



Looking for Leaders

An elementary school play
inspired by “It’s Our School, Too!” by Suzy Messerole and Aamera Siddiqui

About this play

“Looking for Leaders” is a play designed to promote respect and empathy among all students. It works well as a kickoff event for a Respect Campaign (see pages 71–72). It can also be presented on its own any time of year.

Here are a few things to know:

- The play has six short scenes. The parts are brief, making it ideal for elementary students with and without disabilities to perform.
- Students may perform all parts, or adults may take the narrator and teacher roles.
- The play includes 30 parts, allowing for all students in a class or another large group to participate. As an alternative, a smaller group may present the play, with students performing in more than one scene.
- Consider having older students present the play to younger students or to parents as part of a school meeting or at an assembly.
- The only props that are needed are chairs and a table, but students may create additional props.



Scene 1: OPENING

All performers enter the stage one by one. Each performer will say,

When you see me, I want you to see... *and then complete the sentence to describe one of their talents, hobbies, or attributes.*

Examples:

When you see me, I want you to see a friend.

When you see me, I want you to see a nice person.

When you see me, I want you to see that we are alike.

When you see me, I want you to see a soccer player.

When you see me, I want you to see that I'm friendly.

When you see me, I want you to see an artist.

When you see me, I want you to see a happy person.

When you see me, I want you to see a person who shows respect.





Scene 2: THE BUS RIDE

Roles:

Bus driver

Narrator 1

Students 1–4 (Student 1 is female.)

Narrator 2

Eight chairs are arranged in rows of two to represent seats on a school bus. One chair is in front of the paired chairs to represent the bus driver's seat. The bus driver and Students 2 through 4 are seated, with one empty chair beside Student 4 and the remaining empty chairs behind Student 4.

Student 1 is standing outside the bus. The bus driver pantomimes opening the bus door.

Bus Driver: Good morning!

Student 1: Good morning!

Student 1 smiles as she gets on the bus. The other students look at her with curiosity.

Student 2: *(Speaking softly)* Who's that?

Student 3: *(Speaking softly)* I don't know.

Student 4: *(Speaking loudly)* She's not sitting with me!

Student 1 glumly walks past Student 4 and then sits in an empty seat in the last row.

Student 3: *(Speaking to Student 4)* That was mean. She heard you. You shouldn't have said that.

Student 2: Well, she's not in our class. She doesn't need to sit with us.

Student 3: That doesn't matter. How would you like it if no one wanted you to sit with them?

Student 2: *(Slumps in seat.)* I guess I wouldn't like it.

Student 4: *(Slumps in seat.)* I guess I wouldn't either.

Student 2: I bet she's really sad now. We should do something.

Student 4: I'll say, "Sorry" when we get to school.

Student 3: I have an idea! Let's ask her to play with us at recess.

Students 2 and 4: *(Sitting up straighter in their seats)* That's a great idea!

Narrator enters the stage.

Narrator 1: When you hear other kids making rude comments, don't join in.

Narrator 2: Be kind as you let them know that being rude is not okay.





Scene 3: PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

Roles:

PE teacher Narrator 1
Students 1–3 Narrator 2

The PE teacher and students enter the stage.

PE teacher: Okay, class. Today we're going to practice kicking. I want you to kick the soccer ball into the goal. Line up behind one another.

Student 3: This is going to be fun!

Students 1–3 line up behind one another in numerical order and face the PE teacher, leaving several feet between them and the teacher. The teacher pantomimes rolling a ball to Student 1. Student 1 runs up and kicks the imaginary ball.

Student 2: Wow! That went right in.

PE teacher: Good job.

Student 1 happily gets the imaginary ball and tosses it to the teacher.

Student 1: *(Cheering on Student 2)* Come on! Smash it!

Student 3: Yeah, smash it!

The teacher rolls the ball and Student 2 runs up and kicks it.

Student 2: *(Does a fist pump.)* Score!

Student 2 gets the ball and tosses it to the teacher. The teacher rolls the ball to Student 3. Student 3 walks up and kicks.

Student 1: You missed it!

Student 2: It wasn't even close!

Students 1 and 2 laugh.

PE teacher: Okay, okay. Settle down.

Narrators 1 and 2 enter the stage.

Narrator 1: Kicking the ball is only one part of being a great soccer player.

Narrator 2: Another part is being a good teammate. A good teammate doesn't tease other players.

Narrator 1: A good teammate encourages all players even if they don't score.





Scene 5: THE SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Roles:

Students 1–3 (Student 1 is male.)

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Students 1–3 enter the stage. They walk behind one another to an imaginary cafeteria window. Student 1 takes an imaginary tray, walks over to a table with three chairs, and sits down. Students 2 and 3 stand at the window.

Student 1: Yum! Meatloaf and green beans!

Student 1 pantomimes eating his food. Students 2 and 3 start walking toward the table with their lunch trays. They stop when they notice Student 1 sitting there.

Student 2: I don't want to sit by that dummy.

Student 3: He's not a dummy. You shouldn't call people names.

Student 2: I didn't mean it.

Student 3: Well, it still wasn't nice. Did you know that he likes to play basketball?

Student 2: I like basketball too!

Student 3: You might be more alike than you think. There's an easy way to find out.

Student 2: Let's sit down with him.

Student 3: Maybe we can all be friends.

Students 2 and 3 sit at the table as Narrators 1 and 2 enter the stage.

Narrator 1: Mean words hurt people.

Narrator 2: It's never okay to call people mean names.

Narrators 1 and 2: Treat people as you would like to be treated by them.





Scene 6: CLOSING

All performers enter the stage.

Student 1: We will encourage others. We won't put them down.

All: We will encourage others. We won't put them down.

Student 2: We will make sure that no one is left out.

All: We will make sure that no one is left out.

Student 3: We will use kind words.

All: We will use kind words.

Student 4: We will treat people as we would like to be treated.

All: We will treat people as we would like to be treated.





Checklist for “Looking for Leaders” School Play

The play presents several short vignettes that are designed to increase students’ awareness of respectful behavior and encourage them to be leaders by setting positive examples. You’ll find background information and the script on pages 92–98. Use the checklist below to guide your planning.

- 1. Meet with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss putting on the play at your school. Develop a timeline for planning and rehearsing the performance.
- 2. Meet with the principal to discuss plans for the play and ensure the administration’s support and approval.
- 3. Communicate with the school staff about the purpose of the play. Decide who will present the performance. For example, fifth graders could present the play to younger classes, or interested students from various grades might perform the play for students and parents.
- 4. Develop a plan.
 - Set the date, time, and location for the performance. Make sure these details are cleared with the necessary school personnel before releasing the information to others.
 - Assign roles and schedule rehearsals.
 - Create a plan for each task that needs to be completed, including deadlines, and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.
- 5. Ask the school staff members to assist with communication through announcements, the school website, letters sent home, the school newsletter, and local news media.
- 6. Encourage teachers to talk with their classes after the performance to discuss the play’s message of respect and social inclusion. See the discussion questions on page 100.
- 7. After the performance, be sure to thank everyone involved with the event.





Discussion Questions for “Looking for Leaders” School Play

The play provides a natural opportunity to promote class discussions that support social and emotional learning. Use questions such as the ones below to guide students’ reflections.

Grades K–2

- *Social awareness, relationship skills:* What can we learn from the play?
- *Self-awareness, social awareness:* What does it mean to be left out? How does it feel?
- *Social awareness:* What are some things a good teammate might say to a soccer player who scores a goal?
- *Social awareness:* What are some things a good teammate might say to a basketball player who misses a shot?
- *Social awareness:* How can words hurt people?
- *Responsible decision-making:* What can you do if you see a student who has no one to play with during recess?

Grades 3–5

- *Social awareness, relationship skills:* What do you think the play’s main message is?
- *Self-awareness:* Have you ever been left out of an activity? How did it feel?
- *Self-awareness:* Has anyone ever invited you to join them in a game or an activity during recess? How did it feel?
- *Social awareness:* Can you tell everything about a person by looking at him or her? Explain.
- *Social awareness:* How can students be different but alike?
- *Social awareness, relationship skills:* What does it mean to encourage someone?
- *Self-management, responsible decision-making:* A good leader sets a positive example. What does that statement mean to you?
- *Self-management, responsible decision-making:* How can students be leaders?



Unified Champion Schools provide students with experiences that **develop prosocial** skills.

To learn more about social and emotional learning, visit casel.org.