



## In the Aftermath 3–5

### Reach Out to Others

## LESSON PLAN 11

# Connections

After a disaster, children may find themselves far away from familiar surroundings and the people with whom they are comfortable. It is important to help them learn ways to make new friends and to begin to accept these new friends, in spite of possible differences. Moreover, children whose communities have welcomed newcomers must learn to accept and support new people.

### Key Terms and Concepts

acceptance	different	share
community	friendship	similar
compromise		

### Purposes

To help students find connections with others and understand and accept differences, as well as similarities

To help students find ways they can support their communities

### Objectives

The students will—

- Read *The Brand New Kid* by Katie Couric to begin a discussion on ways friends can be different and still be friends.
- Formulate a list of questions for *About Me* in order to list special things about themselves.
- Work in teams on *Similarities and Differences* to create Venn diagrams that illustrate similarities and differences that can be shared with the class.
- Classify characteristics as alike or different using a Venn diagram. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Write stories about entering a new situation where others know each other and you're "the brand new kid." (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Create classroom posters of words, pictures or place names that are unique to the family or school or community. (Linking Across the Curriculum)
- Choose and implement a "Hands On" project to reach out to new people in the community.
- Invite families to participate in a project. (Home Connection)



Visit the American Red Cross Web site  
at [www.redcross.org/disaster/masters](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters)



## In the Aftermath 3-5

LESSON PLAN 11  
Connections

### Activities

“Mix and Match Friends”

“Take Action”



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### LESSON PLAN 11 Connections

#### Materials

- *The Brand New Kid* by Katie Couric (Doubleday, 2000)
- *About Me*, 1 copy per student
- *Similarities and Differences*, 1 copy per student



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## “Mix and Match Friends”

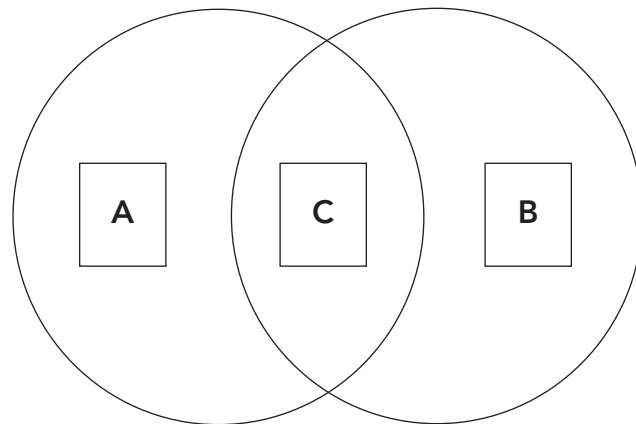
SET UP 10 minutes CONDUCT two 40-minute sessions

### Language Arts: Reading; Mathematics: Logic

1. Before the class begins, review *The Brand New Kid* or another book that illustrates these two truisms:
  - People may be different, but can still be taken in as part of a group of friends.
  - If you accept people who seem different, you may find they're not so different after all.

**TEACHING NOTE** This activity uses Venn diagrams to illustrate similarities and differences. If students are unfamiliar with Venn diagrams, complete a few in the class to help students understand the concept.

1. Draw a simple Venn diagram on the board.



2. Have students raise their hands if they have long hair. They are in set A. Have students raise their hands if they have short hair. They are in set B. Now, have students raise their hands if they have curly hair. They are in set C, the union of sets A and B.
3. Based on this activity, ask students to describe the purpose of a Venn diagram. (Answer: A Venn diagram illustrates the differences and similarities between two groups.)
4. Have students describe how they would use a Venn diagram to illustrate a group of girls and boys who play soccer. (Answer: All girls are in set A. All boys are in set B. All students who play soccer are in set C.) Challenge students to describe other possible sets and their unions.

Read aloud *The Brand New Kid* and have students talk about the book's message. (Answers will vary, but may include—People may look or talk differently than you do, but they can still be good friends who share many common interests. You shouldn't make fun of someone because that person



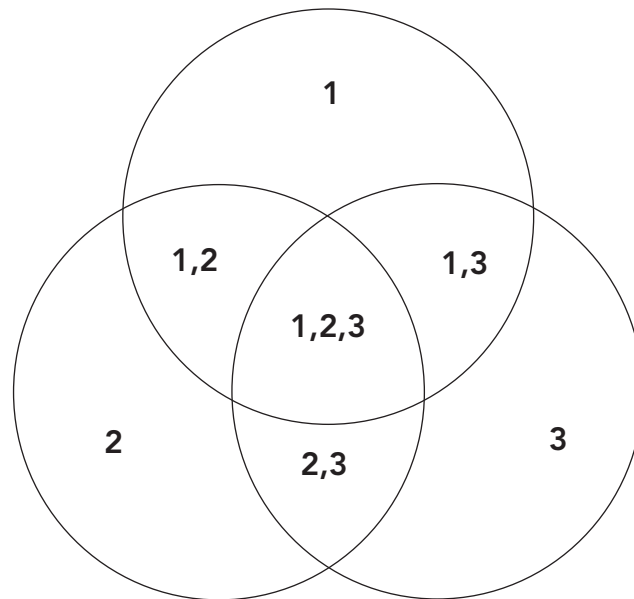
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is new or different. You might find that you share lots of interests.) Have students share some of their own experiences in making new friends or welcoming someone new into their groups.

Distribute *About Me*. As a class, determine three to five new questions to include in the survey on the activity sheet. Have students answer all the survey questions for themselves.

Divide the class in teams of three. Distribute *Similarities and Differences* to each group. Have teams review their answers to the survey and then, complete the diagram, illustrating the teams' similarities and differences.



Switch around the groups, distribute another copy of *Similarities and Differences* and have the groups repeat the process with new teammates.



#### Wrap-Up

Have the teams share the information with the class. Listen carefully to see that their evaluations of the Friendship Team Venn diagrams are clear and that

they draw positive conclusions.

- Are there more similarities than differences among the teams?
- Are there some areas where the students are most likely to differ? Why?
- Were students surprised by how much they have in common with each other?
- Are there some differences where students might compromise? For example: If one student likes to play baseball and the other student likes football, they could find another game they both like and play that instead.
- How might this activity help students accept differences?
- How might it help them make new friends?



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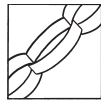
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(Answers will vary, but may include—I found new people who like the same things I do. I don't have a pet, but I would like to play with my new friends' dog. My partner is my best friend and there are lots of things that make us different, but we like each other anyway.)



Write the word “acceptance” on the chalkboard. Have students work together to create a class definition based on the discussions they have had about similarities and differences. Ask—  
Why is acceptance important to friendship? (Being friends means that you understand that you're not the same, but it's okay to be different. Real friends appreciate the differences, too. You can be different, but still be a member of a group of friends or a classroom group.)



#### Linking Across the Curriculum

**Mathematics; Social Studies: Geography; Science: Life Science**

Have students use Venn diagrams in different subject areas to illustrate similar and different characteristics. For example: In science, use a two-circle diagram to illustrate similarities and differences between reptiles and amphibians or a three-circle diagram to compare mammals, reptiles and amphibians. In geography, students might compare different regions, countries or cultures.

#### Language Arts: Writing

In *The Brand New Kid*, Katie Couric tells the story of a new student who has a hard time fitting in until others realize he's not so different. Encourage students to let their imaginations run wild as they write and illustrate stories about making friends with “The New Alien at School.”

#### Language Arts: Vocabulary; Social Studies: Culture

Communities, regions and generations all have special sayings, place names or words. For example, people from the southern United States might say “ya'll,” while some people in the northeast might say “you guys.” Students' grandparents may have said “cool” in the fifties, meaning something really good; however, for today's generation, the expression “that's really cold,” has a whole different meaning (mean, hard-hearted). Some places have nicknames, like “Buckhead,” the “French Quarter” or “The Loop.”



Have students generate a list of popular words, phrases and place names for their communities. They can continue adding to this list on a bulletin board entitled “It's Our Culture.” When new students join the community, have the class share the terms and meanings and ask the new students to share some of their own special words.



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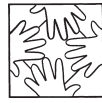
### LESSON PLAN 11 Connections

#### Materials

- Map of the community
- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers



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## “Take Action”

**SET UP** 10 minutes **CONDUCT** 45 minutes, plus implementation

**Social Studies: Geography; Social Studies: Communities and /Culture**

Help students feel part of the community by planning ways to have them lend a helping hand or welcome newcomers.

1. Using the map of the community, pinpoint your school. Have students locate where they live around the school. Have students work together to locate and pinpoint some community landmarks—a park, shopping area, library, etc.



**TEACHING NOTE** Turn this into an online activity by using interactive maps on the Web.

Google Maps: <http://maps.google.com>

Windows Live: <http://local.live.com>

2. Ask students to talk about what makes up their communities. Students may start with the physical location and description as defined by the map. Help students begin to think about the people who make up their communities. (Answers will vary, but may include—police, firefighters, teachers, politicians, bankers, clerks, cooks, road and sanitation workers, mechanics, factory workers, people who care for children or homes.) Have students talk about how each person on their lists supports his or her community.
3. Have students describe what would be missing in their communities if certain people were not part of it. Next, ask students to talk about how they help other people and their communities each day—from shoveling snow to being a school crossing patrol. (Answers will vary, but may include—Shoveling snow helps make the community safer. Being a school crossing guard helps keep people safe.)



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#### Wrap-Up

Listen carefully as students think up a list of activities they can do as a group to help their communities. Do students demonstrate an understanding of the needs of the community? Of the newcomers?

Here are a few ideas to get your class discussion started:

- Collect canned food items and donate them to a local food bank.
- Plant and take care of a vegetable garden. Celebrate the harvest by making soup and/or salad to share at school or take the harvest to a local shelter. (**Note:** Be sure to call the shelter in advance to find out if it accepts homegrown produce.)
- Plant a flower garden to make the school a more beautiful part of the community. Pick bouquets for special people who work at the school or who work or live in hospitals or senior citizens' homes. Deliver them with handmade cards.
- Create "Welcome" cards for people new to the community, especially those who have moved due to a disaster. (**Note:** Work with the school administration, community realtors or the local Welcome Wagon to find a list of newcomers.)
- Work with the school cafeteria to bag food items or make sandwiches for a local shelter. (**Note:** Call the shelter for scheduling and other suggestions.)
- Set aside a weekend to clean up trash on the playground or in a local park. Be sure to set up appropriate health and safety precautions, such as providing non-latex gloves and establishing procedures for students to call an adult when broken glass or other hazardous items are located.
- Conduct a penny drive, hold a bake sale or support a local fundraising activity whose proceeds are used to help the community—your local chapter of the American Red Cross, a nonprofit food bank, etc.
- Attend first aid classes. Your local chapter of the American Red Cross may be able to assist in teaching first aid skills to the class.
- Assemble "school chests" that provide basic school supplies for children living in areas that have been devastated by disaster. Contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross for information.



#### Home Connection

Use the Wrap-Up to select a class community project. As a class, determine the list of tasks that must be done to make the project successful. Send the list of tasks home to have families volunteer for planning, making phone calls, delivering signs or attending the event.



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# About Me

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Work with your class to create three to five new questions for the survey. Then, answer all of the questions and be ready to share your information.

1. My favorite time of year is: (circle one) winter spring summer fall.

2. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

3. My favorite color is \_\_\_\_\_.

4. My favorite holiday is \_\_\_\_\_.

5. In my family, we call our grandmother \_\_\_\_\_  
and our grandfather \_\_\_\_\_.

6. My favorite food is \_\_\_\_\_.

7. My favorite sport is \_\_\_\_\_.

8. I have \_\_\_\_\_ pets. My favorite animal is a \_\_\_\_\_.  
(number)

9. I was born in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(city/state/country)

10. My favorite book is \_\_\_\_\_.

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_





# Similarities and Differences

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Working in a team of three members, set up a Venn diagram that illustrates your similarities and differences. Place the name of a different member of your team inside each of the main circles. Then, compare answers to the “About Me” survey and write the answers in the proper segments of the diagram. In this way, you will show where answers are the same or different for each member of the group. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

