



Sport of the Month

November

This month's theme: **fairness**

Goals:

- Help students understand the meaning and value of fairness in sports as well as in daily life.
- Help students to understand that fair play is as important as competition and effort.
- Help students to recognize when fairness is not a part of competition and how to correct it.



bowling

Bowling in Special Olympics

Although bowling is not part of the Olympics, it is among the most popular sports in Special Olympics. Participants of many different ages and with different degrees of athletic ability can participate. They benefit not only from the exercise but also from the social aspects of the game.

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

"We have created an expectation in our school community—all students should be included, respected, and treasured whenever it is in the best interest of the kids. Our administration and staff are very supportive."

Week 1:

Share the Special Olympics "Sport Teaches Us" video with your class. (Video can be found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.) Engage students in a discussion: *Why was Special Olympics formed? How are Special Olympics athletes like you? What do you have in common?*

Next, share Special Olympics' video "It's All About Unity" with your class. (Video can be found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.) Engage students in another discussion: *What does the word unity mean to you? How are unity and fairness related? How important are the words unity and fairness in Special Olympics?*

Invite students to draw pictures showing what they have learned about fairness, unity, and Special Olympics. Bind the illustrations together into a class book titled "Fair for All, Fun for All."





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Week 2:

Take Action!

- Explain to students that anyone is invited to cheer on the athletes at a Special Olympics event. Share the dates for upcoming local events and encourage students to ask their parents if they can attend. Then remind students to gather a group of friends, make some posters, and bring their team spirit to be Fans in the Stands at a local Special Olympics event!

This week, begin by asking your students if they have ever taken an oath. Discuss the following questions:

- What is an oath?
- Can you think of others who are required to take an oath? (presidents, public officials, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, witnesses in a courtroom)
- Why do people take oaths?

Read aloud as you write the Special Olympics Athlete Oath on the board:
Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

Explain that Special Olympics participants take this oath before competing and that gladiators spoke these same words in ancient Rome as they entered the arena, prepared for battle. Ask students, “What do you think this oath means?” and have them relate the oath to sports or competitive activities in which they’ve participated. Continue the discussion with questions like these:

- What is it like to want to win?
- How does it feel to lose?
- How is a sports competition like a battle?
- Why must athletes be brave?
- Why must Special Olympics athletes be brave? What challenges might they face while competing?
- Why is fairness critical to a good competition? How do the rules in a game like bowling help to keep it fair?

Explain to your class that you will work together to create a class oath. The oath should include the words *unity* and *fairness* and refer not just to sports in students’ school and community, but to the efforts they make together as friends and classmates as well.

When you have agreed on what should be in the oath, write it on the board or someplace where you can keep it for use in Week 3.



November events:

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Project UNIFY®

Special Olympics Project UNIFY uses sports and education programs to activate young people to develop school communities where all students are agents of change—fostering respect, dignity, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Learn more about Project UNIFY at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

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Week 3:

Remind your class about the oath that you developed together the previous week. Review the wording and remind students about the concepts of unity and fairness. Discuss again what these words mean.

Write the oath in a place where the whole class can see it. Point out unfamiliar words. Next, distribute sheets of blank paper. Have students copy the oath and/or draw pictures of themselves reciting the oath.

When everyone is finished, ask your students to stand up, raise their right hands, and recite their new class oath. Finally, display your students' pictures on a bulletin board titled "We Are All Champions Together!"

Week 4:

Start the lesson by having your students recite their oath. Next, help students understand that people with intellectual disabilities are more like them than they are different. Explain that disabilities do create some differences, but for the most part, people share more similarities than differences.

To reinforce this idea, along with the concepts of fairness and unity, have students play "We're More Alike Than We Are Different," an online learning game from Special Olympics. The game is available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. Students will get a glimpse into Special Olympics. Follow up the game with a discussion about the sports being played and emotions that students saw in the photos. No doubt students will realize that they've played similar sports—and felt similar ways!

