

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day

Lesson Plan

SOCIAL JUSTICE



For ages 14 - 19



ABOUT EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER DAY

Eunice Kennedy Shriver devoted her life to fighting for the rights of those with intellectual disabilities. To inspire new fans to experience the impact of her legacy and embrace the movement she started, Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day is an annual celebration of her life and her ideals. It is a global call for people to commit actions of inclusion, acceptance, and unity for and with individuals with intellectual disabilities,

EKS Day's call to action begins with you.

And driving EKS Day are the same values that drove Eunice Kennedy Shriver:

- + **Love** – She deeply loved her sister and she loved sport;
- + **Social Justice** – She became furious about the neglect and indifference she saw toward her sister and others with intellectual disabilities;
- + **Faith** – She strongly believed that everyone counts;
- + **Hope** – She believed in the possibilities of persons with intellectual disabilities, which fuels hope in all of us to make a difference; and
- + **Courage** – She demonstrated an unrelenting indomitable spirit in action that one person could change the world.



In four decades of advocacy, Eunice Kennedy Shriver has inspired and built a worldwide movement of more than 3 million athletes with intellectual disabilities, with health care, education and sports opportunities. From Chicago to South Africa, Panama to China, Eunice Kennedy Shriver continues to inspire.

EKS Day is about action across the globe — activities that demonstrate the impact of these values to those unfamiliar with Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her revolutionary movement. The world will actively celebrate EKS Day on the fourth Saturday of every September.

There are three components to EKS Day:

- + **Play:** A day of sports, training clinics, and Unified Sports to commemorate Eunice Kennedy Shriver's belief in building greater equality through organized athletics.
- + **Join:** An effort to educate people about the Special Olympics and Best Buddies movement and the urgent needs of people with intellectual disabilities, and to solicit their support and involvement with persons with intellectual disabilities.
- + **Build:** A regional effort to dedicate new or renovated athletic facilities in Eunice Kennedy Shriver's honor in the poorest communities.

Though the spotlight will shine particularly bright on one day, the values and the activities that drive EKS Day must continue throughout the year. We must carry on Eunice Kennedy Shriver's commitment to improve and transform the lives of the 200 million people worldwide with intellectual disabilities that still live with diminished opportunities and social disrespect and who are often neglected and hidden away.

“If you tremble with indignation at every injustice then you are a comrade of mine.”
— Che Guevara (political activist)

ABOUT EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER

Eunice Kennedy Shriver (1921-2009), founder of Special Olympics, used athletics to change the world for people with intellectual disabilities. You are invited to reflect on her legacy and then choose and chart your own.

As founder and honorary chairperson of Special Olympics and executive vice president of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Eunice Kennedy Shriver was a leader in the worldwide struggle to improve and enhance the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities for over 40 years.

Born Eunice Mary Kennedy in Brookline, Massachusetts, she was the fifth of nine children of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. Eunice Kennedy Shriver's older brothers included the late John F. Kennedy, who served as President of the United States, and the late Robert F. Kennedy, an American statesman. She married Sargent Shriver and was the mother of five children.

With a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from Stanford University, she worked as a civil servant and then as a social worker. In 1957, she became head of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, which works to transform perspectives of people with intellectual disabilities. The Foundation was inspired by her eldest sister and established in memory of her eldest brother.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver received many honors and awards during her lifetime and is recognized around the world for her efforts on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities. She is known worldwide for establishing Special Olympics, after championing the 1st International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois. One thousand individuals with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competed in track and field and swimming.

Today, more than three million Special Olympics athletes are training year-round in all 50 states and 181 countries. They run races, toss softballs, lift weights, ski moguls, volley tennis balls and pirouette on skates. The oath from the inaugural Special Olympics Games in Chicago is still recited by Special Olympics athletes:

Let me win,
but if I cannot win,
let me be brave
in the attempt.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver died on August 11, 2009 at the age of 88. She is a sterling example of what one person can do to make a difference in the lives of others. Her values and determined spirit are accessible to each of us as we strive to fulfill our potential and contribute to improving the world.



Sources:

"Honoring Eunice Kennedy Shriver's Legacy in Intellectual Disability," David Braddock. American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Vol. 48, No. 1: 63-72, February 2010.

<http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/bios/eks>

<http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/bios/si>

<http://www.specialolympics.org/history.aspx>

ABOUT THE LESSON PLANS FOR EKS DAY

Teachers, facilitators, and leaders of youth groups can choose from this series of lesson plans, developed to engage young people in character building and community service as part of the EKS Day celebration and ongoing effort to honor Eunice Kennedy Shriver's legacy. These lessons focus on the five key EKS values and are designed for two age groups: 8 – 13 years old and 14 – 19 years old.

EKS Values

Each lesson focuses on one of the five values. By explicitly addressing one value within a lesson, students are better able to engage in deep exploration of the term and concept and then connect that lesson to Eunice Kennedy Shriver's life and legacy in support of EKS Day.

- + Love
- + Justice
- + Faith
- + Hope
- + Courage

Overview and Purpose

Use Eunice Kennedy Shriver's life and legacy to:

- + Teach character lessons;
- + Introduce and explore words and concepts;
- + Inform student about world figures and their accomplishments;
- + Develop skills in critical thinking, brainstorming, collaboration and reflection; and
- + Inspire youth to act with hope, faith, courage, social justice, and love.

“It is a worthy thing to fight for one's freedom; it is another sight finer to fight for another man's.”
—Mark Twain (author and humorist)

How to Use the Lesson Plans

The EKS Lesson Plans provide a step-by-step guide for teachers, facilitators, and leaders of youth groups worldwide. Each plan details a specific set of approaches and activities to lead students in the exploration of an EKS value. The lessons are adaptable and allow for adjustments based on group size, age, time allowances, instructional goals, cultural context, and teacher discretion.

It is recommended that teachers review the lesson plan as well as supplemental content and resources developed for EKS Day (e.g., EKS biography, background on Special Olympics, suggested videos) and then craft and deliver a learning experience to excite, engage, and educate students.

Each lesson is intended to inspire students to action and is designed to culminate in their committing to “EKS Acts” of inclusion and acceptance for and with persons with intellectual disabilities. Begin the lesson with this end goal in mind. Review the EKS Acts with your students and help them to choose an act they want to commit to and execute after learning more about Eunice Kennedy Shriver's incredible life and acts to promote social justice. Help them to see how their individual acts to promote social justice can help to improve and change someone else's life.

Teachers can implement EKS Lesson Plans on or about EKS Day or as part of a week-long or even month-long observance of the EKS legacy – or, ideally, as a recurring discussion with corresponding activities and projects for students.



Special Olympics China athlete gives a peace sign as she gets a hug from Eunice Kennedy Shriver during the 2007 World Games in Shanghai.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

"You are stars and the world is watching you. By your presence you send message to every village, every city, every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory:

The right to play on any playing field? You have earned it.

The right to study at any school? You have earned it.

The right to hold a job? You have earned it.

The right to be anyone's neighbor? You have earned it."

— Eunice Kennedy Shriver

Social Justice is an EKS Day value because of the neglect and indifference Eunice Kennedy Shriver saw toward her sister and others with intellectual disabilities. Furious about those experiences, she directed her capabilities toward improving attitudes, understanding and treatment of people with intellectual disabilities. Eunice Kennedy Shriver went on to urge acceptance and inclusion for everyone facing indignities and injustice.

Age Group: 14 – 19 year-olds

Lesson Objectives:

- + To broaden understanding of the term and value: social justice
- + To increase awareness and sensitivity to issues of fairness and equity
- + To provide concrete examples of acts that promote social justice and people who are models of social justice
- + To sustain the Eunice Kennedy Shriver legacy by sharing her story and celebrating her values
- + To provide a direct call to action for students by inspiring them to commit to acts that advance the values and mission of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and EKS Day

Time Required: Up to three 50-minute class periods

Note: *These time allowances are only suggestions. Please use your discretion in allocating time, based on the number of students participating, your judgment about their level of familiarity with the featured value and learning activities, and their responses and engagement during the lesson.*

Resources Needed:

- Online tribute video found at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/videos/video/51>
- Handout with "Small World" categories, excluding the numerical ratios
- EKS Acts Handout

Supplemental K-12 lessons and interactive student activities may be found at the new Get Into It curriculum: www.specialolympics.org/getintoit

Standards Alignment

This lesson is aligned to the service learning standards from "The K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice" from the National Youth Leadership Council. http://www.nylc.org/objects/publications/Standards_Oct2009-web.pdf

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Meaningful Service

Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities
4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.

Link to Curriculum

Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.

Reflection

Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

Indicators:

2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.

5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

Diversity

Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Indicators:

1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.

Lesson Steps:

- I. Grounding
- II. Mining Meaning
- III. Core Activity
- IV. Reflection
- V. Extensions (optional)

“I’m for truth, no matter who tells it. I’m for justice, no matter who it is for or against. I’m a human being, first and foremost, and as such I’m for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole.”

— Malcolm X (human rights activist)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

I. Grounding

Rationale: This foundational segment of the lesson aims to bring students quickly into the mindset of the value, *before* explicitly labeling the value or delving into its definition and relevance in Eunice Kennedy Shriver's life.

Intended outcomes are students gain a sense of "who we are" collectively in the world, recognize our inherent differences and connections, and tap into their personal experiences with social justice and current understanding of social dynamics, however basic or advanced.

Overview: Using a distillation of worldwide demographic data, which could be described as a "shrunk global village," students will explore the implications the demographic ratios that are often the crux of social conflict, prejudice and inequality. (20-30 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Before the class, prepare a handout with "Small World" categories, excluding the numerical ratios. List only "Asian," "European," "African," "female" and "male" and so on, from the complete list that is provided.
2. Start the class by introducing the following concept — shrinking the world population from approximately 6.8 billion to 100 people, while maintaining demographic proportions.
3. Distribute the handout and ask your students to scan the categories and then add a number by each category indicating their estimation of the corresponding ratio.
4. Demonstrate by focusing on a few categories and offering examples.
5. Emphasize that you don't expect their estimations to be exact and that this is only a quick exercise to stir their thoughts and to see how close their perceptions are to reality.
6. Give your students five minutes to write their answers.



Almost 7,000 athletes representing 150 nations participate in the Tenth Special Olympics World Summer Games in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA in 1999.

7. When they are done, reveal the correct ratios, one by one.
8. Engage your students in a brief conversation about their perceptions and estimates, contrasting them with the actual ratios. Help start the conversation with questions like:
 - *Who has an estimate that was close to the actual ratio?*
 - *What surprised you most about these demographic realities?*
 - *What other demographic categories would you be interested in seeing?*
9. Transition from this grounding activity to the next step.

"A man's feet must be planted in his country, but his eyes should survey the world."

— George Santayana
(philosopher and poet)

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II. Mining Meaning

Rationale: This segment of the lesson is designed to further establish what the value is and what it means. The aim is to allow students to explore the meaning of “social justice,” as well as generate a list of terms that carry the same or similar meaning. Labeling the value at this point will enable students to connect the concept to culture and place. “Social justice” can carry a range of meaning based on context.

Overview: Teacher leads students in process to probe the meaning of “social justice.” (20 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Ask students to raise their hands if they are familiar with or have ever heard the term social justice.
2. Call on some students, one by one, to share what they think the term means.
3. Write on the board or another a prominent place a commonly accepted definition for social justice. A definition is provided in the textbox to the right, but you can select your own.
4. Continue to explore the term’s meaning with your students, until you are confident that they have a firm grasp of what it means. You may want to provide some real world examples that will resonate with them, based on their ages.
5. Transition by introducing students to Eunice Kennedy Shriver by providing a brief biographical sketch of her extraordinary family, values, and legacy and discussing the different ways that she exemplified and fought for social justice in her life. Explain briefly why the class is celebrating her values, in this instance *social justice*, and recognizing her achievements on EKS Day.
 - Share with students that “social justice” is a classroom focus in honor of EKS Day and that Eunice Kennedy Shriver held social justice as a value because of the neglect and indifference that she saw toward her sister and others with intellectual disabilities.

Social justice (n): a value that ensures advantages, opportunities and benefits are spread fairly among all people of a community or society.

Synonyms and supporting concepts:

- Fair play
- Level playing field
- Fair play
- Equality
- Equity
- Fairness
- Evenhandedness
- Basic human rights
- Freedom
- Power
- Dignity

Antonyms and incompatible concepts / behaviors:

- Unjust
- Unequal
- Unfair
- Prejudice
- Discrimination
- Bullying

- Use the biographical summary to introduce students to Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her legacy. Distribute a printed summary and/or select a few students to share in reading her bio aloud.
- It was one woman’s courage who changed the world....Show the tribute video, which gives a fast-paced overview of Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s life and pioneering accomplishments, as told by her family, a Special Olympics athlete, and Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela. (Video found at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/videos/video/51>)

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III. Core Activity: Clip, Paste, Love

Rationale: This segment provides hands-on learning through interactivity. Students continue to attach personal meaning and importance to the value — exploring *social justice* in a way that demonstrates its role in personal life, family life, community life, and our society as a whole.

Overview: Using this distillation of the global village, students explore the implications of these demographic data points, which are often at the crux of social conflict, prejudice and inequities. Students exchange thoughts and develop scenario stories through a social justice lens. (45 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Ask students to take a moment to reflect quietly and envision how the world might be different if social justice principles influenced relationships in the “shrunk global village” discussed earlier. Have your students consider the following questions:
 - *How could power be shared more fairly?*
 - *How would people’s lives look differently?*
 - *What would you like to see?*
2. Invite students to share with the class which three ratios most resonate with them and ask them to elaborate as to why.
3. Inform students that they will now form small groups and create a scenario of what their own socially just “village” would be like.
4. Divide the class into groups of four to six students each.

5. Instruct each small group to select three categories and ratios, collectively. Assign each group the task of creating a story about an imaginary village with the following characteristics:
 - Reflects the three demographic categories and corresponding ratios selected by the group
 - Organized so that decisions about the village are made by the villagers
 - Everyone in the village values dignity, equity, and fairness
6. Allot 15 – 20 minutes for group to develop its scenarios and then five minutes for each group to share its vision with the whole class.



Eunice Kennedy Shriver meeting Mother Theresa. Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Mother Theresa shared a similar vision and passion to change the world.

“Until the great mass of people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other’s welfare, social justice can never be attained.”
— Helen Keller (author and educator)

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IV. From Reflection to Action

Rationale: This segment centers on reflection and processing to help reinforce the importance of the value and the ways in which youth, and people in general, can embody that value.

Overview: Guide students in further discussion of social justice issues, as it relates to the real world — their lives and society. (15 minutes)

Procedure:

1. Engage students in a conversation about social justice. Below are some questions to explore real world implications of upholding social justice values:
 - *In a more socially just and equitable world, which dynamic has the greatest implications for our community? Our school? You and your family? In what kinds of ways?*
 - *Name some important times in our country's history when the social justice value mattered most.*
 - *If we really paid attention to our fellow "villagers," what could we do better today?*
 - *What would we have to give up (e.g., beliefs, behaviors, material things)? What's the cost of doing the right thing?*
 - *How could we be fairer and act more just?*
 - *What other differences and similarities hold the potential to drive people together or bring them together?*
2. Ask students to name people — global luminaries, fictional characters, national figures, and everyday citizens — who have stood up for social justice and did the right thing (e.g., Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Eunice Shriver Kennedy).
3. Invite students to share a change in thinking or an action that they will do individually or as a group, after learning the meaning and significance of social justice.

Real-life examples of issues that benefit from people with social justice values:

- Race and ethnicity
- Intellectual disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Gender
- Class
- Indigenous affairs
- World poverty
- Religion
- Human rights
- Abuse (physical, verbal)

4. Distribute the EKS Acts handout and/or refer students to the online version (found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/eks-day-overview.aspx>). Review and discuss the EKS Acts, either as a class or with students in groups 2-4. You may also consider reviewing the Acts with each of your students individually.
5. After discussing the EKS Acts with your students, help them to choose at least one Act that they can lead or get involved with in their communities. Reinforce the idea that their dedication and commitment to social justice can change a person's life!
6. Close this segment by encouraging students to: (a) share what they learned with others, (b) take time to learn more about the EKS legacy and (c) follow through on their personal pledges to take action in small or big ways. Encourage your students to share their stories and the ways that they made a difference in their communities at <http://www.specialolympics.org/community/index.html>.

**"When elephants fight
it is the grass that suffers."
— Proverb of the Kikuyu, a Kenyan
ethnic group**

COURAGE

V. Extensions (optional)

Below is a menu of optional activities within this lesson on social justice. These are activities you can undertake to tie this value to other EKS Day values as well as extend your classes value-based learning activities over a longer timeframe.

- Assign students reading and research to learn more about Eunice Kennedy Shriver's life, legacy, and values, particularly how seeing her sister Rosemary treated unfairly and being discriminated against fueled her fight for justice for those with intellectual disabilities and other challenges. Numerous resources and weblinks can be found at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>. After completing the assignment, invite students to report (orally or written) what they learned about her and how they have fulfilled their personal pledges and EKS Acts.
- Narrow the focus to one or two social justice issues and probe deeper. For example, select a topic like intellectual disabilities and have students research and create presentations on the history of the legislative battles that EKS fought to bring this issue to the forefront of our society.



On July 20, 1968, the first Special Olympics Games were held in Chicago, moving Mayor Richard Daley to predict, "The world will never be the same after this."

- Allow students to cluster into small work teams (3 to 4 per team) and then select a relevant issue of their choice to explore through research, additional activities and community service. Set a timeline for completing key tasks and then designate a day or set of days when each work team can report on their research findings, accomplishments, service hours and new connections with people and organizations.
- Help your class explore how social justice interacts and overlaps with another of Eunice Kennedy Shriver's core values, such as "courage." Engage students in understanding dynamics at the intersection of social justice and courage. If time allows, segue from the social justice lesson into implementing the EKS Lesson Plan on courage.

"Special Olympics athletes are spokespersons for freedom itself - they ask for the freedom to live, the freedom to belong, the freedom to contribute, the freedom to have a chance. And, of all the values that unite and inspire us to seek a better world, no value holds a higher place than the value of freedom."

— Eunice Kennedy Shriver
(Special Olympics founder)

HANDOUT:

EUNICE KENNEDY SHRIVER ACTS (EKS ACTS)

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day is intended to share her story and impact and inspire new fans to join the movement and to commit acts of inclusion and acceptance for and with people with intellectual disability with a goal of reaching 100,000 Eunice Kennedy Shriver Acts.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Acts (EKS Acts) are actions or activities of inclusion or acceptance for and with persons with intellectual disabilities. Individuals, schools, and businesses can commit to EKS Acts and will be able to go online (www.eksd.org) to post their commitment. Here are several individual Acts that one person or a small group of people can do to celebrate Eunice Kennedy Shriver's values and mission, and experience the joy and increased understanding that comes from interacting with people with intellectual disabilities.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Acts for Students and Schools/Universities:

- + Become a Special Olympics Unified Sports partner or sign up to be a Best Buddy.
- + Collect and donate fun supplies and games to special education classrooms or learning centers.
- + Run a Public Service Announcement (PSA) in morning news or announcements at school or editorial in student newspaper about the EKS vision.
- + Set up an EKS awareness table on your school campus in library, hallway, lunchroom, media center, or student union.
- + Take one or more people with an intellectual disability with you to a sports event.
- + Invite a classmate with an intellectual disability to sit with you at lunch.
- + Ask someone with an intellectual disability to play tennis, kick a soccer ball, shoot basketballs, or play another one-on-one game.
- + Fight prejudice in your school by launching a campaign against use of the "R-word."
(www.r-word.org)

- + Change your Facebook profile to a photo of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and share one of her iconic quotes as your status.
- + Tweet about the EKS legacy and impact

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Acts for Businesses or Associations:

- + In the week leading up to EKS Day, dedicate one day as "bring a Best Buddies chapter or Special Olympics team to work day" when participants can visit corporate offices and shadow employees.
- + Give employees one day off that week to volunteer for Special Olympics or their favorite nonprofit organization or NGO related to the disability field.
- + Volunteer at a special education classroom or learning center and donate supplies.
- + Add a PSA or video related to EKS or disability to your website.
- + "EKS Day at the Office" – Arrange an hour, afternoon, or day of onsite activities involving people with intellectual disability.
- + Place a story or article in the company newsletter about Eunice Kennedy Shriver's legacy and impact.



As part of the Extra Mile National Volunteer Pathway, an initiative of the Points of Light Foundation, U.S. President George H.W. Bush recognized Eunice Kennedy Shriver for her volunteer contribution to America.

HANDOUT:

SMALL WORLD – OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE

Shrinking the Earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

- 57 would be Asian.
- 21 would be European.
- 14 would be from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south.
- 8 would be African.
- 52 would be female.
- 48 would be male.
- 70 would be non-white.
- 30 would be white.
- 70 would be non-Christian.
- 30 would be Christian.
- 89 would be heterosexual.
- 11 would be homosexual.
- 6 people would possess 59 percent of the entire world's wealth, and all of them would be from the United States.
- 80 would live in substandard housing.
- 70 would be unable to read.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition.
- 3 would have a disability.
- 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth.
- 1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education.
- 1 would own a computer.

Teachers may adapt this list by adding new categories and verified ratios that reflect cultural interests and the region.



Eunice Kennedy Shriver with Young Athletes participants and Professor Zhou at 2007 Special Olympics World Games, Shanghai, China

“God told me to
look after my people
– all are my people.”
— Smohalla (spiritual leader)