

Leading the Way: Decisions, Justice, and Inclusion

Lesson Overview

Target Age: 11 years old (Grade 5/6)

Time: 60-70 Minutes

Focus: This lesson bridges the gap between how groups make decisions and how leaders ensure those decisions are fair, just, and inclusive. Students will move from understanding "how" we choose to "who" we consider when leading.

Learning Objectives

- Identify and differentiate between Autocratic, Democratic, and Consensual decision-making styles.
- Apply a decision-making system to a real-world scenario.
- Define "Inclusive Leadership" and identify three ways to make a group feel just and fair.
- Demonstrate leadership skills by resolving a conflict using principles of equity.

Materials Needed

- Paper and colored markers
- Scenario Cards (included in lesson text)
- "The Fair Scale" handout (or a drawing of a balance scale)
- Timer
- Optional: Post-it notes

1. Introduction: The Captain's Dilemma (5 Minutes)

The Hook: Imagine you are the captain of a research ship in the middle of the ocean. Suddenly, the engine stops. You have three choices on how to fix it:

1. You bark an order and tell everyone exactly what to do immediately.
2. You ask everyone to vote on which tool to use.
3. You gather the crew in a circle and talk until everyone agrees on the safest plan.

Discussion: "Which one is 'right'? (Spoiler: It depends on how much time you have!) Today, we are going to master these styles and learn how to be the kind of leader people actually want to follow."

2. Recap: The Three Ways to Decide (10 Minutes)

(I Do / We Do)

Review the three styles using the "Pizza Metaphor":

- **Autocratic (The Boss Style):** One person decides for everyone. "*I am ordering Pepperoni. Period.*" (Fastest, but people might be unhappy).
- **Democratic (The Vote Style):** Most people win. "*Raise your hand for Pineapple. 5 vs 3, Pineapple wins!*" (Fair-ish, but the 3 people who hate pineapple are sad).
- **Consensual (The Team Style):** Everyone must agree or find a compromise. "*Let's get half-and-half so everyone is satisfied.*" (Slowest, but makes the strongest team).

Quick Check: Ask the student to shout out which style is best for: A) A fire drill, B) Picking a movie with friends, C) Planning a multi-million dollar NASA mission.

3. Application Activity: The Supply Crisis (15-20 Minutes)

(You Do)

The Scenario: Your group is building a community garden. You have \$100 left. Group Member A wants fancy flowers. Group Member B wants expensive organic soil. Group Member C wants a birdbath. You cannot afford all three.

The Task:

1. **Step 1:** Use the **Democratic** style. Vote on one item. How did the "losers" feel?
2. **Step 2:** Use the **Consensual** style. Try to find a way to make everyone 80% happy (e.g., cheaper soil, smaller flowers, and a homemade birdbath).
3. **Reflection:** Which decision led to a better garden? Which led to a happier team?

4. Leadership, Justice, and Inclusivity (15 Minutes)

(I Do / We Do)

What makes a leader "Great" instead of just "In Charge"?

- **Fairness vs. Equality:** *Equality* is giving everyone the same size box to stand on to see over a fence. *Fairness (Equity)* is giving the shortest person a taller box so everyone can actually see.
- **Inclusivity:** Making sure the person who is the quietest in the room is invited to speak. A leader's job is to "pass the microphone."
- **Justice:** Fixing the system so it works for everyone. (Instead of boxes, let's just fix the fence so it's see-through!)

Activity: "The Invisible Seat." Ask the student: "If we are planning a playground, who is usually forgotten? (e.g., kids in wheelchairs, kids who don't like loud noises, younger siblings). How does an *inclusive* leader bring them in?"

5. Main Activity: The Inclusive Leader's Blueprint (15 Minutes)

(You Do)

The Challenge: You are the leader of a new After-School Club. You have four members:

- **Sam:** Very loud, has lots of ideas, wants to be the boss.
- **Maya:** Very shy, but is an amazing artist.
- **Leo:** Uses a wheelchair and needs accessible spaces.
- **Zane:** Speaks English as a second language and sometimes takes longer to understand the rules.

Task: Create a "Club Charter" (a poster or list) that shows your leadership. It must include:

1. **A Decision-Making Rule:** How will you decide what the club does?
2. **An Inclusion Rule:** How will you make sure Zane and Maya are heard?
3. **A Justice Rule:** How will you ensure Leo can participate in every single activity?

Success Criteria: The plan must show a specific way to help each unique member succeed, not just a "everyone is treated the same" rule.

6. Conclusion: The Leadership Recap (5 Minutes)

- **Summary:** Being a leader isn't about being the loudest; it's about being the person who ensures the process is fair.
- **Recap Question:** "If you have to make a choice in 10 seconds, which decision-making style do you use?" (Autocratic). "If you want your team to stay together for a long time, which style is best?" (Consensual).
- **Final Thought:** How will you "pass the microphone" this week in your own life?

Assessment & Differentiation

Formative Assessment: Observe the "Supply Crisis" activity. Can the student explain *why* they chose a certain decision-making style?

Summative Assessment: Review the "Club Charter." Does it move beyond "being nice" and show actual strategies for equity (like providing translations for Zane or choosing a ground-floor room for Leo)?

Differentiation:

- **Scaffolding:** For students struggling with the concepts, provide "Role Cards" for the Club activity so they can physically see the needs of each person.
- **Extension:** For advanced learners, ask them to identify a real-world injustice in their community or a historical event and explain which decision-making style could have prevented it or helped solve it.