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Introduction to *Hands-On Social Studies*

**Program Introduction**

The *Hands-On Social Studies* program focuses on developing students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes through active inquiry, problem solving, and decision making. Throughout all activities, students are encouraged to explore, investigate, and ask questions in order to heighten their own curiosity about and understanding of the world around them.

**What Is Social Studies?**

Social studies is an interdisciplinary study that draws from such traditional disciplines as history, geography, political studies, and economics. It involves the examination of communities, both locally and globally. In essence, social studies helps students learn about the world around them.

Social studies also involves the development of concepts as well as skills of inquiry and communication. Students apply these skills to develop an understanding of their world and to enable them to make decisions and solve problems in everyday life.

**The Goals of Social Studies**

The *Hands-On Social Studies* program has been designed to focus on the goals of the Social Studies Curriculum as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (2004). These goals are:

1. To understand the basic concepts of social studies, history, and geography
2. To develop the skills, strategies, and habits of mind required for effective inquiry and communication, and for the application of the basic concepts of social studies, history, and geography to a variety of learning tasks
3. To relate the knowledge acquired through social studies and the study of history and geography to the world outside the classroom
4 Rules in School

Materials
- chart paper
- markers
- scissors
- glue
- paper (one piece per student)
- 2 picture cards (included) (You may wish to colour in these picture cards.) (1.4.1)

Activity
Begin the lesson by presenting students with situations related to school rules. For example: “How would you feel if...”
- you had your hand up to answer a question and someone else yelled out the answer?
- you were going down the slide on the playground and other children kept trying to climb up the slide?
- you went to get your snack from your lunch box and someone had taken it?

Discuss each of these situations, as well as others that you or the students create. Focus on how each situation would make students feel and how the situation could be changed. Explain to the students that we have rules in our school so that everyone can learn in a safe, happy environment.

Have the students brainstorm the various rules in your classroom and your school. Record these rules on chart paper. Once the list has been created, go back to the first rule and ask the students:
- Why do we have this rule?
- What might happen if we don’t follow this rule?

Continue down the list asking the same two questions for each rule listed. When all of the rules have been discussed, ask:
- Can a rule ever change?

Hold up the first picture card. Have the students look carefully at the picture and describe what they see. Ask:
- What do you think these students like to play at recess?
- Do you think it would be a good idea to play on the field this recess?
- Why wouldn’t it be a good idea?

Explain that even recess rules sometimes change. Most of the time, it is okay to play on the field, but when it is wet and muddy the rule sometimes changes: The students have to stay off the field and play on the black top.

Hold up the second picture card. Ask the students to look carefully at the picture and describe what they see. Ask:
- What is special about this little girl?
- Do you think she can go in the door where all the other students are lined up? Why not?
- How might this girl get into the school?

Explain that even though the rule for all the other students is that they line up on the stairs and go into the school through the big doors, the rule is changed for this little girl.

Look over the list of rules identified on the chart paper. Ask the students if any of the rules on your list might need to change for a special reason. Have the students identify the rule and explain when and why it might need to change.
Activity Sheet

Note: This is a two-page activity sheet. Students cut out the pictures from the second page and glue them on the first page.

Directions to students:
Cut out the eight pictures. Match the picture of the person breaking a rule with the picture of what happened when the rule was broken. Glue each pair on the sheet (1.4.2).

Extensions
- Discuss rules that the students have observed being broken in school. Have the students make posters to encourage other students in the school to follow the rules. Display these posters throughout the school.
- Make a classroom big book called Our Book of Classroom Rules. Have each student print one classroom rule on a piece of paper and draw a picture to illustrate the rule. Bind all of the pages together in a big book. You may wish to send the book home each night with a different student to make the parents aware of the classroom rules.
- Have students write in their journals about a time when they broke a rule. How did they feel? Introduce the term consequences, and have students discuss and write about the consequences of their actions.
- Discuss rules outside of school, such as in the home and community. Have students suggest why these rules are important and what the consequences are for breaking such rules.
- Read the story, The Boy Who Cried Wolf. Discuss the importance of telling the truth. Have the students describe the consequences of Peter's actions.
- Read stories associated with listening, such as The Cat Who Wore a Pot on Her Head by Jan Slepian and Ann Seidler and The Way It Happened by Deborah Zemke.
- Have students create and act out a skit about a rule being broken and the consequences.
- Explore how rules are adapted for students with special needs. Use resources such as Adventure Holiday by Sue A. Brearley and C. Black

Assessment Suggestion
Through individual conferences, have students identify three classroom rules. Ask them to explain the purpose of each rule and the consequences that result for not following the rule. Record results using the anecdotal record sheet on page 13.
Students at Recess
Students Lined Up After Recess
What Happens When Rules Are Broken?

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<th>Breaking a Rule</th>
<th>What Might Happen</th>
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