



Teaching Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship can and should be taught to children beginning at a very early age. It is natural to think of learning about sportsmanship within the context of physical education and athletics, but sportsmanship is universal and has applications to every aspect of our daily lives. Therefore, it is vital that the components of sportsmanship be taught and used in the classroom as well as the playing field.

In this section titled “Lesson Plans” we have provided ready to use activities for teaching children about sportsmanship. Use them as they are presented, or use them to help you discover some original ideas that will work well in your particular situation.

It is our approach that in teaching sportsmanship it is necessary to break it down into its various components. Sportsmanship, therefore, can be thought of as providing encouragement, being honest, playing by the rules, respecting the feelings of others, playing under control, using teamwork, and being cooperative. For students to fully comprehend, use, and internalize these characteristics, they must have a complete understanding of what they mean. In these lesson plans, each of these components is taught separately and each is clearly defined in terms of what does it mean, what does it look like, what does it sound like, and how does it feel. This approach touches upon the physical, cognitive, and affective domains in the instructional process.

The activities presented here include games that can be played in the gymnasium or playground as well as written work that can be incorporated into a student's physical education portfolio, language arts portfolio, or as part of a bulletin board display. Rubrics are provided for assessment purposes. It is our hope that you will use these activities in your setting to help our young people appreciate the importance of sportsmanship and as a consequence become good decision makers in their interpersonal relationships.