



Sport of the Month



December

This month's theme: **inclusion**

Goals:

- Students will understand the meaning of *inclusiveness* and *acceptance*.
- Students will understand how including others positively impacts their community.
- Students will be able to identify ways in which they can promote inclusion and acceptance.

Week 1:

Before students can participate in a discussion of inclusion and acceptance, they need to understand what these words mean. Lead a brainstorming session in which you ask students the questions listed below. During your discussion, make notes and record ideas and questions on the board.

- Have you heard the word *accept*? For example, what does someone mean when they say, "Will you accept my gift?" What are you doing when you accept something someone gives you?
- There's another meaning for *accept*, too. What might someone mean if they say, "Will you accept my friendship?" Is acceptance similar to welcoming?
- What does it mean to accept another person? Would you agree that accepting someone into your group is the same as including them? Give examples of times when you have included someone in a group or activity or when someone included you.
- Why is it important to include all kinds of people into your group of friends? Is a class or school better off when it includes lots of different types of people?

When you are finished asking these questions, take some time to more fully discuss ways in which it is a positive thing to include diverse people in a group.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 3–5



Alpine Skiing in Special Olympics

Alpine skiing is a demanding sport, and athletes must be in good physical condition to compete successfully and safely. Also called downhill skiing, alpine skiing requires endurance, strength, and quickness. Special Olympics offers cross-country skiing as well.

How do Special Olympics activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

"Some of the most positive outcomes came through the students working together."



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Week 2:

Take Action!

- Have a mix-it-up day at lunch! Randomly assign every student a table to sit at during lunch. This provides students with a great opportunity to meet new people, share ideas, and start friendships with students they might not otherwise get to know.

Gather your students and, after a brief reminder about the value of inclusion and acceptance, prepare them for a game of Frozen Bean Bag. Here's how it works: All players have a bean bag that they balance on their head. Students walk around the designated playing area trying not to drop their bean bags. If a student drops his bean bag, he is frozen. To be freed, another player must try to replace the bean bag on the frozen student's head without dropping her own bean bag. When the game is finished, discuss how this activity related to the ideas of inclusion and acceptance. Point out how students benefited when everyone helped each other, rather than just certain friends and classmates helping.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 3–5



December events:

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Week 3:

This week, review the game of Frozen Bean Bag from Week 2. Your students are sure to have plenty of memories of how much fun they had and perhaps how silly the game was. Remind them that an important part of the game was cooperation—helping each other with their bean bags. Remind them that if they didn't include everyone in the game, they might not have gotten help from someone when they most needed it. Next, give each child a blank sheet of paper. Then ask your students to draw a part of the bean bag game that shows students helping one another. Post the drawings on a bulletin board titled "Everyone Does Better When We Work Together!"



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Week 4:



Program Spotlight: Movies That Move

The Movies That Move project, designed through a partnership between Special Olympics Project UNIFY® and Film Clips for Character Education, uses clips from popular films and TV shows to spark meaningful discussion in the classroom. The four themes explored on the Movies That Move DVD include

- different abilities
- the power of words
- acceptance
- youth leadership

To request a free DVD with the Movies That Move film clips, visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

After a brief discussion of inclusion and acceptance, and a reminder of previous weeks' activities, take your class to your school computer lab to explore the online games available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. Have students work in pairs or small groups to play the "Get in the Game! Scavenger Hunt." This game offers small groups a chance to work together and learn a bit more about Special Olympics sports in the process. Once students are familiar with how to play the game, shuffle the groups and challenge them to race against one another to see which group can find the items most quickly. Be sure to include students who might not otherwise work together in groups to give them an opportunity to see one another's strengths and reinforce the importance of inclusiveness.

