

## Lesson 8: Friendship and Solidarity

### PURPOSE

To motivate students to pursue freedom for excellence in their friendships.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand friendship and its connection to human excellence.
2. Recognize Greensboro Four as a historical example of friendship and solidarity in pursuit of excellence.

### MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- Game: All Aboard
- Game: How are we the same?
- [Video](#) Greensboro Four – Educational Videos for Students
- Solidarity Puzzle
- Pedro Pablo Sacristan: A Village on the Road

### VOCABULARY

- Friendship of excellence: friendship based on pursuing excellence for oneself and others
- Solidarity: unity between people pursuing excellence together

### PROCEDURE

**Step 1:** Review the previous lesson. Recall the definition of creativity. If students completed the [Creativity in Code](#) worksheet as homework, go over the answers using the Answer Key for the Teacher.

**Step 2:** Introduce the theme of the lesson with the [All Aboard](#) game. Tie a piece of rope in a loop large enough for all students in your class to fit within it and lay it on the ground. Invite all your students to sit inside the circle. Once they have accomplished this, congratulate them for working together to make sure they all fit and now challenge them to see if they can do even better. Make the rope smaller. Now, invite your students once again to sit within the circle. Continue to make the rope smaller and smaller until you see that your students are beginning to run out of solutions as to how they can all fit within the circle. Eventually, the circle will be much too small to fit every student.

The goal is for students to cooperate with each other and work closely together to come up with creative solutions (standing rather than sitting, putting only hands in, fingers in, etc.). At the end, discuss what you observed and invite feedback.

Lead the class discussion by asking:

What happens when people work together?

Explain that when people come to do something excellent — like complete a project together, or to defend dignity — the result is always important because the creativity and solidarity of two friends, a group of people, a whole classroom, an entire school, etc. is more powerful than one single individual working alone.

**Step 3:** Friendship is the connection between two people who pursue excellence together. When this pursuit extends on a group level, solidarity emerges.

Write the two definitions on the board:

Friendship of excellence: friendship based on pursuing excellence for oneself and others  
Solidarity: unity between people pursuing excellence together

Friendship is key in our life, especially if we want to use our powers to think and to choose what is excellent. We need friends who also want what is excellent for us. For example, if we are surrounded by people who fall into the various thinking traps that we learned about in previous lessons, our thinking will be influenced by theirs. We may start to blame others or think the worst of a situation, a person, etc. If our friends are indifferent and careless in their choices, it might not be long before we find ourselves saying, “who cares, if I don’t do anything then I can’t fail at anything, right?”

Whereas if your best friend said, “hey, why don’t we go to extra help together at lunch?” You’d probably go with them for extra help. It takes only one other person to help us pursue excellence. A friendship of excellence strengthens our desire to develop ourselves, to help others, and to help the world.

Have students play the game [How are we the same?](#) In pairs, students have to find three things they have in common with each other. Once all pairs have completed this task, they have to join up with another pair to make a group of four. Once again, the group has to find three things they have in common with each other. After the four students have found something they have in common, they are to link up with another group of four and find three things the group shares in common.

Explain that like the game the students just played, solidarity is an outgrowth of a friendship of excellence. Friendships of excellence are the foundation of solidarity, but solidarity means thinking about not just what concerns ourselves and our closest friends but our wider community (such as a class), too.

**Step 4:** Ask the students if they can think of any historical examples of solidarity. After hearing the student' comments, explain that in this lesson the class will learn about one example of solidarity in which a group of people pursued and achieved excellence together.

This is the example of the Greensboro Four. To introduce the students to this example, play [the Greensboro Four - Video](#)

After watching the video, explain that even though slavery ended in the United States in the 1860s and the American Constitution was changed to establish equal protection under the law, one hundred years later, some states enforced segregation, which meant that some places, such as restaurants, would only serve white people. Even water fountains might be labeled to be only for white or black people. Four young black men wanted to make a peaceful statement against segregation, so they acted.

One day, Ezell Blair Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain, and Joseph McNeil, went to Woolworth's Diner in Greensboro, North Carolina, and sat down at the lunch counter. They were refused service simply because they were black. Instead of becoming angry or violent, the young men continued to sit at the counter quietly, even though they received no food or drinks. They sat there all day, and then they returned the next day with even more students. Eventually, the sit-in movement spread everywhere. Multiple people began to participate in sit-ins, causing the world to take notice of the unfairness of segregation.

Lead the class discussion by asking the following questions:

- How is this an example of solidarity?
- Do you think that the four young men were brave?
- Could you have done what they did?
- How did 4 people cause such a big difference?

Explain that The Greensboro Four recognized the violation of their dignity. Their support of each other in their choice to stand up for their dignity during the first, non-violent sit-in at Woolworth's Store began an entire civil rights movement to defend the dignity of every person of every race or ethnicity. The four made an excellent choice together, and others joined it. They showed how only a handful of people can make a big difference when they act together in pursuit of excellence.

**Step 5:** Ask the students to brainstorm one solidarity action that they could perform together as a class. It could be an activity that would help other students in the school or the wider community. If students are struggling to come up with an idea that they can implement, help them brainstorm with the following ideas:

- A thank you card to the school principal or the custodian staff.
- One day where the class decides to hold the doors for students at the end of the day.
- If there's a certain day where food is provided at the school, the class could volunteer to help.
- At lunch, the class could sit with students in a younger grade to be a peer to a new friend.

After the class agrees on an idea, they should write it in the center of the [Solidarity Puzzle](#). The project should be written in the middle of the puzzle and the names of all the students in the puzzles around that one. Put the Solidarity Puzzle in the visible place in the room for the students to see.

**Step 6:** Summarize. Recall the definition of solidarity and its connection to the pursuit of human excellence. Highlight the Greensboro Four as an example of solidarity with the wider community. Motivate them to practice their solidarity project written in the Solidarity Puzzle.

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

To reflect on solidarity in greater detail read the story by [Pedro Pablo Sacristan: A Village on the Road](#). Afterwards, ask the following questions:

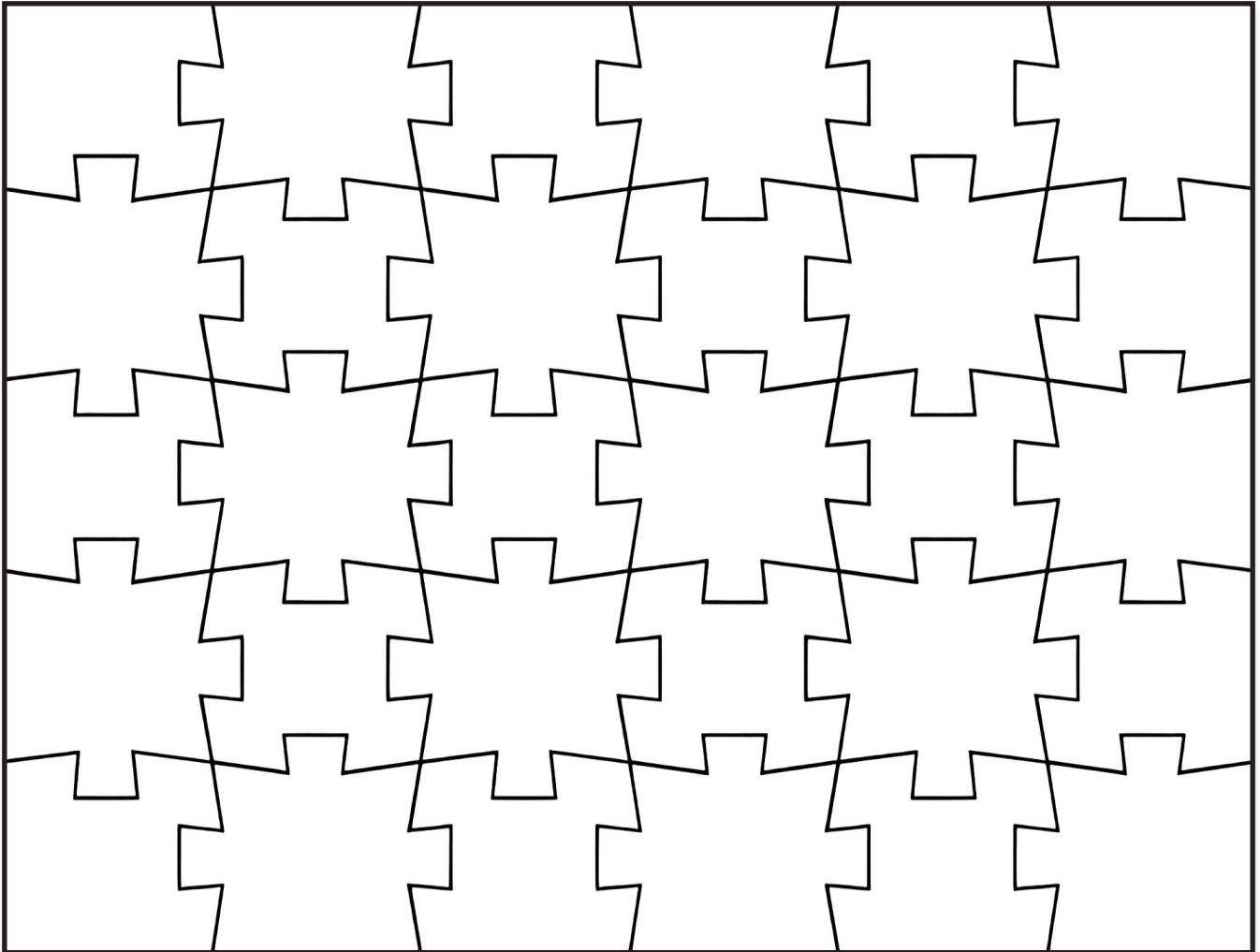
- Did the first two rich men show solidarity to the villagers? Why or why not?
- What was different in the actions of the third rich man?
- How can you show solidarity to someone you do not know?

Highlight that the story shows how people who help others only so that people can see how much they are giving. They do not want to know anything about the people they are giving to.

Other generous people really try to help others, but only so that they can feel better about themselves. But there are other generous people: the best kind. To them, it does not matter what the other kinds of generous people think of them. Nor do they give in a showy way. Instead, they truly worry about how best to improve the lives of those they are helping. They give something much more valuable than money. They give their time, their vision, and their lives.

This was the example of a third man in the story who really engaged himself in helping others.

**SOLIDARITY PUZZLE**



**A VILLAGE ON THE ROAD BY PEDRO PABLO SACRISTAN<sup>4</sup>**

In a land far away, once upon a time there was great poverty: only the rich could manage without great problems. Three of those rich men, and their servants, were traveling on the same road, in a convoy, when they came to a very poor village. Seeing this poverty provoked different reactions in all three rich men.

The first could not stand to see it, so he took all the gold and jewels from his wagons and shared them out among the villagers. He wished them all the best of luck, and he left.

The second rich man, seeing the desperate situation, stopped for a short time, and gave the villagers all his food and drink, since he could see that money would be of little use to them. He made sure that each villager received their fair share and would have enough food to last for some time. Then, he left.

The third rich man, on seeing such poverty, sped up and traveled straight through the village without stopping. The two other rich men saw this from a distance and commented with each other how the third rich man lacked decency and compassion. It was good that they had been there to help the poor villagers.

However, three days later, they met the third rich man who was traveling in the opposite direction. He was still traveling quickly, but his wagons, instead of the gold and valuables they had been carrying, were now full of farming implements, tools, and sacks of seeds and grain. He was heading to the poor village to work with the people there.

This happened a long, long time ago, but we can see the very same thing happening today too. There are some generous people who give only so that people can see how much they are giving. They don't want to know anything about the people they are giving to. Other generous people really try to help others, but only so that they can feel better about themselves. But there are other generous people: the best kind. To them, it does not matter what the other kinds of generous people think of them. Nor do they give in a showy way. Instead, they truly worry about how best to improve the lives of those they are helping. They give something much more valuable than money. They give their time, their vision and their lives.

We still have time to become like the third man.

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<sup>4</sup> The third way of thinking, The New Times, available at <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/56691/the-third-way-of-thinking> (last visited Dec 7, 2022).