where respectful communication occurs
- ✓ The teacher provides examples, from which the students can select one, or think of their own situation:
 - A classmate sends you a message that sounds rude, but you're not sure if they meant it that way. What should you do or say before reacting?

- A new student joins your class and speaks a different language. Some classmates start whispering and laughing. How can you communicate respect and make the new student feel welcome?
- During a class discussion, a student mentions celebrating a religious holiday you're not familiar with. A few students make jokes about it. What could you say or do to show respect for that student's beliefs?
- Your friend makes a joke about another classmate's appearance. The classmate looks upset but doesn't say anything. How can you respond in a way that shows empathy and promotes respectful communication?
- ✓ Each group writes their stories (situations) and how would they respond in a way that promotes respectful communication (approx. 5-6 sentences)
- ✓ Each group reads their stories
- ✓ The teacher concludes the activity, encouraging the students to reflect on the most important elements of respectful communication
- Student activity:
 - Participation in the dialog, taking notice of the presentation, asking questions, active listening, participation in the discussion, working in a group, reflecting on the activity
- Methods and tools:
 - Methods: dialog, presentation, storytelling, story-reading, group work, discussion
 - Tools: interactive board or a screen, laptop/computer, board, marker, flipchart (optional, for writing down students' ideas), printed short story "A man with a lamp" (or a digital version – <https://www.moralstories.org/a-man-with-a-lamp/>, in English), sheets of paper, pencils/pens/markers

3. Conclusion (1 min.)

- Teacher activity:
 - Sharing concluding thoughts:

Respectful communication helps people understand one another and build positive relationships based on trust and kindness. It means listening carefully, speaking politely, and valuing everyone's feelings and opinions. When we communicate with respect, we create a peaceful and supportive environment where everyone feels heard and appreciated.

- Answering questions and clarifying information
- Student activity:
 - Active listening, asking questions if needed

- Methods:
 - Methods: reflection, active listening

15. Variations:

- The “What would you say” activity: The teacher presents short everyday situations (e.g., “Your classmate interrupts you during group work”, “You disagree with a friend’s opinion”), writing them on pieces of paper and giving them to the students, or writing them on the board; The teacher divides the students into small groups; The students receive (or select from the board) their situation (for each group) and discuss and act out respectful responses; The teacher initiates a discussion and outlines the responses that show empathy, tolerance, and respect.
- The “Active listening” activity: The teacher divides the students into pairs; One student (from each pair) speaks for one minute about a topic they enjoy (e.g., a hobby or favourite movie); The listener must stay silent, listen carefully, and then summarize what their partner said; The students in the pairs switch roles; Afterwards, the class discusses how it felt to be truly listened to and how active listening builds respect.
- The “Respect across religions” activity: The teacher divides the board into sections for different world religions or cultural traditions; The teacher organises a discussion (or instructs the students to conduct a brief research) on how kindness, peace, or respect are expressed in each of the mentioned religions; Students write one quote, value, or example from each religion that promotes respect; The teacher formulates a conclusion and emphasizes common values such as kindness, honesty, and compassion.
- The “Silent communication” activity: The teacher creates a list of situations that could trigger different emotions in students; The situations should be fairly mild, such as “realizing you left your lunch at home”, “misplacing your phone”, “overhearing gossip about yourself”, “standing at a bus stop and the bus is running late”; The teacher gives each student one of these situations to perform silently – without using any words, while the rest of the class watches; The other students should guess what scenario is being acted out; Once someone guesses correctly, the teacher leads a group discussion about the emotions involved in that situation; the activity concludes with a reflective discussion about “reading” emotions and responding adequately.
- The “You don’t say” activity: The teacher divides the students into groups; The teacher provides a list with nonverbal behaviours, including items like: crossing arms, smiling, frowning, yawning, nodding, shaking your head, looking at a watch, rubbing your temples, resting chin on your hands; Each group discusses these behaviours within the group and translates their meanings by writing what each one communicates; All groups discuss the meanings of the behaviours together and compare their notes on them, reflecting on the similarities and on the differences in interpreting non-verbal communication.

16. Interesting facts (from Guzman, J., 2022, <https://commsroom.co/6-communication-fun-facts-you-probably-didnt-know/>; Gillingham, S., 2025, <https://www.telbee.io/blog-post/10-amazing-facts-about-voice-communication>; <https://www.diy.org/article/communication>; [https://kids.kiddle.co/Communication](https://kids.kiddle.co/Communication;);)

- ✓ The earliest form of long-distance communication was the smoke signal.

- ✓ Pigeons were commonly used to carry messages over long distances because they have a natural ability to find their way back home.
- ✓ The oldest known message in a bottle, believed to be 132 years old, was found in 2018 by a woman from Australia.
- ✓ In 1860, a French inventor named Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville made history when he recorded the first human voice ever captured. He sang 10 seconds of a French folk song called “Au Clair de la Lune” (which means “By the Light of the Moon”) into a special machine he invented called a 'phonograph'.
- ✓ Thousands of years ago, ancient people communicated by creating simple drawings on cave walls, which we call cave paintings today. Some of the most famous examples were discovered in the Lascaux Caves in France, and scientists believe these paintings are about 17,000 years old.
- ✓ Later, a system of writing using symbols – hieroglyphics, was developed by the Egyptians.
- ✓ In 1440 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, which allowed books to be made quickly.
- ✓ Around the world, communication styles vary based on different cultures. In Japan, people often bow to show respect when they meet someone, while in the United States, shaking hands is the typical greeting. In some countries, people communicate less directly because they want to be polite and avoid hurting anyone's feelings. For example, if someone says “maybe” or “we'll see”, they might actually mean “no”, but they're saying it in a gentler way. In contrast, cultures like those in America or Australia tend to be very open and direct – people usually say exactly what they mean.
- ✓ There are different forms of communication, like music and art, which send emotional messages.
- ✓ The Sami people, who live in the northern parts of Europe (in countries like Norway, Sweden, and Finland), have as many as 1,000 different words to describe reindeer. This might sound surprising, but it makes sense because reindeer are such an important part of their culture and daily life. These words describe different characteristics like a reindeer's size, body shape, colour, age, behaviour, and even personality traits.
- ✓ In 1995, the internet was still very new technology, and fewer than 1 out of every 100 people in the world had access to it. Fast forward to today, and more than 5 billion people worldwide are connected to the internet! This amazing growth means that communication has become incredibly fast; we can now instantly send messages, share photos, and video chat with people on the other side of the world in just seconds.