

This packet contains

Free Kindergarten Lesson Plans

on the topics of

- Voting • Fairness • Problem-Solving •
- Election Day • MLK Jr. Day •

This packet contains five free kindergarten lesson plans to support active student learning about fairness, democracy, and voting.

Created by early childhood educator Karen Keesling, the lesson plans use *Equality's Call* and other picture books to help students explore important civics concepts as well as SEL competencies.

The lesson plans can be used individually or as a series. The five plans are centered on the theme of fairness. Topics covered are:

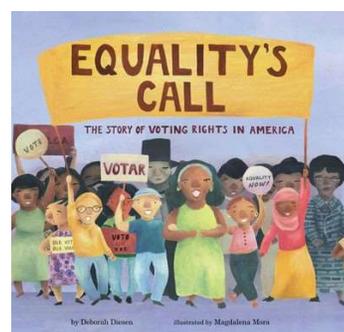
1. Voting
2. Fairness
3. Problem-solving
4. Election Day
5. MLK Jr. Day

Each plan includes virtual learning adaptations. An appendix provides suggestions for singing *Equality's Call*, an activity included in Lesson Plans 3 and 4.

You may make modifications to the lesson plans to tailor the plans to your students' needs. If you would prefer a Word document (rather than this PDF), please just email to request that.

We welcome your feedback on these lesson plans. We'd love to hear about your students' responses to the activities, as well as your comments and suggestions. Please send your feedback and input to deborah@deborahdiesen.com

Thank you!



Kindergarten Lesson Plan 1: Voting

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject
Kindergarten/Math
2. Common Core Standards
CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.C.6
Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies.
CCSS.Math.Content.K.CC.B.4
Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.
3. Learning Objective (s)
For students to engage in voting that will affect them and to practice conservation of quantity, comparing quantities and counting with one-to-one correspondence.
4. Assessment (s)
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral/physical responding, independent practice, etc.).
5. Description of Learning Activities:
Students will make a 3D graph connecting cubes (or whatever tool you use for counting days of the year e.g. straws, Popsicle sticks etc.) and practice voting by majority rule. They will count the number of connecting cubes cast and arrive at a decision.

Introductory Activity (Connection)

Ask students what they know about voting, have they ever voted before? Teacher will ask class to vote on something (giving at least two options) for the classroom (what book to read at the end of the week, what celebration day they should have e.g. Silly Sock Day, Wacky Wednesday etc., new classroom jobs, color play dough, name for class pet, how many kids in block area etc.)

Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will hold up his/her nametag and then place a connecting cube under one category. Teacher will hold up each child's nametag for them to read, come up and "cast their vote."

Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Each student will vote using his or her connecting cube. At the end teacher will ask students which category had the most votes? How do they know? Can they count them? Can you arrange the votes in different ways to show which has more (e.g. stack them up high, put them out long like a bar graph, Venn diagram etc.).

Conferring Small group Work

Have students turn and talk to discuss how it felt when they voted. How did the results feel? Did it seem fair? What can we do to make voting more fair? Teacher should check in with a few partnerships and take notes.

Virtual Learning Adaptations

-You can give out virtual stickers/emojis for online voting
-You can use poll everywhere, have students type a 1 or 2, give a zoom thumbs up, create a doodle etc. For book of the week voting, you can ask for write-in titles of books they'd like you to read, or present two options each week; you can also encourage parents to do this at home when they do bedtime reading. You could also do a Wacky Wednesday where everyone has to come dressed with something silly (e.g. socks on your head, upside down/inside out shirt) and as a fun icebreaker that day to have everyone guess what he or she did different.

Teacher Note

For added engagement either have as a job/one child/ or all children make stickers from name labels (or give out your own stickers) to each child who votes, to simulate real voting in the classroom and as a way of keeping track of who's voted.

You can also do adaptations like an ongoing secret ballot box (to take formative assessments e.g. how did you feel this morning e.g. put name tag into smiley face box or, frowning face and count votes and count, how did you feel at the end of the day, did you enjoy today's word study etc.), have it be a job for someone to count all the votes.

A great way to connect to literacy is to have an empty book basket out where students put in a book they'd like the teacher to read at the end of the week in the empty basket. The day before the reading, have the students vote on which book should be the special one to read. The ones that weren't chosen can be used the following weeks. This way voting will be a regular occurrence in the classroom.

Kindergarten Lesson Plan 2: Fairness

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject
Kindergarten/ELA
2. Common Core Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.5.c
Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g. note places at school that are colorful).
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.1
Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
3. Learning Objective(s)
Students will share own life knowledge and ideas and come to a group understanding of what fair means and what are tools we can use to make things fair.
4. Assessment (s)
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (note taking, shared writing, working document on Chart Paper, recording conversation if possible).
5. Description of Learning Activities:
Introductory Activity (Connection)
Teacher will show students the classroom “toolbox” and show that this box will be available throughout the year for students to use whenever they need. Teacher will take out sample tools (e.g. pencil, eraser, scissors, tape/glue sticks etc.), let children play with them, and ask what each of the tools do and how they help us. Teacher will explain that tools help us solve problems and also we have tools that are ideas and in our minds.

Teacher will then open up small/large group discussion(s) about what does fairness mean, has there ever been a time where you felt something wasn't fair?

Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will give example from own life about something that wasn't fair and how it felt. Will also give example of how they solved the problem and draw a picture/sentence that represents the tool as well as names it (e.g. it's not fair that other classes get more paper supplies than ours does. It's frustrating that they get more because we need the same amount. Scissors/erasers won't help me get it so I

used a tool from my mind, an idea. I wrote a letter to the principal/parents/business asking for donations, draws a picture of writing a letter, writes the tool name as “letter writing”.)

Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Students will do a turn and talk with a partner discussing something that wasn't fair, how it felt and a tool/idea they used to solve the problem. There are no wrong or right answers, students should come up with whatever is meaningful to them (e.g. I never get to be the good guy at recess, my parent makes me go to bed at the same time as my little sibling so I asked them to change my bedtime-talking/asking for change etc.)

Conferring Small group Work

Teacher will go around to each partnership and ask them to make a picture/word label (if children are able to) of their tools for the toolbox (teacher may have to take notes to write word of tool on back or make list of what each child did for reference later). Students will then deposit their picture/word label of their “tool” in classroom “toolbox.”

Virtual Learning Adaptations

Teacher can still facilitate this conversation online (beginning with asking children to bring a tool e.g. a spoon, that they use at home to the lesson and how they use that tool), and then ask children to raise hands to speak to share their experiences about fairness or to have these conversations with their families at home. The picture/sentence of how to deal with fairness can be done as a homework assignment or in virtual class time with students sending teacher their work or sharing their ideas in conversation for all to see.

Teacher Note

A nice way for added student engagement is for students to each make their own toolboxes (out of paper, cardboard, shoe boxes, popsicle sticks etc.) and/or to decorate the main class toolbox).

If you plan on doing Lesson 3, make sure box is big enough to incorporate big tools for later.

Connections to Text

Check Kindergarten texts and pull out instances from books of something that was unfair instead of or in addition to teacher's own model of something that wasn't fair (e.g. in *Equality's Call* women and people of color weren't given the right to vote, or in *The Story of Ruby Bridges* it's not fair that all the other children stopped going to school because of her skin color).

Kindergarten Lesson Plan 3: Problem-Solving

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject
Kindergarten/Literacy
2. Common Core Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.K.6
Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.
3. Learning Objective (s)
For students to expand toolbox of ways they can solve problems and make connections from self to text.
4. Assessment (s)
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.). Teacher will then confer with or offer support to 1-2 students, and take anecdotal notes with regards to the lesson objective and students' individual goals.
5. Description of Learning Activities
Introductory Activity (Connection)
Teacher will pull out toolbox and pull out tools for children to look at/play with. Teacher will then explain that sometimes when really big things seem unfair we need big tools that involve a lot of people. When a lot of people use big tools, it helps make big changes (e.g. protests, petitions, letter writing, voting).

Teaching Point and Modeling
Teacher will introduce *Equality's Call* and ask students to go on a tool treasure hunt as they do a picture walk*. Teacher will then either read book or sing (see appendix at the end of this lesson plan packet as well as a sample audio file on web site) the book and ask children to stand up and march in place if they see or hear a tool being used. Teacher will model standing up and marching for voting on p.3 (illustration of green background with founding fathers) and relate to children's prior personal experience by voting from Lesson Plan 1 or in PK for play dough color or jobs for classroom etc. Teacher will ask children to show with their fingers what letter to use for "voting" then do shared writing of letter V (eliciting letter from children by

emphasizing initial consonant sound in voting) teacher can then write rest of word (either on sentence strip or sticky note) voting and put it on the side.

Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

As teacher prompts on each page if they hear of any tools being used, teacher will pull out different talking points along the way e.g. what is marching and why is it a tool, marching alone or in a big group? Why is it a big tool? Teacher and class will make a list (using multiple sticky notes or sentence strips) of big tools using shared writing.

Conferring Small group Work

In small groups, children will draw large-scale pictures (you can use brown paper that comes in box packages, or have students tape a few sheets together) to go with big tools listed on the treasure hunt. Teacher will go around to ask questions and check for understanding of meaning. Students' pictures, with words (from sticky notes/ sentence strips) will be deposited into toolbox at the end of the lesson.

Virtual Learning Adaptations

If toolbox from prior lesson was done as a document, Teacher can use share screen of tools generated from previous lesson for review. Alternatively if teacher made physical toolbox, teacher can pull out previous tools on screen).** Teacher can then do picture walk and ask students to type in initial consonant sound for Voting. As teacher reads/or sings the book, have students put a thumbs up emoji every time they want teacher to stop. Whole class can stand up and march in place every time they find a tool. Teacher can assign illustrations for homework and later compile them into the toolbox.

Teacher Note

*A picture walk is when you lead the children through the story by only looking at the illustrations and eliciting from them what they think is happening in the story. It is a great way to practice pre-literacy skills.

**For added engagement, add drama, similar to a magic box kind of lesson.

Teacher can vary different ways of adding physical engagement to the read-aloud that ideally relate to the tools mentioned in *Equality's Call*.

The on-going voting experience from Lesson Plan 1 can be repeated with multiple different big and small tools in the toolbox. E.g. if students come up with the idea of consensus, give them a chance to decide that way. Let them try all the different tools and gradually draw out the negatives and positives of each one.

Kindergarten Lesson Plan 4: Election Day

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject
Kindergarten/ELA
2. Common Core Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.10
Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.7
With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).
3. Learning Objective (s)
To Learn about the importance of Election Day and voting
4. Assessment (s)
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. question/observing, taking notes on Chart Paper and students acting out text)
5. Description of Learning Activities:
Introductory Activity (Connection)
Teacher will first do a picture walk of *Equality's Call* and see what children notice. Teacher will then either sing *Equality's Call* or read the book. (For singing suggestions, see appendix at the end of this lesson plan packet.)

Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher will point out that today is Election Day and ask children what happens on Election Day, what they know about it, and why is it important. Teacher can take a poll to see if any children have gone with their parents to vote. Explain that class has been discussing how things aren't fair and teacher will explain that one thing that that isn't fair is that voting happens when most parents are at work or how often if you're a person of color you have to wait longer than other people or how women weren't allowed to vote. Bring out the toolbox and ask students what tools they would use from the toolbox to fix the problems (e.g. model, I would write a letter to ask if voting could be changed to a weekend or to voting by mail, or protest to change the rules so that once you can drive a car, you can vote too).

Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

In Small groups/partners students will decide on a tool to make voting more fair and why. Students will then act out small scene of how they would use the tool for the rest of the class.

Conferring Small group Work

As groups work on their skits, teacher will go around and ask them why they picked the scene that they did. If teacher has permission, teacher may record the skits for children to watch later on.

Virtual Learning Adaptations:

Instead of working in pairs, teacher can ask each child to work individually on their own scene. Children can record scenes on computer as homework and whole class can watch video.

Teacher Note

For added engagement (and if possible) teacher can have children see voting booth set up the day before Election Day as an in-school field trip.

Really focus on the emotions behind voting. How does it feel when you win, when you lose? How does it feel to know that it's not fair for everyone? Explain that we still have a lot of work to do, that it's everyone's job to make things fairer.

Kindergarten Lesson Plan 5: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Lesson Plan created by Karen Keesling

1. Target Grade/Subject
Kindergarten/ELA
2. Common Core Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.10
Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.K.7
With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).
3. Learning Objective (s)
Students will learn about the history of the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
4. Assessment (s)
The teacher will gauge participation and understanding by using a combination of techniques (e.g. modeling, questioning/observation, guided practice, oral responding, independent practice, etc.).
5. Description of Learning Activities:
Introductory Activity (Connection)
It is recommended that teachers spend time days before the actual day reading the stories of *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Johnny Rae Moore, *Equality's Call* by Deborah Diesen and *I Am Rosa Parks* by Brad Meltzer and explain how today is Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and we celebrate how he helped change the rules to make them more fair.

Teaching Point and Modeling

Teacher should pull out points that weren't fair (but have been changed) and try to have children imagine if those were still true today (e.g. couldn't sit wherever you like on the bus, couldn't go to the same school together if skin color was different).

Guided Practice (Active Engagement)

Teacher will facilitate whole group, having students act out the story of Rosa Parks not giving up her seat on the bus, and leading into protests.

Conferring Small group Work

In small groups, students discuss in small groups what their favorite parts of the story were and why. Teacher will go around and confer/take notes. If applicable, teacher will explain that protests are another tool (you can tie this to the toolbox lessons if you did these prior) that people use to make things fair. Explain how things still aren't fair today and so a lot of people are using protests to try to change the rules just like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the rest of the civil rights movement.

Virtual Learning Adaptation

Instead of acting out the civil rights movement, as a whole class, teacher will read the books mentioned above and will show the video clips in the Teacher Note below. Teacher will facilitate a class discussion about what they would say to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr./Rosa Parks/Ruby Bridges and why. How would they feel to be a part of the movement and why?

Teacher Note:

Inevitably students are curious to know what happened and why/how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. died. You can judge for yourself how comfortable you and your class are in discussing it (it is a very scary reality and many children might very well have already discussed with their families today). You can create space for students to discuss their ideas about what happened and how they feel. Try to let the children talk as much as possible, with you just listening/facilitating.

For added engagement (and vet for appropriateness) show online video clips of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream Speech", and the Montgomery bus protests. You can also explain that it's not only adults who fight to make changes (read about Ruby Bridges, children's march in Oakland for Black Lives Matter, show videos of Greta Thunberg etc.).

Appendix: Singing *Equality's Call*

Notes from Karen Keesling

Benefits of music in the classroom:

Early Childhood Educators often joke that their classrooms are like musicals. There are songs for everything from cleaning up to sitting down to saying goodbye, but all of this is practiced with good reason.

Music, chants and songs not only help with word recall (which is great for early literacy and language development especially, for children for whom English is a second or third language), but also reduce anxiety¹, help children's brains develop faster² and help children learn in so many other areas (such as math, gross and fine motor skills, emotional and social skills). If you think back to how you learned the alphabet (a random bunch of words that don't have meaning when you can't read) your first memory is probably singing the song. Music is linked to emotional memory which lasts forever. As children develop fluency and new vocabulary, it frees them up to tackle the hardest part of reading, comprehension. Yet music helps with comprehension too. If you think to the Star Spangled Banner, the crescendos at "the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air" help give meaning to the idea of something up high.

Similarly, many children experience different learning styles. Music can employ many styles; reading lyrics or seeing a book/illustrations made of a song stimulates visual learners. Hearing a melody/or song helps aural learners. Singing the song itself will benefit oral learners and dancing or doing hand movements will appeal kinesthetic learners. Music incorporates multi modal learning and often combines many of these different learning styles which will allow many students to access the content better.

But....I'm not musical and can't carry a tune:

It's scary to put yourself out there, but given the benefits of music in the classroom it's a shame to forego using it. No one is saying to go out and perform karaoke, but singing in front of your students may help your perfectionist students to know that it's okay to try things, even if you're not the best at them.

Besides helping to model for them, young children are egocentric, meaning they're thinking more about themselves than how you sound. We're often our own worst critics, be kind to yourself. You can always work your way up to singing. There are many books that are made out of songs already (e.g. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, *Puff the Magic Dragon*, *This Land is Your*

¹ <https://www.ucf.edu/pegasus/your-brain-on-music/>

² <https://news.usc.edu/102681/childrens-brains-develop-faster-with-music-training/>

Land etc.). You can play the songs for your students and show them the book in time with the music. You can also pick books that are in rhyme or when you read them, naturally have great rhythm or a call and response built into them (e.g. *The Pout Pout Fish*, *Max Found Two Sticks*, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* etc.). Then as you get more comfortable try using common tunes to chants or your intended learning points (e.g. Happy Birthday melody for months of the 12 months of the year or Skip To My Lou to count how many fingers on two hands etc.).

Lastly, if you're uncomfortable with singing then try chanting. The rhythm and beat will still help give many of the benefits of musical learning. You can have your children make up dance moves or hand movements to go with it to enhance comprehension (especially for you English Language Learners). The most important thing is that it should be fun and spark joy for you and your students!

So...why this melody for *Equality's Call*:

Like the Star Spangled Banner example above, the melody is designed to help give meaning to the words. The slowing down before the refrain of "a right isn't right" and the chanting part of it are to help draw attention to the importance of those lines and mimic protest calls.

Go ahead, give it a try!