

EMPATHY

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ **HE.3.R.1.1** Identify skills needed when working with others. Clarification: Listening, cooperating, taking turns and compromise.
- ✓ **HE.4.R.1.1** Consider the perspectives of others.
- ✓ **HE.5.R.1.3** Describe the importance of considering the perspective of others when communicating.

PURPOSE

- ▶ These interactive activities will help your students explore the characteristic of **empathy** and understand others' thoughts, feelings and actions. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **empathy**.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to explore **empathy**. **Empathy** helps us understand others' thoughts, feelings and actions. It's about paying attention to others and imagining how you would feel in their situation. For example, if a classmate is upset, **empathy** helps you notice and think about how you can support him or her. **Empathy** makes us better friends, helps us solve problems and creates a happier community for everyone!"



Activities to Build Empathy:

1 The Listening Game

Create scenario cards that describe different feelings (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, excitement, worry). Divide students into pairs and give each group a scenario card. Have one partner read the scenario while the other listens. The listener must pay close attention and later retell the story to his or her partner, emphasizing key details. Discuss how listening carefully helps us understand others' feelings and why it is important to make sure we hear each other when working together.

Ideas for scenarios include:

- A student struggles with a math problem while others finish quickly.
- A student is nervous about presenting in front of the class.

EMPATHY

Teacher Resource

GRADES
3–5



Activities to Build Empathy (Continued):

2 Empathy in Practice

Having **empathy** for others often drives us to practice service, such as through volunteerism. Identify community service opportunities, which may include providing support to those less fortunate. Brainstorm together how you can meet a need in the school or community. Have students plan a food drive and donate to a local food pantry or shelter.

3 Boston Tea Party Role-Play

Group students in pairs and assign roles from the Boston Tea Party (e.g., American colonist, British government, British merchant). Provide students a notecard that provides different perspectives from the Boston Tea Party (e.g., American colonists seeing the Tea Act as unfair taxation without representation, British merchants discovering the destroyed tea and the significant loss of money). Have students take turns communicating and encourage them to consider the other sides of the story. Explain the importance of considering the perspective of others when communicating; this also helps students understand that history is never one-sided.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

“Today, we have explored the characteristic of **empathy** and practiced understanding how and why others think, feel and act. When we take the time to notice how someone feels and try to make him or her feel better, we make our world a better place. Even small actions, like saying something nice or offering help, can make someone’s day brighter. Let’s remember to use **empathy** wherever we go!”