

## 3rd Period - Relations

### *Tolerance, Helpfulness, Broadmindedness, Solidarity*

While second period concentrated on inner boundaries, the idea of third period is to offer children a feeling of having outer boundaries they can choose for themselves. To reach that goal, children need to learn:

- to respect the boundaries of others
- to understand and respect the diversity of the community
- to establish a positive group image
- to create projects by consensus
- to reduce the fear of making mistakes
- to have an honest discussion about mischief and bullying and
- to take care of a friend.

This is also a period of learning to work in pairs. It is okay for you to tell a friend not to do something to you, even some of your friends don't mind when the same thing is done to them. The aim is to give everyone the idea that it is okay for you to scream if someone goes past your boundaries. You have the power to control your own body. And the same applies

- if someone is making fun of you – you also have the right to say loud and clear – that's not true!
- if someone is cheating, imitating you in a way that feels bad
- if someone is bossing you around
- if someone is chatting or acting in a way that disturbs you
- if someone is persuading you to give or lend them something that you wouldn't want to
- if you are persuaded or pressured to take the last turn and worst things too often
- if someone touches you in a way that feels bad to you
- if your way of being a boy/girl is diminished by someone
- if someone makes you feel less worthy than others
- if you feel you cannot wear clothes you like, do things you, or have toys you like without being laughed at

Children need to be able to have close friends and the opportunity to perceive themselves as sweet, kind and friendly persons. It is important for the teacher to react quickly when s/he hears children saying something negative to, or about, one another, or when something negative happens. Instead of asking "who started, what happened", ask "what can we do to make it right" or say something like "we will make the best of this" or "better luck next time". By doing this we minimize the attention given to what went wrong and instead focus on how we can do things better.

#### 1. To respect the boundaries of others

- What one person calls teasing, another sees as bullying. The one who must set the boundaries is the one being teased. Our responsibility as educators is to offer
  - a safe environment and atmosphere
  - tools for children
  - enough knowledge and awareness for the children to be able to recognize and react in an honest and straightforward manner
- It is important to eliminate non-physical violence. Asking the children questions about how they feel and asking the parents the same question opens up possibilities for noticing what is unpleasant for the child and how to work on it.

- In these matters it is often enough to teach children to say what they want directly instead of talking about what they do not want to happen. If a child says to a group of children “You won’t let me play the game”, we can teach the child to say “Can I play with you?” instead.
- Intervention is carried out immediately when it is noticed that some child is in danger of being left outside or be diminished.

## 2. Understand and respect the diversity of the community.

- The simplest way is to take note of what is happening around us and explain to the children as we go along. Not all families are the same and that provides opportunities to have conversations about different kinds of families. It is good to look at different cultures from the viewpoint of what purpose they might have.
- At the same time it is important to understand and respect the school community. We sit in a circle so that everyone can look everybody else in the eyes, and we explain to the children that what we do affects this small community. So, if we don’t take good care of the school by being neat and taking care of our things and clothes, it affects others in school in addition to ourselves.

## 3. Giving to the community

- All sorts of projects, which aim to help the community promote the feeling of responsibility. Giving money to charity, singing for the elderly, sending greetings to children in foreign countries are projects that make us understand that we are part of a larger society.
- To have a conversation about these projects in a wider context is a good way to instill a positive attitude towards these matters. Why is it good to make others happy, why do we feel good when we are nice to others and do others feel good if they make us happy? Do those who we have made happy want to do the same to us if they possibly can?

## 4. Establish a positive group image

- To make a certain song, sentences or handshakes or something else that is special to this group of children gives a feeling of belonging and being a part of something unique.
- Send warm thoughts to those who are sick at home to tell each child that they are important and we really miss them if they are not at school.
- Lots of things are done together spending time in nature. For instance, constructing a hut together is good exercise for interaction and sharing skills.

## 5. Projects of consensus and solidarity

- Rehearsing for a theatrical play, singing together, working in teams and taking joint responsibility for something are projects that require the pupil to do well on behalf of her/his peers. Emphasizing positive communication between the children improves their ability to react in a positive way with regards each other’s strengths.
- Practice being in someone’s shoes. “How does Anna feel when she is walking home alone in darkness, why does she feel that way?” “If it was Anna’s father walking home from the night shift in the hospital, would he feel the same way?”

## 6. To reduce the fear of making mistakes

- To practice making a mistake – by doing something that is doomed to fail, e.g. for children to run faster than the wind, to jump over something that is impossible.
- The teacher takes the blame – if a child spills milk on the table and the others talk about it, the teacher spills milk too. So... the children see that making a little mistake is nothing to worry about, it can happen to anyone!

- Exaggeration – The teachers try out different ways to guide the children. Strongly, mildly, showing, telling, assisting, cruelly, hushing... Attention is paid to what the children experience when each method is used. After doing this the teachers discuss whether the experiment went perfectly, because they want to give the children the idea that they are in control of their own feelings and no one, not even the teacher, should have control over how they feel.

7. To have an honest discussion about mischief and bullying

- The conversation should be based on words that indicate activity. This means that the children should understand that they are “doing“ something they can change (i.e. not indicating any personal characteristics). They are responsible for their own actions and behavior, and what words they use can be easily changed.
- Beware of sentences that include negative messages and repeat them in a more positive way.
- Instead of revenge in conflict situations, the child learns to say how s/he felt about the behaviour of the other child. “I feel bad when you do that, so please stop!”

8. Take care of a friend

- Assisting younger pupils, e.g. when they are dressing to go outdoors, is a reality-related project that gives the child an opportunity to be a good role model and feel a sense of importance.
- Create little “plays“ for the children to practice comforting a crying friend or helping someone who is being bullied.
- A ‘pal room’ is a space in which a child can play with someone whom s/he wants to know better. Children who have practiced the skill of being decent friends can play in the ‘pal room’.

**Period 3 – Compliments and encouragement**

Using an appropriate compliment that focuses on what the child needs to practice is the most effective way to achieve success. Here are ideas for encouraging the children during the 3rd period.

**Tolerance** – “I can hear you are also taking the others’ point of view into consideration.“

**Helpfulness** – “Nice to see that you are helping each other. “

**Broadmindedness** – “I hear that you are looking at things from different angles. “

**Solidarity** – “You are doing well working together!“



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