

Me and the World – Me and My Emotions

Empathy – Understanding and Respecting the Feelings of Others

Lesson Plan

1. Theme: Me and My Emotions: Empathy as Understanding, Respect, and Care for Others

Key thematic axes: Personal identity and social identity, Emotional awareness and perspective-taking, Empathy and respect, Responsible behavior, Peaceful communication, Understanding oneself and others

2. Grade: 4th Grade (Primary Education)

3. Target Group: Students attending a Greek primary school in a multicultural and multilingual environment, including children from Muslim families and diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds.

4. Lesson Type: This is a conceptual, experiential, and values-oriented lesson, not focused on psychological terminology or assessment, but on understanding empathy as a social and emotional skill in everyday life.

Lesson aimed at:

introducing empathy as the ability to understand and respect others' feelings

developing perspective-taking and emotional awareness

fostering respectful, supportive, and peaceful social interaction

5. Duration: 45 minutes

6. Key Terms and Concepts: empathy, emotion, feeling, perspective, understanding, respect, kindness, support, body signals, facial expression, tone of voice, self-control, peaceful behavior

7. Pedagogical Methods:

Teacher-guided discussion

Visual and situational learning

Case-based reasoning

Role-play and guided dramatization

Drawing and written reflection

Dialogue and collective reflection

8. Teaching Aids (Means)

Emotion and empathy cards (faces and situations)

Illustrated stories showing social interactions

Whiteboard / flipchart

Paper, colored pencils

Classroom empathy chart

Power Point Presentation

9. Goals

Educational Goals

Students will learn to:

- ✓ Understand what empathy means

- ✓ Recognize emotions in others

- ✓ Understand that people may feel differently in the same situation

Formational Goals

Students will:

- ✓ Develop empathy and perspective-taking

- ✓ Respect different emotional reactions

- ✓ Practice supportive and kind responses

✓ Strengthen peaceful communication and cooperation

10. Cross-Curricular Connections: Citizenship Education, Ethics and Values Education, Language Development, Social Studies, Art Education, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

11. Expected Results

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

✓ Explain empathy in their own words

✓ Recognize emotions and needs in others

✓ Suggest empathetic responses to everyday situations

✓ Demonstrate respectful and supportive behavior

12. Preparation for the Teacher

The teacher prepares:

visual materials related to emotions and social situations

short, age-appropriate case stories

guiding questions for discussion

Important teacher emphasis:

Participation is voluntary

There are no “wrong” feelings

Listening and understanding others are essential

13. Lesson Structure

A. Introduction – Activating Prior Knowledge (7 minutes)

Teacher action:

The teacher shows an illustration of two children in a social situation (e.g. one child looks sad, another is watching).

Teacher questions:

What do you think this child is feeling?

How do you know?

What might the other child be thinking?

Transition statement:

“Today we will talk about empathy – the ability to understand how others feel and to treat them with respect and care.”

14. Core Concepts – Theoretical Framework

What Is Empathy?

Empathy is the ability to understand and respect the feelings of another person. It means trying to see a situation from someone else’s point of view and recognizing how they might feel, even if we feel differently.

Empathy does not mean feeling the same emotion as another person. It means understanding, respecting, and responding with care.

Emotions and Perspective-Taking

People may experience different emotions in the same situation. This depends on their experiences, thoughts, and needs. Perspective-taking helps students understand that their own feelings are not the only possible feelings.

Developing empathy involves:

noticing emotional signals

imagining how another person might feel

accepting emotional differences

Recognizing Emotions in Others

Empathy begins with emotional awareness. Students learn that emotions can be recognized through:

Facial expressions

Body language

Tone of voice

Behavior and reactions

The lesson emphasizes that not all emotions are visible. Some people hide their feelings. Empathy requires patience, kindness, and careful observation.

Empathy and Respect

Empathy is closely connected to respect. Respect means accepting others' feelings without judging or mocking them. It also means listening and responding in a calm and supportive way.

Students learn that empathy:

reduces conflict

strengthens friendships

supports cooperation

creates a safe and inclusive environment

Empathy, Emotions, and Behavior

A key concept in the lesson is the difference between understanding emotions and choosing actions.

Understanding how someone feels helps us choose kind and responsible behavior.

For example:

A classmate feels sad → we can offer help

A classmate feels angry → we can give space and speak calmly

Empathy guides behavior toward peaceful solutions rather than conflict.

The lesson emphasizes that emotions are universal, even if people express them differently. Empathy allows students to connect beyond language, culture, or religion.

15. Pedagogical Notes for the Teacher

Pedagogical principles:

Avoid emotional judgment

Avoid forced sharing

Respect family values

Use neutral, inclusive examples

16. Practical Activities

Activity 1: “What Is the Feeling?”

The teacher presents a picture or short story.

Students answer:

What might this person be feeling?

What signs help us understand?

Purpose: Develop emotional awareness and empathy.

Activity 2: “How Would You Feel?”

Students hear a situation and answer:

How might this person feel?

Would everyone feel the same?

Purpose: Develop perspective-taking.

Activity 3: “What Can We Do?”

Students suggest empathetic responses:

What could help this person?

What would show kindness?

Purpose: Connect empathy to action.

Activity 4: Drawing or Writing – “An Empathetic Moment”

Students draw or write about a time when:

someone helped them

or they helped someone else

Sharing is optional.

17. Conclusion – Reflection and Closure (5 minutes)

Reflection circle (voluntary):

Today I learned that empathy means...

One way I can show empathy is...

Teacher closing message:

“When we understand others’ feelings, we build peace, respect, and friendship.”

18. Optional Extensions

“Empathy of the Week” classroom focus

Peer support roles

Kindness journal

19. Variations – Role Play

Role Play: “Showing Empathy”

Students act out a simple situation and practice empathetic responses.

Focus: listening, calm communication, respectful behavior

20. Sources of Information

CASEL. (2020). What Is Social and Emotional Learning?

Council of Europe. (2018). Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

UNESCO. (2017). Social and Emotional Learning and Well-being

UNICEF. (2019). Emotional Well-being in Schools

Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional Intelligence