

Lesson Plan: Justice and Fairness

Key Concepts:

Justice
Fairness
Liberty
Revenge
Restitution

Materials:

- White board, chalkboard, overhead projector or easel with chart paper
- Downloadable testimony clips:
Testimony - Justice and Fairness
- TV and DVD player and/or a computer with a broadband connection is recommended for viewing directly from the online resource *Creating Character*
- Tangible reward of some sort: candy, pens, stickers, stars, or extra credit points
- Student Handouts:
Viewing Guide - Justice & Fairness
Concept Map - Justice
Independent Practice - Justice & Fairness
(Possible alternative: use a transparency of the above student handouts in lieu of individual copies.)

Time Required:

1-2 Class Periods

Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the concepts of Justice and Fairness.
- Students will be able to distinguish the difference between the concepts of justice and fairness.
- Students will work with visual history testimony.
- Students will use visual history testimony to examine examples of justice and fairness.
- Students will define justice and be able to identify examples of justice and injustice in their own lives.
- Students will explore their own viewpoints regarding justice and will identify steps they can take to promote justice.

Procedures:

1. Choose six student volunteers to participate in an experiential activity. Explain to the rest of the class that during this activity, they will be observing and recording the reactions of the volunteering participants.
2. Seat the six volunteers at the front of the room, facing the class. Explain to the volunteers that they are participating in a quiz show and that students who answer questions correctly will be rewarded.
3. Prior to beginning the questioning, secretly identify one or two participants against whom you will actively discriminate during the activity. This discrimination may be based on either a real difference (eye color, hair color, left-handedness, etc.) or it may be a random choice.
4. Begin asking the six volunteers relatively easy questions. These questions can be based on other lessons in this resource, on material that the class has previously covered, on current events, or on easy topics of student interest. Reward students who correctly answer the questions with something tangible, such as candy, stickers, stars, pens, or extra credit points. Do not acknowledge the responses from the student(s) who you have decided to actively discriminate against.
5. Continue the questioning process for approximately three to five minutes.

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6. Once the activity has concluded, instruct all students, participants, and observers alike to silently reflect upon and write about this experience. Make sure students address the following:
 - What *exactly* happened during this activity?
 - What do you think was *actually* happening?
 - What were the reactions of the participants during the activity?
 - At what point did it become evident that certain participants were being treated unfairly?
 - What were their general feelings about the activity?
7. Facilitate a discussion of student responses with the whole class.
8. Once responses have been shared, initiate a broader discussion of justice and fairness and the experiences students have had with these two concepts. Some or all of the following questions may be used in guiding the discussion:
 - What is the meaning of justice? What is the meaning of fairness? How are they similar? How are they different?
 - Who determines what is just? Who determines what is fair?
 - Can people disagree on the fairness of something? Provide an example that illustrates this argument. Can people disagree on the justice of something? If a disagreement ensues, how should it be handled?
 - Does justice look the same in different states? Does it look the same in different countries? Provide an example that illustrates this argument. Has justice looked the same during different time periods throughout history? Provide an example that illustrates this argument.
 - How are the concepts of justice and vengeance related? In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?
 - When have you experienced injustice or unfair treatment? Explain.
9. Inform students that they are about to watch testimony clips taken from testimonies given by Holocaust survivors and witnesses. Explain to students that the following clips are brief excerpts from longer interviews.

*NOTE: Some background knowledge of the Holocaust is necessary for students to understand the context of the visual history testimony clips. Some general resources are available on the USC Shoah Foundation Institute website at www.usc.edu/vhi or in the bibliography listed in the Additional Resources section. In addition, comprehensive classroom lessons that provide historical context on the Holocaust are included in **Echoes and Reflections – a multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust**, available at www.echoesandreflections.org.*

10. Distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Viewing Guide - Justice and Fairness*.

*ALTERNATIVE: You may want to display a transparency of the **Viewing Guide** using the overhead projector and allow students to create their own replica.*

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11. Play testimony clips: *Testimony - Justice and Fairness*.
 12. Inform students that as they are watching the video, they should look for examples that each survivor describes regarding justice and fairness. Students should write these examples in the “examples” column.
- NOTE: For clarification, you may want to pause the video after playing each testimony clip or play the clips more than once.*
13. After viewing the three testimony clips, students should write the survivor’s viewpoint regarding justice and fairness. Students should record their answers in the “viewpoint” column.
 14. Break students into small groups and distribute copies of the Student Handout: *Concept Map - Justice and Fairness*. Ask student groups to create a definition of justice together and write it in the “define justice” circle on their *Concept Map*.
 15. Students should complete the rest of the *Concept Map* on their own. Once they complete the task, students will share their responses with the other members of their group.
 16. Once students have finished sharing within their group, ask students to volunteer some of their responses for the benefit of the entire class.
 17. Conduct a large class discussion using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - How did your group define justice? In what ways was your group’s definition similar to definitions from other groups?
 - If the class were to agree on a definition of the concept of justice, what would that definition be? Is it possible for this class to reach consensus on a definition? If it is not possible, why not?
 - Identify some of the examples of justice and injustice from the testimony clips. How are the survivor’s examples similar to student examples? How are the examples different?
 - In the student-generated examples, which examples were personal examples and which had a more global reach? How are these examples similar? How are these examples different?
 - Reflecting on the causes of injustice, how can individuals make choices, both great and small, to work against injustice? Can what appears to be a small choice in daily life be a choice that advocates a greater justice? Explain how this might occur.
 18. For homework or independent practice, assign one or more of the following activities:

ALTERNATIVE: Have students choose the activity they would like to do for homework or practice.

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- Distribute the Student Handout: *Independent Practice - Justice and Fairness*. Respond to each question by writing a few sentences that explain why you agree or disagree with each of the given statements.
- Write a journal entry or reflection on the following prompt:
Leopold Oberhard discusses his feelings of wanting revenge after surviving the Holocaust. However, he also says that after he saw dead soldiers, he no longer wanted revenge. He goes on to say that guilty people should be punished but that one cannot live with revenge. If you could have a conversation with him about his experiences and his thoughts regarding justice and revenge, what questions would you ask him? How do you think your thoughts and beliefs on these subjects might compare to Leopold's?
- Choose one of the following quotes and write a response to its author that explains why you either agree or disagree with the quote. In your response, reference your own experiences, the experiences exemplified in the testimony clips viewed, and/or the outcomes and insights garnered from class activities and class discussions of justice and fairness.
 - **An eye for an eye ends up making the whole world blind.**
— *Mahatma Gandhi*
 - **Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.**
— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
 - **The man who opts for revenge should dig two graves.**
— *Chinese proverb*

Extension Activities:

1. As a class, brainstorm situations in the school, community, state, nation, or world that can be considered unfair or unjust. Reach consensus on one example to pursue as a class. Research the issue and identify groups or organizations that are currently working to remedy this situation. Identify possible ways to support their work. Create a display for the school that recognizes the efforts of those who are working for justice. Be sure to include information about how other students can get involved in the work of these organizations.
2. Research an example from history about a person or group of people who worked toward achieving social justice. Prepare a presentation for the class on the person or group. Be sure to include responses for the following questions:
 - What was this person or group fighting for?
 - What were some of the efforts they used for achieving social justice?
 - Were these efforts successful? Why or why not?
 - How was this success measured?
 - Are they still pursuing these ideals? If not, has someone else or another organization continued to pursue their work?

Viewing Guide: Justice and Fairness

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Justice and Fairness* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Examples of justice and/or fairness

Viewpoint of justice and/or fairness

Alex Stern

Manny Spindler

Leopold Oberhard

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Teacher's Answer Key

Name _____

As the testimony clips for *Justice and Fairness* are viewed, complete the two columns below:

Interviewee

Examples of justice and/or fairness

Viewpoint of justice and/or fairness

Alex Stern

Alex went back to Germany to testify against the commandants who had persecuted him and murdered his father.

Even though the trip was hard on his health and his nervous system, he felt it was his obligation to testify.

Even though he was never the same afterward, he was satisfied that he did his part.

Manny Spindler

When Manny was about to be executed for carrying blades to cut his bread, Karl (a German Stormtrooper) saved him by taking full responsibility for the incident.

Manny believed he owed Karl his life, therefore he was willing to help him.

In order to protect Karl once the war was over, Manny agreed to write a letter saying Karl had treated the Jewish prisoners well.

Leopold Oberhard

Leopold said he was comforted by his thoughts of revenge.

Leopold said his feelings of revenge left him once he saw the deaths of German soldiers.

Toward the end of the war, he witnessed German soldiers being killed.

He said he realized that they all suffered, even the German perpetrators.

Leopold believes that there should be punishment, but that you cannot live with revenge.

Concept Map: Justice and Fairness

Name _____

As a group, define justice,
and then individually complete
the remaining boxes.

Examples of justice from your world:

Examples of injustice from your world:

Define justice:

My viewpoint on justice:

Steps I can take to promote justice:

My viewpoint on revenge:

Symbol of justice:

Independent Practice: Justice and Fairness

Name _____

Respond to each statement by writing an explanation as to why you agree or disagree.

1. We live in a fair and just society.

I agree/disagree because:

2. It is important to treat others with justice and fairness.

I agree/disagree because:

3. Revenge can sometimes be justified.

I agree/disagree because:

4. There is justice and fairness at my school.

I agree/disagree because: