

Middle School Scope and Sequence

Personal Safety and Consent, Grade 6

Introducing Consent

PURPOSE

Learning about consent in relationships can start early, preferably before young people are developing romantic relationships and starting to negotiate sexual activity. This activity introduces the concept of consent and bodily autonomy. Students will identify and describe when consent is and is not present and ways to communicate consent in non- sexual situations. They can then apply these skills in their friendships as well as in their romantic relationships as they evolve.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Be able to identify and communicate their own desires as well as how to say no
2. Understand that everyone has the right to their own likes and dislikes
3. Understand the concept of consent
4. Identify verbal and non-verbal cues around consent in non-sexual situations

LESSON SUMMARY

Activities	Minutes	Materials and Preparation Checklist
Introduction	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce the concept of consent. <input type="checkbox"/> Use chart paper or white board to write down responses to the definition of consent.
Activity A: Let’s Make a Pizza	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Copy the pizza worksheet for each small group of 2-3 students. <input type="checkbox"/> Colored pencils (optional)
Activity B: Identifying non-verbal consent	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review and select images that illustrate non verbal consent or lack of consent. <input type="checkbox"/> Either set up projector for viewing images or print and cut out the images for small groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Hand out YES and NO cards, one set for each person or for small groups.
Final Wrap Up	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare exit slips or have notecards available for exit slip.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome Class and introduce lesson by saying,

Today we are going to take a look at how to know if someone is agreeing (or not agreeing) to something we want to do. This is also known as consent. Has anyone heard of the word consent? What does consent mean to you?

Give students time to answer this question to see if they are comfortable responding and have a basic knowledge of the term consent.

Say, *Consent is a term used in many different settings. For instance, in order to go on a field trip or play on a sports team at school, a parent or guardian needs to sign a consent form giving permission for you to participate. Today we're going to talk about consent which we'll define as words or actions that show that someone really wants to do something. Consent is commonly referred to when talking about sexual situations, but that's not the only time that we can express consent or take responsibility in finding out if someone else is giving consent.*

ACTIVITY A: LET'S MAKE A PIZZA

(this activity is adapted from ETR's Teaching Affirmative Consent)

This activity provides students with the opportunity to work with other students to identify or express consent in a fun, non-sexual related activity.

Form students into groups of 2-3 – give one pizza worksheet to each small group–

1) Introduce the activity and give directions

Say, *Your task in your small groups is to create a pizza that all of you would like (and be able to) eat. There are a few rules you need to follow.*

- *The first is that your pizza needs to include at least 3 toppings.*
- *When someone suggests a topping, the others cannot communicate with words—like yes or no. You have to find non-verbal ways to communicate which toppings you want or would be okay with, or that you don't want.*
- *You can write down your toppings on the pizza worksheet, or if you'd like, you can also draw the toppings you all agree on.*
- *You have 5 minutes to create your pizza.*

Check to see if students understand the directions. You may want to ask students to repeat back the directions to you.

If all is clear, give students 5 minutes to create their pizzas. You might want to walk around the room to make sure students are following the directions and making progress.

2) Share their pizza creations

Depending on time, have all or just a few groups share their pizza creations and the toppings they could all agree, or consent, to.

3) Process the activity

Use the following discussion questions to process the activity.

- *How easy was it for your groups to come up with a pizza that you could all agree on? What made it easy? What made it difficult?*
- *If you had been able to use your words and not just non-verbal responses, how would that activity been different?*
- *Why do you think we did that activity?*

Say, *That fun activity gave you the chance to work with others to make sure everyone agreed with the pizza you created. When deciding toppings, each of you had to communicate what you wanted or didn't want on the pizza. Some of you may have had strong opinions about the toppings (for instance, if it was something you were allergic to or really didn't like). For others, maybe you didn't have strong preferences and could agree, even if it wasn't your first choice.*

It was the responsibility of the person suggesting the pizza topping to make sure the others agreed, or consented, to that topping. The same is true when you're in relationships (with your friends or in romantic relationships). If you're the person suggesting an activity, you need to check in, to make sure the other person is giving their consent.

ACTIVITY B: IDENTIFYING WHEN CONSENT IS PRESENT

(This activity is adapted from Vermont Consent Campaign, www.vtnetwork.org)

This activity continues the exploration of identifying non-verbal cues for when someone might be consenting or not consenting. Prepare the slides or pictures to show the students.

1) Transition to Activity B

Say, *We just discussed how non-verbal communication about what we want or don't want can sometimes lead to confusion and miscommunication. Next we're going to test your skills at picking up on non-verbal cues using a set of pictures of people doing things.*

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: This activity may need adapting for students who have developmental or physical disabilities that make it difficult to read body language. Other options may be having people demonstrate sounds and body language that mean yes and no and discussing as a group together.

2) Explain the activity

Say, *In pairs, you are going to use your Yes and No cards to guess whether it looks like consent is or is not present in some images I will show you.*

– Pass out YES and NO cards, to each student or to pairs or groups of three–

3) Show the images, one slide at a time.

Show the photos one at a time and ask students to put up their **Yes** or **No** cards based on what they observe. Process their responses asking:

- *What about the image made you choose **Yes** or **No**?*
Responses may include: the look on their face, their body position, etc.
- *How could someone know if the other person was agreeing with, or consenting to, the situation?*
Responses may include: they might notice the other person's body language or expressions; they could always ask if they aren't sure.

4) Add communication to the images

Return back to a few of the photos and ask students to come up with some conversation between the people in the images that either allow them to either voice their feelings or check in with the other person for agreement or consent.

5) Process the activity

After viewing the images, ask these questions:

- *Based on our discussion, how easy is it to know for sure whether or not there is consent based solely on someone's body language and non-verbal cues?*
Possible responses or prompts: Sometimes it can seem obvious by their actions; but you may also misinterpret their cues; It can be difficult to know for sure.
- *Why is it important to pay attention and check in with someone's non-verbal cues?*
Possible responses or prompts: Because someone may not want to do something and not want to say anything; if they seem uncomfortable with their body language, it could mean they aren't really agreeing or consenting, even if they aren't saying so.
- *What does someone need to do in order to be sure the other person in these kinds of situations is feeling okay or consenting with what is going on?*
Possible responses or prompts: the only way to be sure is to ask them instead of assuming they feel one way or the other.

FINAL WRAP UP

1) Close the lesson by summarizing the key learnings

Say, *It can be difficult to tell what someone wants or doesn't want by their body language or non-verbal communication. Even so, it's important to observe and pay attention to those cues. To make sure consent is present in situations remember these three things:*

- 1. Listen to one another's words and observe their body language. Even if they aren't saying no, their body language may seem like they aren't comfortable with the situation.*
- 2. Say what you like or don't like and how you feel. Someone else might not know how you're feeling unless you tell them.*
- 3. Respect others boundaries. We can't always tell what someone really feels or wants unless we stop what we're doing and ask them.*

2) Assess student understanding of consent

Hand out notecards or slips of paper and ask students to answer the following:

- What is one thing that you can do to check to make sure someone is agreeing or consenting to an activity?
- What is one thing you can say to someone else if you are not feeling comfortable with or agreeing to an activity or situation?

YES and NO CARDS

Yes

No

Yes

No

Yes

No

Yes

No









