

# Session 1: Introducing the Concept of a “Get-Along” Classroom

## respect • collaboration

Session 1 lays the groundwork for a bully-free “get-along” classroom that will last all year long.

### Students will

- identify qualities of a “get-along” classroom
- recognize their responsibility for helping create a safe and supportive learning climate
- create and sign an “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart

### Materials

- globe (see page 6)
- chart paper and markers
- handouts: “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” (page 21, one copy); parent letter (page 22)
- *optional*: art materials for a classroom display

**Introduction.** Welcome your students and express how pleased you are about being their teacher. Let them know that this is an important meeting, one that will help them start to create a peaceful year where they get along with each other and treat each other with kindness and respect.

**Discussion.** Ask students their number one hope for the coming year, months, or weeks. Briefly discuss.

Hold up the globe and tell students that just as we are connected to each other as members of the same classroom, community, neighborhood, and country, we’re also connected as members of the human family. By learning to get along and respect each other in the classroom, we’re preparing ourselves to get along with all kinds of people in all kinds of settings.

Ask: **What kind of world would you like to grow up in?** Students will likely say things like safe, peaceful, fun, and healthy. Write the words on the board.

**Activity.** Now ask: **How about here in our own classroom? How would you like it to be in here?**

On chart paper, write the title “*Qualities of a Get-Along Classroom.*” List what students say. As each child shares, pass the globe.

Next, ask: **What are things each of us can do to create a get-along classroom?** Have students pass the globe as they speak. On chart paper, write the title “*Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom.*” List the agreements they suggest, stating them in the affirmative where possible; for example, instead of “No hitting” write “Keep your hands to yourself.”

As you list the agreements, ask students to give specific examples for each. For example, if someone suggests, “Treat each other with respect,” ask what that means in terms of actions (avoid using put-downs even when you’re angry, refrain from rolling

eyes or laughing when someone makes a mistake or says something you disagree with, etc.).

Keep the list short (seven or eight agreements) and be sure to leave enough room at the bottom for everyone’s signature, including your own. When the chart is complete, ask several students to lead in reading it.

Explain what a contract is and let students know that this agreement is a special kind of contract. Ask students to sign their names to the bottom of the chart. You might say: **By signing a contract we give our word of honor. This means we promise to do everything in our power to live up to the agreements we are signing our name to.**

**Wrap-Up.** Affirm students for working together to come up with agreements they can use all year long. Hold up the globe and remind students that getting along with others and creating peaceful relationships starts with each of us. Say: **If we want our world to become a more peaceful place, it has to begin right here.**

**Follow-Up.** Laminate the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart and hang it prominently in front of the room where you can refer to it every day. This is a living document to be continuously integrated into the daily life of your classroom.

Copy the agreements from the chart onto the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” handout and make photocopies to send home with a parent letter. Use the letter on page 22 or write your own.

**Extension.** Have students create and decorate a classroom bulletin board display that includes the “Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom” chart. Use the display to incorporate other key classroom charts you make in future sessions.

# Our Agreements for a Get-Along Classroom

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. \_\_\_\_\_

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8. \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our class is committed to creating a classroom filled with peace, respect, kindness, and compassion: a “get-along” classroom. Attached are agreements we came up with together to help us do this all year long. Please ask your child to tell you about these agreements and why they’re so important.

Many parents are looking for ways to reinforce respect, kindness, compassion, and peace at home, so periodically I’ll be sending you information to help with this. You are an important part of the peaceful community we’re working to create this year, and I welcome your involvement.

Thank you for your support. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

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Contact me at: \_\_\_\_\_

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