Joining In and Making Room

Grades 1 and 2 | 30-minute counselor lesson

Joining takes noticing. Including takes follow-through.

Begin with the existing Thumbs Up / Thumbs Down partner connection (0-3 minutes).

Grade 1: Notice the activity, try a request or invitation, and follow through with a place, turn, or role.
Grade 2: Explain why a response fits, then adjust when the situation changes.



3-5 minutes | Welcome and opening decision

Say: "Today we are practicing two friendship skills: joining something that is already happening and helping someone take part. Joining takes noticing. Including takes follow-through."

"Imagine two classmates are playing a game you do not know. You want to join. What could you notice before you ask?"

Accept noticing the rules, whose turn it is, or what players are doing. Say: "You do not have to guess perfectly. You can ask about the game. We will practice choices that help us join without taking over."

Use invented situations, not names or stories about classmates.

5-9 minutes | Everyday Speech and two questions

Say: "Watch for what the child notices before joining, and what the group does after someone asks."

Play the existing Including Everyone on the Playground video sample.

Ask: "What words AND actions helped someone take part?"

Ask: "What would you change if someone was invited but never got a turn?"

Say: "Saying yes is a start. Including someone means they have something meaningful to do."

9-13 minutes | Notice the plan and make room

Show the two friendship pictures. Say: "In the playground picture, Homer is watching before joining. What might he need to learn about the game?"

Model: "How do you play? Could I join the next round?"

"He can learn the rules and suggest a way to join. He does not need to grab the ball or change the game."

Point to the classroom picture. Say: "The group has a poster plan. Homer wants to help. A classmate says, Would you like to add the border? Here is a marker and an open space."

"Now Homer has a real part. He can share an idea, too. Including does not mean giving someone a job and then ignoring their ideas."

Say: "An invitation is a choice. If someone says No thanks, we can say Okay and keep being friendly. If there is no answer, give them time or offer another way to respond. Do not keep pressuring them."

"Sometimes a turn or group is limited. We can explain kindly and offer a next turn or another choice. We cannot always join immediately. Unkind repeated exclusion or unsafe behavior needs adult help."

13-22 minutes | Friendship Replay

Say: "We will try a friendship situation, pause, and replay it with a choice that helps. These are pretend situations. No grabbing, chasing, or acting out insults. You may act, point, speak, or coach."

Make pairs. Partner A tries joining; Partner B responds for the group. Use an imaginary game, so no supplies are needed.

Round 1: "Two friends are playing a game you do not know. You want to join."

"Try it for 30 seconds. Pause. Did the joiner learn the plan? Did the group explain a way to take part? Replay with one helpful change."

Model if needed: "How do you play?" / "We take turns tossing. You can go after me."

Switch roles.

Round 2: "The group says You can play, but never gives the new player a turn."

"Try a response. Pause. Did the invitation lead to an actual turn? Replay."

Model if needed: "When is my turn?" / "You go next. I will pass to you."

Switch roles.

Round 3: "You invite someone and they say No thanks."

"Try a response. Pause. Did you respect their choice? Replay if needed."

Model if needed: "Okay. You can ask later if you change your mind."

Grade 1: Choose one phrase and show the action that makes it work. Give a model when needed.

Grade 2: Add a change: "The round has already started," "There is no answer yet," or "Your friend wants you to leave someone out." Ask partners to explain and revise their response.

For exclusion, model: "We can make a turn for everyone. I am not going to tell someone they cannot play because you do not like them."

After each replay ask: "Did that help? Did everyone have something meaningful to do?" If not, try one change or ask an adult for help.

22-28 minutes | Friendship Decisions worksheet

Use the Grade 1 page for first grade and the Grade 2 page for second grade. Read the situation aloud.

Say: "Choose what you could say. Then show the action that makes your words work. You can write, draw, point, or tell a partner or adult."

Grade 1: Complete the joining and welcoming speech bubbles, then show an actual turn or role. Ask: "What would you DO after saying that?"

Grade 2: Respond to a player who was invited but never got a turn. Explain why the response helps. Then adjust for a changed situation: the round has already started or the invitation is declined.

Do not spend the activity coloring. The task is choosing, explaining, and trying a response. If printed pages are unavailable, display the page and have partners respond aloud.

28-30 minutes | Check and close

Say: "Return to our first situation: two classmates are playing a game you do not know. Show how you could join, and how the group could make room."

Grade 1: Look for noticing or asking about the plan, a request or invitation, and a real turn or role.

Grade 2: Add: "The round has already started." Ask: "What could you change, and why?"

Say: "Today, try one of these skills during a game or classroom activity. Joining takes noticing. Including takes follow-through."

Accept speech, gestures, pointing, drawing, or communication tools. Notice who can demonstrate independently and who needs another model.

Resources

Play the existing Everyday Speech video

Open the Everyday Speech companion lesson

Print Friendship Decisions: page 1 for first grade, page 2 for second grade. Spoken, drawn, gestured, and communication-tool responses are welcome.