

I-Messages

Level of difficulty: 1
Recommended age:
 > 8 years.

Objectives:

- Understand I-messages.
- Practice using I-messages.

Summary: Students learn how to use I-messages and analyze examples of them. They reflect on how I-messages are used in class and decide on a collective goal for using them as a way to improve communication.

Time: 15 min.

Lesson Type: Indoors, short activity.

Group Size: Any size as one large group.

Materials: Photocopies of the Appendix.

Instructions

- Explain to the class what an I-message is and what is meant by it
- Individually, instruct students to fill in Appendix 5.8.4
- Review their work
- Discuss a time when a conflict arose in class and students used you-messages. Have students think about how I-messages could've been used instead.
- Have students agree to use only I-messages from now on. Assist the class understand how to change from speaking in you-messages to I-messages when disputes arise and people get angry. Encourage students to remind their classmates when they're not speaking in I-messages. It may be helpful to keep track of wrong (you) and correct (I) messages in a list. Have the class agree on a goal, e.g. that no one shall slip up more than 10 times, and modify it depending on progress.

Debrief and Conclusions

Questions:

- In moments of tension, do you notice when others speak in I-messages versus you-messages? How is it you notice?
- How does it make you feel to speak in I-messages?
- How is it different to communicate in I-messages?

Tips for the facilitator

For more information on activities for communication and active listening, see the Resource Centre for Games and Group Dynamics under Education for Peace at www.escolapau.org/programas/dinamicas.htm (in Spanish and Catalan).

Get involved

Encourage students to speak respectfully and empathetically to each other. Insist they use I-messages, particularly in moments of tension.

Appendix I-Messages

Recall the case of Alexia and Peter



Basketball or soccer?

Peter and Alexia have been friends for a long time. Today they're in the playground playing basketball and are getting along well. After playing together a bit, Peter suggests they switch to soccer. Alexia doesn't want to change. Peter takes the school's ball and goes to look for others to play with, leaving Alexia alone.

What would you say to Peter if you were Alexia?

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How would you say it in I-messages?

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What would you say to Alexia if you were Peter?

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How would you say it in I-messages?

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