

# **WHY IS EVERYBODY ALWAYS PICKING ON US?**



**A Mini-Curriculum for Instructors  
On Understanding the Roots of Prejudice**

**Ages 8 – 12**

by  
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## LESSON 1

# What Is Prejudice?

### 1. Ask students:

- Have you heard of prejudice? What is it?
- Has anyone ever called you a name you don't like? If so, what does this name do to you when you hear it?
- Do you think *you* have ever acted in a prejudiced way? Why do you think so? Did it make you feel tough? Smart? Revengeful?
- If you could learn how to prevent prejudice, would you want to?

### 2. Tell students:

- When the world was a larger place, with far fewer people in it than today, small groups of people formed tribes.
- They participated in frequent, repeated practices that made them feel safe and secure. And these practices were passed from one generation to the next – for thousands of years!
- Although we don't live in tribes today, in a way we do – in villages, communities, neighborhoods, clubs and organizations we belong to – and countries, too.
- Prejudice is seeing other people as **different** from us – in a way that does not promote peaceful thoughts and feelings. Tribe members thought that was the way to protect themselves. Think of a time you saw a person “different” from you and how you thought and felt. Did you feel helpless? Ready to fight? *Encourage responses.*
- Prejudice **separates** us from one another. Do you remember a time you felt superior to someone? Or a time when someone acted superior to you and made you feel inferior? How did this separate you from each other? *Encourage student responses.*
- Prejudice is feeling **afraid** of someone because that person represents something **different than you and your group**. Do you remember a time you were scared of someone? Why were you

scared? When did this happen? What happened? *Encourage active responses.*

**3. Ask students:**

- Do you think that we sometimes feel afraid because we feel our survival is threatened?
- What does it mean to survive?

**FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING**

There are four stages of learning we will use in each lesson. The stages are: Think! Remember! Observe! Talk! So let's begin.

- Think:** There are two kinds of survival: Physical and Psychological.
- Remember:** Physical survival depends on whether we have enough to eat and drink, clothes to keep us warm and a place to live.
- Observe:** Psychological survival depends on whether our thoughts and feelings help us feel safe, to survival .
- Talk:** Ancient tribe members had to follow their tribe's customs and beliefs. Members had to be mentally and emotionally loyal to their group. Today, we are mentally and emotionally loyal to family, friends and others close to us. A sense of safety and security comes when both our physical and emotional needs are satisfied. Ask students:

**What if, with our needs satisfied,  
we no longer needed to think like any group, and differences that  
have kept people apart fell away?**

**What if you were always called upon to think for yourself,  
and in so doing,  
never felt prejudice toward another person – ever?**

**4. Activities and Talks**

**Activity 1:** On the next page are song lyrics. Perhaps you can get a copy of the music and play it for students. But if not, the lyrics alone are fine.

ACTIVITY 1:

## **You've Got to Be Carefully Taught**

The following song is from a musical play called *South Pacific*. It was written more than 60 years ago. The words — most often called lyrics — are by Oscar Hammerstein, II. There is music for these lyrics written by Richard Rodgers. The song is performed by a person who's been hurt by prejudice.

Let's listen to the lyrics and talk about them.

### **You've Got To Be Carefully Taught**

You've got to be taught to hate and fear,  
You've got to be taught from year to year,  
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear,  
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught to be afraid  
Of people whose eyes are oddly made  
And people whose skin is a different shade,  
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught before it's too late  
Before you are six or seven or eight  
To hate all the people your relatives hate  
You've got to be carefully taught...  
You've got to be carefully taught.

©1949 *Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, II*

**Talk with students about where they see prejudice  
in these lyrics, and how they feel as they listen to them.**

## LESSON 2

# What I'm Taught To Believe!

### 1. Ask students:

- Do you think that there are people in the world who've been treated badly because of how they look, how they were brought up, or what they believe?
- Do we humans sometimes not think before we act? What's an example of a time you acted without thinking? Were you prejudiced?
- Do you think that sometimes we're given information that isn't true, and we don't stop to question it? Is that prejudice?

### 2. Tell students:

- The act of prejudice is based on judgment, assuming or expressing an opinion – not fact! It always seems to pop up when we have to face someone who, or something that, is different in some way.
- Prejudice can grow and spread like wildfire – all without being true! A person may act in a prejudiced way toward you. That person's actions trigger feelings of prejudice inside you. And the fire keeps spreading!

### 3. Tell students:

- Think:** Are there some “different” things you've tried, or people you've met, that you like? A new candy bar? A new video game? Why are some “different” things okay, and others not?
- Remember:** We can look at other people's customs and traditions and, instead of judging them, learn from and enjoy them!
- Observe:** Look at and question everything you see and hear. Ask: Who? What? Where? How? Why?
- Talk:** Talk about how exciting it can be to meet people who are different, and experience things that are different!

### 4. Activities and Talks:

On the next page is a suggested chart to hang on your classroom wall. Talk with students about it.

## ACTIVITY 2

# Words I Use When I'm Prejudiced

- ✓ Put up a chart in the classroom: WORDS I USE WHEN I'M PREJUDICED. Every day invite students to add words/phrases to the list.
- ✓ Tell students:
  - One way to recognize when we're being prejudiced is to examine the words we use.
  - Sometimes the words we use give away our prejudiced feelings.
- ✓ Ask students:
  - Which of the following statements are clear signs of prejudiced feelings?
    1. "He's stupid!"
    2. "She should do what I tell her to do."
    3. "All people from that country are jerks."
    4. "What they ought to do is change their ideas."
    5. "I think that's a really strange idea."
    6. "Can't you ever do anything right?"
    7. "No one could possibly understand how I feel."
    8. "Anyone who believes that is a fool!"
    9. "You'll never amount to anything!"
    10. "Your country and my country can never be at peace."
  - If you guessed all of the above, you're right! What words or phrases reveal the speaker's prejudice?
- ✓ **Tell students:**
  - This chart will stay up during our entire course study.
  - Feel free to write an entry on this chart any time!



## LESSON 3

# Prejudice Is A Mechanical Difficulty!

### 1. Ask students:

- Have you noticed how your TV or computer screen sometimes acts up when something mechanical goes wrong?
- Do you think that prejudice is like that – that it’s a mechanical difficulty in our brains?
- Do you think prejudice programs us to act in ways that create static and conflict?

### 2. Tell students:

- Angry, hurt and confused thoughts can cloud our minds and prevent us from responding instantly to a physical or mental attack.
- By examining prejudice in ourselves and others, we protect ourselves from ignorance, and we learn how to survive at the highest level of understanding — getting along with other people.
- The next time you notice a feeling of prejudice creep up inside you, think about what gave you that unhappy feeling in the past.

### 3. Ask students:

- If you discovered there was a new theme park in town that had a wild ride — something **different** you’d never experienced before — would you instantly hate it, or like it?
- If a new automobile or article of clothing came out that was more beautiful — **different** from any you’d ever seen — would it scare you? Or would you want to try it?
- What makes something or someone **different** unappealing? Why would someone who looks, thinks or acts **differently** be less exciting than a new flavor of ice cream, a new outfit, or a new car?

4. **Tell students:**

- Sometimes we can be taught to think in ways that make us dislike, or even hate, another person — without ever understanding why.
- All over the world, conflicts based on this kind of prejudice go on every day. All of them are based on one simple thing — **fear**. Think of a conflict you've seen — at home, at school or in the world. What do you think the fear is for that conflict?

**Here's a terrific thing to know!  
When we look at prejudice — in our friends and family,  
in ourselves, in the world around us —  
and are able to recognize it —  
we have already begun to stop it!**

- Think:** When we see someone or something different, fear can cause us to feel prejudiced against that person or thing.
- Remember:** It's important to not judge any person or thing. This takes practice, so we have to keep practicing! We need to be aware of when we feel afraid of something or someone different.
- Observe:** When is the last time you let fear decide how you think or feel? When's the last time you were scared of a situation that was different from any you'd experienced before?
- Talk:** When we look beyond our fear at any prejudice we feel, and recognize it in ourselves — this instantly stops the prejudice, because we are thinking for ourselves!

5. **Activities and Talks**

**Activity:** On the next page is a game students like to play that gets them used to thinking on their feet. All you need is a bag, hat or bowl, in which you can put strips of paper.

**Congratulate students on their awareness and understanding.  
They are taking their first step in recognizing prejudice  
and learning how to deal with it.**

### ACTIVITY 3

## A Bag of Fears!

- ✓ In a bag, hat or bowl, put slips of paper, each of which has a fear written on it. Use examples below that you cut into strips. Add some of your own.

I'm afraid I'll make a mistake.

I'm scared of getting a bad grade.

I'm afraid people won't like me.

I'm afraid of nothing.

I'm afraid of everything.

I'm scared of people I don't know.

I'm afraid of large dogs that bite.

I'm scared I have nothing to say.

I'm afraid people aren't interested in what I have to say.

I'm scared I won't earn enough money.

I'm afraid of losing.

I'm afraid of winning.

- ✓ Ask each student to select a slip of paper, open and read it. After the fear is read aloud, ask the student:

1. What thought or action do you think could have caused this fear?
2. Do you think this thought or action might be based on some form of prejudice? If so, what kind?
3. How would you handle this fear? Is there some way to change your thinking about it?

## LESSON 4

# Where Prejudice Begins

### Prejudice Begins Inside Us

#### 1. Ask students:

- Think of one way you might have been prejudiced in your life. Where do you think that prejudice might have started?
- Do you believe that any prejudices you have come from something someone else said or did? Who? When?
- Even though the roots of your prejudice may have been passed down to you by people who came before you, do you see that this prejudice now lives inside you — and comes from you?
- Do you think you have the power to change a prejudice inside you?
- If you could change a prejudice that's inside you, what prejudice would you change, and how would you change it?

#### 2. Tell students:

- Notice what happened in your mind when you started to think about answering the previous question.
- Your mind went immediately to a “stopping” place — the place where you stop, think and make a decision. That place is very important! It's where judgment and rumors stop! That's the place we need to know how to reach — all the time!
- If you think.... “That person is stupid. I'm much smarter!” Or: “That person is a nerd, and I'm not going to talk to him.” Or: “I don't want to be anywhere near that girl,” then you are creating conflict in your mind.
- With all of this conflict invading your mind, there's no path to your “Stop! Think” place! It's important to always get to your “Stop! Think!” place when you feel afraid, or in conflict.

### 3. Tell students:

- There are many kinds of prejudice people have created over the years. Some of them are based on:
  - ✓ Skin color
  - ✓ Nationality/culture
  - ✓ Gender (male/female)
  - ✓ Occupation
  - ✓ Social class  
(lower/middle/upper)
  - ✓ Age
  - ✓ Race
  - ✓ Belief system
  - ✓ Physical disability
  - ✓ Body size
- All these distinctions can **separate** us. They don't provide us the opportunity to think about all the ways we are **the same**, about what we have **in common**, and what we **mutually like**. What happens is that conflict inside us becomes conflict outside us.
- All of these potential objects of prejudice share the same root cause. They're all built on fear.
- At their roots, all of these prejudices are programmed images fixed in the brain — your brain, my brain, everyone's brain.

**Here's another terrific thing to know!  
Understanding yourself and how you think  
is understanding the whole human race,  
for we are the world and the world is us.**

- Think:** Prejudice is a way of thinking that's out of focus. Our judgment of what we see is likely to be incorrect.
  - Remember:** When conflict invades our minds, there's no room for clear thinking.
  - Observe:** When we feel scared or threatened, we need to go to our "Stop! Think!" place and remind ourselves: Rumors stop here!
  - Talk:** We can talk with our friends, relatives, teachers, neighbors about prejudices we have observed – and hopefully this will help everyone put an end to them.
4. **Activities and Talk:** The activity on the following page can be used to further improve students' ability to challenge their thinking patterns. Make it fun!

## ACTIVITY 4

# Re-Thinking What I Think!

- ✓ Tell students:
  1. The purpose of this activity is to challenge things we often assume, and re-think our old thought patterns. Are you ready?
  2. Let's re-think them and come up with as many different answers to the following questions as we can — no matter how crazy they sound. Let's have fun. *(You can focus on only one topic, or you can work with many. Some will turn out to be more fun than others, as you will see.)*
    - Why do we need to eat healthy food? (Wait for a response.) Is your answer a judgment or an observation?
    - Why do we come to school?  
Is your answer a judgment or an observation?
    - What's the difference between boys and girls?  
Is your answer a judgment or an observation?
    - What's the difference between "a foreigner" and you?  
Is your answer a judgment or an observation?
    - Where does conflict come from?  
Is your response a judgment or an observation?
- ✓ If any discussion arises, let it happen. The more answers, the more students have to think about. But set a time limit, because once these discussions get started, they can go on!

### **Reminder:**

**Add to chart "Words I Use When I'm Prejudiced." Remind students to freely add to this list at any time.**

**Visit "Why Is Everybody Always Picking On Us" at the Prejudice Museum at: <http://www.training.bravenewchild.org>**

## LESSON 5

# When We're Aware, We See!

### 1. Tell students:

- Once we feel we've been a victim, our immediate reaction is to either become afraid, or seek revenge — to make the score “even.”
- Once a fight begins – any fight – there's always another.
- As long as the prejudice or the fighting continues, the score can never be even. There's always someone who feels ahead (superior) and someone who feels behind (scared, inferior).
- If one person can **stop** the prejudice, all fighting ends. Then, no one loses and everyone wins. The score is truly even. Who would like to be that person? Everyone? Good!

### 2. Tell students:

- When we're prejudiced, our mind is asleep. We react to a situation as if it were real, unaware that our brain is on “automatic pilot.”
- When we're lost in our own thoughts, it's as if we're asleep. We're not experiencing what's happening to us right here, right now.
- One way to strengthen our mind is to make it think in ways that are different from the ways we usually think. This increases our brain power, and encourages us to be more creative.
- Whenever we're forced to face attacks or threats of any kind, such as a prejudiced remark or act, finding our “Stop! Think” wake-up place is very helpful.

### 3. Ask students:

- Does looking at your prejudice, or wanting to remove your prejudice, frighten you? If so, why do you think it does that?
- Do you think that when you feel fear it can sometimes awaken you to a new realization — a helpful one?

4. **Tell students:**

- Ask yourself to honestly consider whether you believe any of these statements – students can respond freely and at once. Follow each statement with “Stop! Think!” before your student responds.
  - ✓ Men are stronger and more intelligent than women.
  - ✓ Women are more gentle than men.
  - ✓ White people are better business people than black people.
  - ✓ Black people are more athletic than white people.
  - ✓ Younger people are better workers than older people.
  - ✓ To have peace, we must protect ourselves by fighting.
  - ✓ Authorities don’t ever need to be questioned.

**As soon as we begin to question old thinking,  
we wake up!**

- **Think:** Sometimes we’re conditioned to believe that thinking and acting in certain ways is safe, certain and orderly when, in reality, they’re not.
- **Remember:** Being unaware doesn’t mean we are dumb; it simply means that we’re unaware of the truth – and that it’s time to learn it!
- **Observe:** Take note that it can be difficult discussing prejudice with the people who contributed to making us prejudiced! But it’s always good to try!
- **Talk:** To understand our prejudice, we need to question how we have been conditioned. This means discussing this with people we like, people we trust, people who will share our understanding.

5. **Activities and Talk:** The activity on the following page can be used to further enhance students’ ability to see what happens when conflict inside us can grow into conflict outside us – on a global level. Read aloud, or make copies for students, and talk about how the steps are different.



## ACTIVITY 5

# Ten Mental Steps

The following are the ten **mental** steps to war. Read them aloud, one by one, and notice how one step leads to the next.

### **The Ten Mental Steps to War**

1. That person across the street is different from me.
2. That person across the street is “bad.”
3. That person is a threat to my safety and security.
4. That person is a threat to my group’s well-being.
5. That person and that person’s group is my “enemy.”
6. I must defend myself against my enemy.
7. I must defend my group against “them.”
8. I feel inner conflict.
9. I project my conflict onto my “enemy.”
10. We’re going to war!

Now, read through the following ten mental steps to peace.

### **The Ten Mental Steps to Peace**

1. That person across the street looks different.
2. I wonder where that person across the street is from?
3. Is that person a threat to my safety and security?
4. Is that person a threat to my group’s well-being?
5. Probably not.
6. Do I have to defend myself against this person?
7. I’ll walk over and say hello.
8. I feel no conflict.
9. I express my confidence and peaceful intentions.
10. Have I achieved the highest goal?

Talk about the differences in these steps and how they affect thoughts and actions.

## LESSON 6

# Faulty Wiring in Our Brain

### 1. Ask students:

- Do you remember the danger you sensed the last time you felt afraid?
- Did your brain send messages to your body to prepare you to either fight or run away? Do think there's another way to act?

### 2. Tell students:

- When we're in danger, we usually want to either fight or run away. This "fight or flight" response is a healthy and natural response to *real* danger.
- Sometimes, however, our "fight or flight" response happens when the danger isn't real, based on images of fear or prejudice we have.
- Mental strength comes when we don't run away and when we don't fight, but go to our "Stop! Think" place to connect with the truth.
- When we're prejudiced, we don't ACT based on what we're seeing now. We REACT based on something that happened in the past.
- Mental strength comes when we listen to our thoughts and feelings and **act** instead of **react**!

### 3. Ask students:

- Have you seen a television, computer or other piece of equipment break down because of faulty wiring? *Allow brief responses.*
- Do you think it's possible that our thinking can break down like that? *Let students think; encourage answers.*
- Do you think it's possible to believe something all your life and then find out that, due to faulty wiring, you've believed something that's not true — that it's never been true? *Allow students to offer some brief, personal examples.*

4. **Tell students:**

- Unless we become **aware** of this faulty wiring in our brain, it's hard to stay connected to the truth of a situation.
- Most thinking begins with a basic statement. Then, sometimes a thought is expressed that isn't true, is partially true, or hides what's true.
- Once that thought is out there, and people who express it believe in it —prejudice is born.

**There are seven elements of thinking  
that tend to rely on a faulty wiring system in our brain.  
Once we're aware of them, we can avoid them!  
Do you want to learn what they are?**

- Think:** We are conditioned to accept a lot of rules and regulations, from our parents, teachers, and people in our community. Think about the ways these affect you.
- Remember:** Some of these rules and regulations are designed to protect us and help us survive.
- Observe:** Think of the difference between being given lots of rules to follow and learning to think for ourselves.
- Talk:** What's a new, excellent way to make a decision that you've learned in this class?

5. **Activities and Talk:** The activity on the following page reviews seven elements of thinking that are based on fear and prejudice.

"Knot-like" thinking refers to thoughts that ties our brain into a knot and does not allow us to think for ourselves.

See how many elements and examples your students can offer for each of the seven elements.

## ACTIVITY 6

# Elements of Knot-Like Thinking

Test your students to see how well they recognize these seven elements of knot-like thinking! As you read the name of each one and its action, ask students to offer an example – for instance: For “repetition,” perhaps a television commercial jingle they’ve heard – and the effect it has. For “comparison,” comparing people from two different countries – and so on.

<b>NAME OF ELEMENT</b>	<b>ACTION OF ELEMENT</b>	<b>EXAMPLE OF ELEMENT</b>
Repetition	Saying and hearing the same thing over and over.	
Comparison	Comparing one group of people with another.	
Projection	“Throwing” an image in our minds onto another person or thing.	
Identification	Becoming part of a group in order to “belong.”	
Authority	The power to command, demand obedience, and enforce laws.	
Reinforcement	Rewarding behavior with positive words or actions to achieve a certain effect.	
Belief	Accepting something, with no proof that it’s true.	

## LESSON 7

# A Clear Mind Reflects The Truth

### 1. Tell students:

- We've learned a lot over the past weeks:
  - ✓ There's a difference between a fact and an opinion; between getting information first-hand and assuming; and between understanding and judging.
  - ✓ Our brain operates in a mechanical way that's sometimes programmed to create images that aren't real or true.
  - ✓ We've seen how false images can be formed when we're faced with faulty wiring or knot-like thinking in our brain.
  - ✓ We've discovered that fear can create incorrect images that get stuck in our brains, and that conditioning, training the mind, helps us hold on to these images forever, if we don't wake up.
  - ✓ We've learned that prejudice is a reaction, and if we want to act rather than react, we have to think for ourselves.
- Sometimes, the simplest thing can start a fight in our brain – even words, as we know from the words we've been adding to our chart.

### 2. Ask students:

- Did you know that prejudice has been carried on for human beings for thousands of years?
- Are you aware that wars are always caused by prejudice – people from one country thinking differently from people from another country?
- There have been two world wars and thousands of smaller wars when sometimes millions of people were killed. Do you think it's sad that these came about all due to people thinking in prejudiced ways and nobody knew how to "Stop! Think!" to stop them?

**3. Tell students:**

- We all have ancestors who lived long ago – many of them in tribes as cave creatures.
- At that time, these people had to live in certain ways that would protect them, or their survival would be threatened. They often had to fight for territory and food, and against dangerous animals living in the wild.
- Today, even though the world is different and far more advanced than it was back then, many people still act in primitive, tribe-like ways – still trying to prove who is strongest, best or “right.”
- While fighting to be the most powerful was helpful to cave creatures and tribe members of the past, today such action creates tremendous conflict between people.

**Here’s another important thought!**

**Today, we need think of ourselves as a single tribe –  
a single race – the human race.**

- **Think:** A lot of what we believe today could be the result of an old tribal tradition! Maybe we’ve been conditioned, taught, to claim it as our legacy because our parents and grandparents have done so.
  - **Remember:** It’s important to question any belief to find out for ourselves whether it is true or false, healthy or destructive.
  - **Observe:** If we aren’t educated about what authorities or “experts” are telling us, and we don’t question anything they present to us, then any authority is in position to take advantage of us.
  - **Talk:** We need to understand and talk about prejudice at its roots and end it *before* it becomes a problem. Otherwise, we pass these prejudices on, in the same way they were passed on to us.
- 4. Activities and Talk:** The activity on the following page can be used to help students understand their very human instinct to do anything they can to survive – at home, in school, in their communities, and in the world.

## ACTIVITY 7

# What I Do To Survive!

Sit together with your students and talk about what they do to survive. You can trigger their discussion with some of the following questions, or make up your own questions about students, since you know them.

1. Was there something important you feel you survived today?
2. What was it?
3. Did it happen at home? At school?
4. Do you ever get the feeling that you need to survive living with a brother or sister? A parent who gets angry? A school friend you don't always agree with?
5. What do you do to survive your situation?
6. Do you think the way you've chosen is the best way to survive? Why do you think so?
7. Are there other ways to deal with surviving that you think could work as well, or better?
8. Does anyone in class have suggestions to offer anyone else in class on the best way to survive?

**Congratulate students on their ongoing work!**

## LESSON 8

# Taking Responsibility

### 1. Tell students:

- Here's a fun thing for us to do today. We are going to create, together, a respectful human being!
- We're going to talk about how to build a person, in real life, who lives every day, as best as this person can, learning to be respectful and responsible.
- This is a challenge because we don't want to make this person "ideal" or "perfect." Being respectful and responsible is a way of life. We can observe for ourselves how it works.
- This needs to be a person who makes mistakes, like you and me, and can learn from them. We want this person to understand how we humans are conditioned to think and act and, as a result, don't always find the best way to survive in the world today.

### 2. Ask students:

- What kind of words would this person use? "Please" and "thank you"? How would this person ask a question?
- What kinds of thoughts and feelings would this person have? What would you teach this person to do? Question? Assume? Judge others? Laugh at others? Laugh with others?
- What kind of self-image would this person have? Confident? Calm? A braggart? A bully?
- How would this person be educated? Would he or she love school? Love to work? Love to play? Like to be taught? What kind of ideas would this person enjoy?
- In what ways would this person be conditioned? Maybe to learn not to cross the street against a red light? To wear a seat belt in a car? To ignore people from different neighborhoods? To not talk with people from different countries?



- How would this person act in response to authorities telling him or her what to do? Obey the rules? Ask questions?
- What influences would this person have? Who would be this person's role model? How would he or she respond to newspapers or magazines that don't report the facts? Would he or she accept all information as the truth, or investigate personally?
- What interests would this new person have? Books? Museums? History? Animals? Plants? Music? Art?
- What kind of family and friends would our creation have?

**Here's a fun thing to do!**

**Talk with students about this person they've created together and whether they would like to be this person, or know this person, or have this person as a friend – why they would or wouldn't.**

- Think:** Think of a problem or conflict situation you've been involved in lately – at home, at school, in your community.
- Remember:** Say to yourself: "It's possible that I have somehow taken part in creating this problem."
- Observe:** Whether or not you've actually taken part in creating the problem doesn't matter. What's important is to accept – to take on – responsibility for a situation.
- Talk:** Have a discussion with classmates at school or people at home about responsibility. Sit in a circle and have each person say out loud: "Since I may have taken part in creating the problem, let me think of some way I might be helpful in resolving it."

**4. Activities and Talk:**

**Activity 8A:** While prejudice is a serious subject matter, it's good to be able to add humor to a situation.

**Activity 8B:** The activity on the following page can be used to help educate students on ways to handle conflict situations, and it's good to follow the previous activity with this one.

ACTIVITY 8A  
**I Am Prejudiced!**



**Pat, The Prejudiced Person**

**Have as much fun with this activity as you can. It's good for students to catch themselves in the act of prejudice, and it's okay for them to laugh in recognition of their human faults.**

- ✓ Tell students that you're going to walk around the room and begin an unfinished sentence you want them to complete. Move around the room quickly; give every student the opportunity to fill in a blank. Add your own sentences, if you wish – but make them about prejudice.
- 1. "I am prejudiced. Sometimes when I see someone very different from me – I don't think I'll ever actually do this, but I feel I would really like to \_\_\_\_\_."
- 2. "It's hard for me to admit I'm prejudiced, but the last time I acted like a prejudiced person was \_\_\_\_\_."
- 3. "I am prejudiced. The last time I felt superior to someone was \_\_\_\_\_."
- 4. "I am prejudiced. The last time I felt afraid of someone was \_\_\_\_\_."
- 5. "I am prejudiced. I like telling people what to do because I feel some people ought to \_\_\_\_\_."
- 6. "I am prejudiced. The main thing I really don't like about people who are "strange" is \_\_\_\_\_."

## ACTIVITY 8B

# What Kind of Sight Do I Have?



## Sammie, the Sight Spotter

Explain the following three kinds of “sight” to students. Then, get into a conversation about them.

- ✓ Tell students:
  1. When we’re too far gone in a situation to see what created the conflict or prejudice, but we understand that it has happened – this is called **latesight**. It’s too late to do anything, but we recognize that it happened.
  2. When we recognize that an act of prejudice has happened and that we reacted to it with more prejudice, and now we want to resolve it – this is called **hindsight**. It’s still too late, but at least we recognize more than that it happened – we understand why.
  3. When we have the ability to recognize conflict, or prejudice, right when it’s happening – it can stop immediately – this is **insight**. This is the stage that prevents conflict, and it’s always our highest goal.
- ✓ Ask students to mention a conflict or prejudice situation they were in, or saw, and whether they thought it was handled with latesight, hindsight or insight – and why. Then ask their view on how to improve handling of the situation.

## LESSON 9

# Thinking In New Ways

### 1. Ask students:

- Do you think we live in a world full of way too much prejudice?
- Do you think you now have a better understanding of prejudice and how it affects all of us in the world – and maybe you can help reduce or even end it?
- Did you know that the country of Costa Rica, in Central America, has no army – and that all the money that could have been spent on the military can go toward educating kids like you to understand what creates prejudice?

### 2. Tell students:

- Thinking in new ways, if you can imagine a big STOP sign in your mind to stop any conditioned or prejudiced thoughts – you will recognize them and think before you act!
- All you have to do is practice. One way is to remember to question:
  - ✓ Is what I'm hearing true?
  - ✓ Where did this information come from?
  - ✓ Do I have to think this way, or is there a better way?
- Asking yourself these questions puts you in a “**Stop! Think!**” moment, and puts you on the road to understanding rather than judging. This makes you feel open, confident and mentally strong.
- Instead of giving in to our “automatic” reactions, we need to be aware that the old way doesn't work.
- When you immediately go to your “Stop! Think! place, new thinking is allowed to happen.
- When new thinking takes place, we act in new ways.

### 3. Three steps to remember:

- **Become aware of new information you need.** Awareness gives us information we didn't have before and affects the way we think about a situation. Any action not based on awareness is a re-action.
  - **Concentrate on what's new that you need to do.** As soon as you are in a "Stop! Think!" moment, you are ready to act instead of react. You are ready to ask questions.
  - **Focus on the new way until you understand it.** It may take time to change old habits, but we can learn new behavior just by keeping our mind open to new possibilities. We must not be afraid to stop in the middle of behavior that could prove destructive — to ourselves or someone else.
- Think:** If any information you get doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to question it. Recognizing and admitting mistaken information is powerful!
  - Remember:** Every thought has its own vibration. We *feel* what we think. Listen to your feelings.
  - Observe:** When automatic information pops into your head and feels false to you, take the time to "Stop! Think!" and replace that information with truthful statements.
  - Talk:** Talk with friends and family about how sometimes our brains don't know the difference between an imagined threat and a real one! Practice recognizing the imagined ones!

### 4. Activities and Talk:

**Activity 9:** Look at the questions on the following page. It's a great way to end this study of prejudice for your students. You can spend an entire class session simply talking about these questions that deal with how we separate ourselves from others by thinking "we" vs. "them" and automatically see differences instead of likenesses.

## ACTIVITY 9

# What Questions Should I Always Ask?



## Quan, The Questioner

1. When we talk about “we” and “them” and “other people” – who are we talking about? Shouldn’t we all be “we”?
2. Is “the other” person really different? In what ways? Aren’t we all different? And can this be interesting?
3. Why do some people believe they’re superior to “others”?
4. Do we all want to be “the same”? What would happen if we were all “the same”?
5. Shouldn’t I be able to enjoy people from different countries and cultures who are “different”?
6. Why do we have to fear and hurt “them” – whoever they are? Doesn’t this mean that I’m afraid of something?
7. What things about “different” groups of people create conflict in my mind?
8. What’s the root of my prejudice? What’s its cause? Where does it come from?
9. Do I want to protect myself from the truth, or do I want to learn from it?



**Congratulate students on completing  
this course on prejudice.**

**They have worked hard  
and accomplished many goals.**

**You should be very proud of them,  
and they should be proud of themselves.**

**Encourage them to congratulate one another!**

**Wish them a lifetime of discovery  
and a continual desire  
to be aware of conflict and prejudice —  
and what they can do to prevent them.**