

# REFERENCE SHEET

# EMPATHY



## THEME DEFINITION

### Building a common understanding

Empathy is the ability to notice how others are feeling, understand their perspective, and respond with care—while also respecting your own feelings and boundaries. This theme helps students recognize that empathy supports thoughtful and respectful choices in everyday situations.



## WHY IT MATTERS

### Why this theme is relevant for students

Empathy plays a key role in friendships, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Learning about empathy helps students better understand others' feelings, manage strong emotions, and respond in ways that strengthen positive relationships.



## SKILLS IN ACTION

### What students are invited to practice

#### Notice Feelings and Perspectives

Pay attention to how others might be feeling and why.

#### Balance Empathy and Boundaries

Understand that being empathetic does not mean ignoring personal needs or limits.

#### Respond with Care

Choose words and actions that are respectful and supportive.

#### Reflect After Interactions

Consider how words or actions may have affected others.



## CONCRETE IMPACT

### Possible changes teachers may notice over time

- Pauses before reacting during conflicts, using words instead of actions or raised voices
- Greater awareness of others' emotions and needs, especially when a peer appears upset or left out
- Increased active listening, turn-taking, and effective collaboration during group activities



## CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

### Video lesson descriptions

#### 1. Accepting Different Beliefs

When Kai invites Isabel to his birthday BBQ, special requests begin to pile up. The situation encourages reflection on empathy, flexibility, and personal boundaries.

#### 2. Leading With Kindness

Tatiana struggles with disappointment after losing a lead role. Isabel must decide how empathy can guide her response.

#### 3. Responding with Compassion

Isabel reacts strongly to an unexpected guest, and Tatiana's frustration shows how a lack of empathy can strain friendships.

#### 4. Understanding Empathy

Tatiana reflects on the basic principles of empathy, helping students connect feelings, perspectives, and thoughtful responses.



### QUICK PROMPTS

#### Flexible, theme-level discussion questions

How can we tell how someone else might be feeling?

What could you do if you feel upset but want to be kind?

How can empathy help keep friendships strong?



### WATCH OUT FOR...

#### Common misconceptions or facilitation challenges

Believing empathy means always agreeing or giving in

Expecting students to manage strong emotions without clear modeling

Oversimplifying situations where feelings and needs conflict

Pressuring students to share personal experiences



### SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS

#### Ideas for accessibility, comfort, and inclusion

##### Model Empathetic Language

Practice simple phrases together (e.g., "I see you're upset," "How can I help?" "I need a break right now.").

##### Use Visuals and Emotion Cues

Refer to facial expressions, tone of voice, or emotion charts to support understanding.

##### Practice Responses Through Guided Role Play

Use the Role Play activity in the platform so students can practice safe, respectful responses without personal disclosure.

##### Reinforce That Empathy Includes Boundaries

Remind students that caring about others does not mean ignoring their own feelings or limits.