



Assuming Good Intentions

Discussion

Talk about what it means to assume someone has good intentions. There are times when others may hurt us physically or emotionally without intending to. But when we assume that someone has good intentions, we encourage empathy and a generous spirit, and we create opportunities for others to apologize or rephrase something with kindness. Leading questions help facilitate positive discussions, such as: Did that student cut me off in the lunch line just to make me frustrated? Did my friend ignore me to make me feel sad?

Assuming Good Intentions

Break students into small groups and choose several Assuming Good Intentions Dilemmas. Urge students to pay attention to their initial reactions, which may not take into account the other person's intention. Instead, encourage students to consider how their responses might change if they assume the best intentions of others.

1. On Monday morning while Janie was walking to her classroom, Steve, a classmate, bumped into her. Janie dropped her books on the ground and Steve did not stop to help her pick them up.
2. Nate and Juan were on their way to soccer practice. Juan's mom was in charge of the carpool that day, so they were riding with her. While she was driving, Juan's mom slammed on her brakes, yelled out "Hey!" and waved her hand at another car that cut in front of her.
3. Every day at lunch, Keisha and Gabby eat together and then play on the swings during recess. Today, Keisha sat down next to Gabby, who was silently eating her lunch. Keisha talked to her like she usually does, but Gabby ignored Keisha. During recess, Gabby wouldn't play on the swings, and instead sat quietly on a bench.
4. Marco's family went out to dinner on Friday night at a popular restaurant. Once they were seated, they had to wait a very long time for the server to come to their table. When the server arrived, he took their orders quickly and didn't even ask them what they wanted to drink. It took almost an hour for the food to arrive at their table, and Marco's order was wrong.
5. Natalie was so excited to wear the new jeans they got for their birthday. When they arrived at school, they were showing them off to the rest of their classmates. One classmate, Mariah, said they looked silly and that she didn't like them.
6. Mr. Encinas' 4th-grade class went on a field trip to have a picnic at the local park. During their lunch, Raymond and Claire noticed someone walking their dog along the path. When they bent down to pet the dog, they dropped some papers out of their bag. They continued walking without stopping to pick them up.
7. Isaiah and Brandon both tried out for the school basketball team. Brandon was so excited when he saw his name on the list of students who made the team! He had worked hard all summer practicing his skills. Isaiah did not make the team. When Brandon came up to him and said how excited he was to play basketball this year, Isaiah said he only made the team because Brandon is taller than him.
8. On a school trip, Shanna won't stop talking. She has the "right" answer to every question, and she tries to tell all the other students what to do. Lysette gets along well with Shanna at school, and she feels confused because Shanna is acting like a different person on this trip.
9. Marcus and Esther are members of a student club that volunteers to pick up litter on the side of the road on the weekend. On Saturday, when they are cleaning up, someone yells at them from a passing car, but they can't understand what was said.