



Students learn and practice their empathy skills through a discussion and drawing activity.



Flipchart paper or whiteboard; Markers or dry erase markers; Pencils or pens; Coloring materials (markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons); One copy of the “Take Off Your Shoes and Empathize” Handout per student.

Total Prep Time: 5 mins.



As this is the second Monday of the month, please consider sharing or re-sharing the Monthly Kick-Off activity, and if appropriate, video at www.everymondaymatters.org. Additionally, a three-minute recap of the previous weeks may add extra context to this week and help connect the dots around the monthly theme.

4 C's	SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING	SERVICE LEARNING
● Critical thinking	● Self-awareness	● Integrated learning
● Communication	● Self-management	● High quality service
● Collaboration	● Social-awareness	● Collaboration
● Creativity	● Relationship skills	● Student voice
	● Responsible decision-making	● Civic responsibility
		● Reflection
		● Evaluation

GOALS FOR THE WEEK

- Discover what it means to empathize by learning from others and about others
- Practice showing empathy and commit to doing our best to understand what others are going through
- Gain an appreciation for perspectives and experiences that are different than our own
- Understand how “WALK IN THEIR SHOES” is an important part of this month’s theme, “MONDAY GETS UNDERSTANDING”



STUDENT ACTIVITY:

“TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE”

1) SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE”

2) ASK 1-3 QUESTIONS FROM THE LIST BELOW TO WARM STUDENTS UP ON THE ACTIVITY’S FOCUS:

***NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What is “EMPATHY”?**
 - Answer: The ability to “UNDERSTAND” and share the feelings of another person
- **How is “WALKING IN THEIR SHOES” a way to be “EMPATHETIC”?**
- **Do you think you are an “EMPATHETIC” person?**
 - How do you show “EMPATHY” toward others or let it guide your actions?
- **What are some ways that you can act “EMPATHETICALLY”?**
- **Do you think asking questions and being curious about other people’s experiences are ways to be “EMPATHETIC”?**
- **Do you think we’re all born knowing how to “EMPATHIZE” with others?**
 - Or, does “EMPATHY” take practice and commitment?
- **Why is it important to commit to growing in our ability to “EMPATHIZE” with others?**
- **Why is “EMPATHY” so important in developing strong friendships?**
- **Do you think you need to “EMPATHIZE” with someone else before you can really get to know them?**
- **Do you think you can truly “EMPATHIZE” with others if you think your way of living is the only way to live, or the best way to live?**
 - Why or why not?
- **Why might it be important to put aside your agenda and your experiences for a moment to “EMPATHIZE” with someone else?**
 - How can this help you step out of your own “SHOES” and into someone else’s to “UNDERSTAND” them better?
- **How can “EMPATHIZING” with others help you “UNDERSTAND” them better?**
- **When you “EMPATHIZE” with others, do you think you’re showing them that they MATTER?**

3) SET UP THE “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE” ACTIVITY:

- **Ask:**
 - Before this week began, had you ever heard the phrase “You can’t understand someone until you’ve walked a mile in their shoes”?
- **Explain:**
 - To get to know someone else, it’s important to do your best to “UNDERSTAND” things from their point of view
 - That is why it’s so important to “EMPATHIZE” with others—it’s a step toward “UNDERSTANDING” them in a new way as we “WALK IN THEIR SHOES”
 - When we “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes,” the “SHOES” represent someone else’s life experiences, perspective, point of view, and identity
 - The idea of “WALKING IN THEIR SHOES” comes from what many believe to be an ancient Native American proverb that went something like this: “Never criticize a man until you have walked a mile in their moccasins”
 - The more we “WALK IN THEIR SHOES” the more our ability to be “EMPATHETIC” grows
 - Today, we’re going to learn about how we can “WALK IN THEIR SHOES,” and how we have to “TAKE OFF” our own “SHOES” first

4) START PART ONE OF THE “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**

- One way to “UNDERSTAND” why a person feels the way they feel, why they do what they do, act the way they act, or what they may be going through, is by “WALKING IN THEIR SHOES”
- But, it’s important to remember that to “WALK IN THEIR SHOES,” we have to “TAKE OFF” our own first
- “TAKING OFF” our own “SHOES” in this scenario means that we do our best to let go of our personal ego or narrative and open our minds to try and really imagine what it is like existing as another person

- **Continue:**

- Sometimes other people’s points of view and experiences can be so radically different from our own that “EMPATHIZING” can be difficult at first
- To “TAKE OFF” our metaphorical “SHOES,” we have to temporarily let go of some of our ideas in order to “UNDERSTAND” someone else’s
- We don’t have to lose our sense of self in order to “EMPATHIZE”
- Instead, we can carry our shoes with us when we “WALK IN THEIRS”
- “TAKING OFF” our “SHOES” allows us to really “WALK IN THEIR SHOES” by helping us “UNDERSTAND” how a person perceives the world around them and acts—it keeps us from letting our own biases and points of view get in the way of “EMPATHIZING” with someone else’s perspective
- Today we are going to brainstorm some ways we can work on our “EMPATHY” skills, and then decorate a pair of “SHOES” to help us remember these skills

- **Hang a piece of flipchart paper or prepare the whiteboard**

- **Ask students to brainstorm some ways that they can “EMPATHIZE” and “WALK IN” other people’s “SHOES” by first “taking off” their own “SHOES.” Write their ideas on the flipchart paper or whiteboard**

- Students can brainstorm individually, in pairs or small groups, or as a large group

- **If helpful, share some examples of ways to “EMPATHIZE,” take off their “SHOES,” and “WALK IN” some one else’s “SHOES.” Some examples include:**

- Remembering that the way that one person lives isn’t the way that everyone should live—and that there is no right way to live
- Remaining open to what other people have to say
- Actively taking the attention off of ourselves and instead putting it on someone else
- Trying to understand the reason why someone is feeling bad or acting a certain way
- Believing that everyone is capable of feeling, fearing, loving, and wanting, no matter how much we disagree
- Remembering that we are all human beings with reasons behind our perspectives and actions
- Trying to focus less on ourselves and more on others
- Trying to consider the motives behind someone’s action before reacting or getting emotional
- Practicing active listening instead of trying to tell our own stories while someone else is telling theirs
- Remembering that we can disagree with someone’s ideas and actions, but that still makes the other person human and worthy of love

- **Allow up to 5 minutes to brainstorm ways to “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE”**

5) START PART TWO OF THE “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE ACTIVITY:

- **Pass out one “Take Off Your Shoes and Empathize” Handout to each student plus pencils or pens and coloring materials (markers, colored pencils, and/or crayons)**

- **Explain:**

- Now that we have ideas of ways we can “TAKE OFF” our own “SHOES,” it’s time to identify the ways we want to learn and grow to be more “EMPATHETIC” people
- In just a moment, you will pick some “EMPATHETIC” skills from our list (or choose your own) that you will practice this week
- Then, you will write those skills on the “SHOES” on your handout so you can remember to “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES”

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- Instead of just writing the skills, you will turn them into statements that help you commit to being a more “EMPATHETIC” person, such as “I will focus less on myself and more on others”
 - **Challenge students to pick 4-5 skills that they turn into “I will...” statements and ask them to start writing them on their handout**
 - **When they are finished writing their “TAKE OF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE” commitments, they can use coloring materials to color their “SHOES”**
 - **Allow students up to 5 minutes to write their commitments and decorate their “SHOES”**
 - **When students are done, hang the decorated “SHOES” in the classroom so students can get inspired to “TAKE OF THEIR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE” as often as possible**

6) AFTER THE ACTIVITY, ASK 1-3 OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS REFLECT ON WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED AND HOW THEY CAN TAKE THIS FORWARD:

***NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What did it feel like to learn how you can be more “EMPATHETIC” today?**
- **What “EMPATHETIC” action are you most interested in working on?**
- **Was it new for you to try and “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES”?**
- **Do you believe that it is important to work on your “EMPATHETIC” potential, or your ability to be “EMPATHETIC” toward others?**
- **How can growing to be more “EMPATHETIC” improve your own life, your relationships, and the world you live in?**
- **Do you think that working on your ability to “EMPATHIZE” with other people can help you better “UNDERSTAND” your own perspective?**
- **How so?**
- **How will you remember to “TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE” going forward?**
- **Will “TAKING OFF YOUR SHOES” always be easy?**
- **What will you do when “TAKING OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZING” is challenging?**
- **Why is “TAKING OFF YOUR SHOES” worth it, even when it’s challenging to do?**
- **How would the world change if more people—including each of us—acted more “EMPATHETICALLY”?**
- **How is being “EMPATHETIC” a way to “GET UNDERSTANDING”?**
- **How can “TAKING OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZING” remind you that YOU MATTER?**

7) THANK STUDENTS FOR “TAKING OFF THEIR SHOES” AND LEARNING MORE ABOUT ACTING “EMPATHETICALLY.” CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO ACTIVELY PRACTICE THE SKILLS THEY WROTE ON THEIR “SHOES.” REMIND THEM THAT “EMPATHETIC” ACTS DO NOT NEED TO BE PERFECT AND THAT EACH “EMPATHETIC” ACTION IS A WAY TO GROW INTO A MORE CARING, LOVING, AND “UNDERSTANDING” PERSON.

8) CHECK IN WITH STUDENTS DURING THE WEEK TO SEE IF THEY’VE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT “EMPATHETICALLY.” ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SPREAD THESE IDEAS AT HOME AND WITH THEIR FRIENDS BY ACTING “EMPATHETICALLY” AND INSPIRING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME.

9) CONTINUE EXPLORING WHAT IT MEANS TO “TAKE OF THEIR SHOES” BY LEADING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXTENSION IDEAS.



EXTENSION IDEAS:

DO ONE OR MORE OF THESE EXTENSION IDEAS TO BRING THE LESSON FROM 15 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES OR MORE.

- 1) TEDx Talk:** Watch the TEDx Talk, “To Walk a Mile in My Shoes You Must First Take Off Your Own” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mIV_bSBUiO) and discuss with students. Challenge them to write their own TED Talk about “EMPATHY.”
- 2) Think, Pair, Empathize:** Print a second copy of the “Take Off Your Shoes and Empathize” Handout and group the students into pairs. Instead of each student decorating their own pair of “SHOES,” have the partners tell a little a bit about themselves. After they have some time to get to know each other, have each student decorate one “SHOE” for their partner using information they learned during their conversation. Emphasize being “EMPATHIC” during the conversation to best “UNDERSTAND” what the other person might like on their “SHOE.”

“EMPATHY GROWS AS WE LEARN.”
- ALICE MILLER

TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND EMPATHIZE



MONDAY GETS UNDERSTANDING

Make enough copies to give one to each student.

