



Instructor Guide

Unit 4: Lesson 3 Power of Crowds

Lesson Objectives:

- The learner will understand how a group of people can have a powerful influence on others.
- The learner will consider how to be comfortable standing out and being different from the rest of the group.

Fundamental Skills or Competencies: Responsible decision-making, Relationship skills, Social dynamics

Time Needed: It is flexible, depending on which activities you choose.

Materials Needed: *Note: Please skip ads wherever they pop up before watching videos.*

- Video clip of Social Conformity Experiment, originally conducted by Solomon Asch (3:39): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8BkzvP19v4>
- Video clip of the “Elevator Experiment” *Would You Fall for That* experiment (2:09) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOOfkM-nGQ>
- Video clip of “80 Strangers Form Human Chain to Rescue Family from Riptide” (2:03) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYCWT3CU0RE>
- Video clip from *Aladdin* of Jasmine’s speech to Hakim (2:01) – How does Jasmine use the power of the crowd? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXMLtJ9InS8>
- Video clip of *Gravity Falls* S01E04 The Hand That Rocks Mabel: Why is Mabel having trouble telling Gideon how she feels? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8Ogggz1Uyk>
- 4-3-6 *Assessment for Power of Crowds* (1 copy per student)
- 4-3-5 *Article on Peer Pressure: Its Influence on Teens and Decision-Making* article (optional to read with older kids or send home for staff and parents)
- Screen on which to project video clips
- Ball for physical activity game called Energy Ball
- For visual art activity:
 - Heavy white paper
 - Butcher block paper
 - Templates of leaves and apples or pre-cut paper leaves and apples
 - Glue or transparent tape
 - Pencils, crayons, markers, paint, glitter
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
 - [I Walk With Vanessa: A Story about a Simple Act of Kindness by Kerascoët](#)
 - [Let the Children March by Monica Clark-Robinson](#)
 - [We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom](#)
- 4-3-4 *Sharing Circle Script for Power of Crowds*

Part One: Watch Video on Power of Crowds

Start by watching the *Power of Crowds Video for Kids*. If kids have trouble focusing, invite them to do 25 jumping jacks or another burst of intense physical activity for one minute before you start the video. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

Part Two: Discussions on Power of Crowds

Lesson Essential Questions: What causes a person to follow the crowd? How do we avoid peer pressure, even when we want to fit in? How can someone learn to be comfortable standing out? What heroic qualities do we display when we resist peer pressure?

Introductory Hook/Question to Engage Students

Sometimes the power of a crowd and peer pressure can be a good thing. Sometimes the power of a crowd and peer pressure can be harmful. Let's watch a video clip of a time in real life when a crowd used their powers for good. (*Please pull up the link and skip any ads prior to the news story*).

- Play video clip of “80 Strangers Form Human Chain to Rescue Family from Riptide” (2:03) and please remember to choose “skip ads” on the video:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYCWT3CU0RE>
- Ask students to share their thoughts on how the crowd used its power.

Discussion of Key Teaching Concepts About Power of Crowds:

Key Concept One: Crowds have an incredible and real power over people.

- Fitting into a crowd can affect the clothing you choose to wear, the activities you do, and whether or not you take risks.
- Studies have shown that the silent pressure of crowds can make people do things they would not otherwise do, such as stand backwards in an elevator!

Key Concept Two: Not all peer pressure is bad.

- Just as people can influence others to make negative choices, they can also influence them to make positive ones. You might join a volunteer project because all of your friends are doing it, or study hard in school because the social group you belong to thinks being successful in school is important.
- Friends often encourage each other to study, try out for sports, and follow creative interests.

Key Concept Three: Adolescents are especially influenced by crowds, and younger adolescents make poorer decisions in a group than older adolescents.

- During early adolescence in particular, kids are drawn to the immediate rewards of a potential choice and are less attentive to the possible risks.
- Younger adolescents make better decisions when they are alone and have time to think. They make poorer decisions when they are in a group and are pressured to act quickly.
- Your ability to control your impulses, think ahead, and resist pressure from others will get better as you get older. Kids struggle the most with the pressure to conform in middle school.

Whole class discussion of how to fight the pressure to conform.

- Discuss how a person might fight the urge to follow the group.
- Challenge the students to choose **one way** to stand out in the next week, forcing themselves to feel different or uncomfortable.
 - Some ideas include: walk backwards around the mall for several minutes, wear a silly hat, wear brightly colored pants or unusual clothing, etc.
- Finally, encourage students to practice feeling different, and explain that this prepares them to be the person that will step up and take action in an emergency. Practicing fighting groupthink (or the pressure to conform) is a critical component of hero training.

Students discuss times when they've felt the pressure to conform.

- Divide the class into small groups and ask students to discuss situations in their lives where they feel the pressure to conform or where they see others around them conforming to the crowd.
- Have a discussion about whether this trend is good, bad, or neutral (dependent upon the situation).

Part Three: Activity Options

For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see *4-3-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Power of Crowds*.

Activity Option 1: Watch video clip *Social Conformity* and hold discussion.

- Before watching, tell the children: “This video shows what happened when a hidden camera recorded an experiment to test the power of crowds to influence social learning. A group of people was told ahead of time to stand up every time they heard a beep, and then a new woman enters the room, not knowing the rule about the beep.
- The unsuspecting woman feels so much pressure to conform that she also stands when she hears the beep, and she even continues to do it after the original crowd leaves.
- As a group, watch the video clip of the Social Conformity Experiment, originally conducted by Solomon Asch (3:39), and please remember to choose “skip ads” on the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8BkzvP19v4>
- After watching, ask the following questions:
 1. Why do you think the woman began standing when she heard the beep?
 2. Why do you think the woman kept standing even after the crowd left the room?
 3. Were you surprised by the outcome? Why or why not?
 4. How do you think you would have responded in this experiment? Why?

Activity Option 2: Watch video clip *Jasmine's Speech to Hakim* and hold discussion.

- Before watching, tell the children: “This video clip is from the live action film *Aladdin*. It is near the end of the movie, when evil Jafar is trying to have Jasmine arrested by the palace guards. Hakim, the leader of the guards, has been obeying Jafar. But Jasmine gives a passionate speech in front of the crowd to remind Hakim that he can make his own choices and do what’s right.”
- As a group, watch the video clip from *Aladdin* of Jasmine’s speech to Hakim (2:01), and please remember to choose “skip ads” on the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXMLtJ9InS8>
- After watching, ask the kids the following questions:
 1. How does Jasmine use the power of the crowd to sway Hakim?
 2. What do you think gave Jasmine the courage to speak out against Jafar?
 3. If Jasmine had given her speech to Hakim without an audience, how might the situation have ended differently?
- Invite children to create a skit about what might have happened if Jasmine had stayed silent and had not made a speech to Hakim. What would it be like to live in Agrabah with Jafar as Sultan?
- Invite groups who elected to create skits to perform them for the whole group.

Activity Option 3: Watch video clip *Social Conformity* and hold discussion

- Before watching, tell the children: “This video shows another example of the power of crowds to teach social conformity. A group of people was told ahead of time to stand facing backwards in an elevator. Then a new person, Nadia, enters the elevator, not knowing the rule about facing the rear.
- Nadia eventually feels so much pressure to socially conform that she also turns to face backwards in the elevator.
- As a group, watch the video clip of the “Elevator Experiment” *Would You Fall for That* (2:09), and please remember to choose “skip ads” on the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOOsfkM-nGQ>
- After watching, ask the following questions:
 1. Why do you think Nadia keeps facing forward at first?
 2. What role does peer pressure play in Nadia’s actions?
 3. Do you think it’s harder to be unique or to conform? Why?

Activity Option 4: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss the Power of Crowds.

Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled *4-3-4 Sharing Circle Script on Power of Crowds*. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

Activity Option 5: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about the Power of Crowds.

We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how it relates to the idea of the power of crowds. Children may draw pictures of the story as they listen.

- [I Walk With Vanessa: A Story about a Simple Act of Kindness by Kerascoët](#)
- [Let the Children March by Monica Clark-Robinson](#)
- [We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom](#)

Activity Option 6: Physical activity: The children will explore the power of crowds through physical games. They will practice ways to stand out safely.

1. **Last Tower Standing:** Kids form a circle. Instructor picks someone to be the Last Tower Standing. Instructor plays music and kids hold hands and dance in a circle. When instructor stops the music, everyone sits down while still holding hands, except for the Last Tower, who tries to stay upright. Give each child a turn to be the Last Tower Standing.
2. **What Are You Doing?:** Have children form two lines so that they are facing each other in pairs. Player A does a motion (i.e. swimming), and then player B asks: “What are you doing?” Player A must name a motion that does NOT match the motion that they are doing. (i.e. “I’m pouring a cup of juice”). Player B must do the motion that player A named. Player A then asks, “What are you doing?” The game continues until someone makes a mistake. When a player messes up, they go to the end of the line and the next person steps up.
3. **Energy Ball:** Split kids into 4 groups: Solar; Nuclear, Wind, Hydro (4 types of energy/power). Instructor throws a ball into the air and calls out one of the four groups. The kids from that group run to get the ball; everyone else runs away. First kid from named group to get ball yells “Energy Ball” and everyone freezes. Person with ball throws ball at a kid from a different energy group. If ball hits the targeted person, they join the thrower’s energy group. If the target catches it, the thrower joins the target’s energy group. Repeat until only one energy group is left.

Activity Option 7: Drama/Theater activity: The children will create skits about this week’s theme, which is *Power of Crowds*. Below are prompts.

- **A Prank or a Problem:** “You and your friends are at an athletic competition being held at the school of your biggest rival. Some of your friends show up with permanent markers, paint, and stink bombs. They want to play a prank on the rival school by painting and drawing on the buildings and setting off stink bombs. Some of the kids want to even record it and post it online. Some of you feel hesitant and don’t want to do it. What happens?”
- **Backwards Day:** “You and your friends show up one day at school and notice that all the teachers and the other students are walking backwards and doing things backwards, such as facing backwards in class. You all feel pressured to walk backwards too. What happens? Are there any problems, such as people tripping? Who speaks up?”

Activity Option 8: Visual Art activity: Kids will work together to create a magical group tree over several days.

- **Magic Group Tree:** Each kid will receive several pieces of heavy white paper. Instruct kids to draw the outline of a leaf on one sheet and an apple on another and cut them out. *Instructor can also pre-cut out a variety of leaf shapes and apple shapes on white paper.*
- After cutting out leaves and apples, children will use markers, glue, glitter, or paint to decorate their unique shapes and give them unique magic powers.
- Instructor will draw or paint a trunk and branches onto a piece of posterboard (or tape several pieces together for a larger tree). After paint dries, each child will tape or paste their decorated shapes onto the branches to make a group tree. Kids can take turns telling the group about the magical powers their apples and leaves hold. Display tree on a wall!

Part Four: Assessment

If you want to do a formal assessment at the end, hand out one printed copy to each child of *4-3-6 Assessment for Power of Crowds*. Ask the children to answer the questions and do the written exercise. For primary students, you can talk through this assessment as a discussion or have them draw pictures.

ANSWERS: The correct answers are indicated in **bold**.

- 1) Tweens and teens tend to make better decisions when
 - a) they have peers with them in a group.
 - b) **they are alone and have time to think.**
 - c) they need to make a decision quickly.
- 2) Younger tweens and teens will make poorer decisions than older teens because younger adolescents are drawn to the immediate rewards of a choice and think less about the risks and consequences involved.
 - a) **True**
 - b) False

Follow up activity:

Invite children to practice standing out or being different in some way over the next week. Survey the children a week later to find out how many of them practiced standing out or being different in some way. Have them share examples of how they did this.

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.C

Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.D

Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate ... each source.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.