

Martian/Politician/Tiger/Salmon

Focus: Inclusion/exclusion, mixing, cliques

Materials: None

Level: Grades 2 and higher

Sources: Laurie Frank learned this activity from Sarah Shatz.

Suggested Procedure

1. Clear a space in the room and stand in a circle.
2. Teach the class motions and sounds for each of the following (or make up your own). Martian – fingers on head like antennae, and make a “doodle, doodle, doo” noise. Tiger – hands out like claws, and growl. Politician – reach out to shake hands and say “hello there.” Salmon – arms close to sides and jump from side to side (like swimming upstream), and say “whoosh, whoosh.”
3. The object of this game is to try and do the same thing as others and then join up with them.
4. Everyone starts alone, finding one other person.
5. Without saying what each is doing, the pair counts to three and each does one of the four things.
6. If the two do different things, then nothing happens, and they go on to find someone else to try again.
7. If they do the same thing, they link elbows. They are now a team.
8. The pairs then decide on one thing to do, find another person or pair and do their thing. If it is the same as the other person or pair, they join up.
9. In this way, small groups will begin to form. This continues until there are two large groups, with each group deciding what to do and trying to end up as one large group.
10. In the process, as groups form, some people will continue to be alone. Notice what those in groups do to try and include the ones who are alone (if anything).

Sample Processing Questions

- How did it feel to match up with others and be included?
- For those who were alone for a long time, how did it feel to not match up?
- Did anyone do anything to try to include those who were alone? If so, what? If not, what could they have done?
- Being excluded can be hurtful. When are there times in here when people are excluded?

Variations/Modifications

- For younger students: Use fewer motions. Have the students make them up.

Facilitation Notes

If you are working directly on issues of inclusion and mixing, note that this activity sometimes causes a few people to be left alone. Suggest that they think about how to include people if this happens. Sometimes when there are two or three larger groups left, a dynamic occurs where one or more groups will consciously try not to match up with the others. This can result in a great discussion about conformity and individuality. This activity can be quite loud, so make sure it won't be disruptive to another classroom.