

# ***Empathy and Using Our Strengths***

Lesson Objective:

Students will understand what empathy is and how to use their personal strengths to empathize with others.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 3: Walking in Someone Else's Shoes
- Pencils and markers
- Scenario Cards
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Briefly discuss what they think Walking in Someone Else's shoes means.

## **Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script**

### **1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:**

- "Good morning, class! Today, we're going to talk about something very important—walking in someone else's shoes. What do you think this means? This is called Empathy. Empathy means trying to understand how someone else is feeling by imagining what it's like to be in their shoes. It's an important skill because it helps us connect with others and build stronger relationships. Today, we'll read about how Ollie and his friends learn to practice empathy by using their strengths."
- Wait for the children to settle.

### **2. Discussion Starter**

- "Now, can anyone share why it might be important to understand how someone else is feeling, or to have empathy for someone else?" Wait for a few children to respond and acknowledge their answers.
- "Can anyone share an example of having empathy for someone else?" [Pause for student responses.]

- “We’re going to read Chapter 3 from *Ollie’s Superpower Squad- Fourth Grade Challenges*, where Ollie and his friends learn about empathy and using their strengths or superpowers.”

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read chapter 3 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts in the story.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### 1. Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "The third chapter in our novel *Ollie’s Superpower Squad- Fourth Grade Challenges* is called “Walking in Someone Else’s Shoes and while I read the chapter, I want you to think about how the characters use empathy and their strengths to help each other.” (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

#### 2. Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
  - Why do you think Ms. Sanchez wants the class to learn about empathy?
  - What does Buzz mean when he says, "How do we know what someone else is feeling? We’re not mind readers"?
  - How does Ollie explain empathy using Sammy’s strength of listening?
  - When the friends notice Benny is upset, why does Betty suggest they give him space before asking what’s wrong?
  - What do the friends think Benny might be feeling? How do they come to that conclusion?
  - How does Harriet use her strength to encourage Benny?
  - Why does Ollie stop Betty from trying to solve Benny’s problem right away?
  - What does Benny say is bothering him? How do his friends respond?
  - What does Buzz realize about empathy after they check on Benny?
  - How do the friends use their strengths to practice empathy and help Benny?

### Chapter 3: Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

It had been a busy few weeks in fourth grade, and Ollie, Harriet, Benny, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty were adjusting well to their new routines. After learning about their personal strengths and setting SMART goals, they felt more confident than ever. But Ms. Sanchez had another important lesson for them, one that would challenge them to use their strengths in a new way—practicing empathy.

"Today," Ms. Sanchez began as the class gathered in a circle for their morning meeting, "we're going to talk about empathy. Empathy means being able to understand how someone else is feeling by imagining what it's like to be in their shoes. It's an important skill because it helps us connect with others and build stronger relationships."

Buzz tilted his head. "How do we know what someone else is feeling? We're not mind readers."

Ms. Sanchez smiled. "That's true, Buzz. We can't read people's minds, but we can listen to them, observe how they're acting, and use our own experiences to imagine what they might be going through. That's empathy. It's like a superpower that lets you see the world from another person's perspective."

Betty looked thoughtful. "But what if they're feeling something we've never felt before? How do we know what to do?"

"That's a great question, Betty," Ms. Sanchez replied. "Sometimes, we haven't had the exact same experience, but we can still try to imagine how we would feel in their situation. And if we're not sure, we can always ask them how they're feeling."

The friends exchanged glances, realizing that empathy was something they hadn't thought much about. Sure, they cared about each other, but imagining what someone else might be feeling? That sounded like a challenge.

During recess, the group sat under their favorite tree to talk about the lesson.

"So how do we actually use our strengths to help with empathy?" Sammy asked, always thoughtful about how to connect with others.

"I think empathy means using what we're good at to help understand people better," Ollie said.

"For example, you're really good at listening, Sammy. That's already a big part of being empathetic."

Sammy nodded, but Buzz was buzzing with curiosity. "But what if we just can't get it? What if someone's upset and we don't know why?"

Harriet chimed in, "Maybe that's when we need to slow down and really try to see things through their eyes."

Just then, they noticed Benny sitting quietly on a nearby bench, looking glum. He wasn't his usual steady self, and the group could tell something was off.

"I'll ask him what's wrong," Buzz said, about to rush over.

"Wait," Betty said, stopping him. "Let's think first. Maybe he's upset because something's bothering him, and if we ask him right away, he might not want to talk about it."

Harriet nodded. "Yeah, let's give him some space for a minute and try to understand how he might be feeling."

Ollie, always the planner, said, "We know Benny's always the one to help everyone else. Maybe today he's feeling like he needs help, but he doesn't know how to ask."

Sammy added, "Maybe he feels like if he asks for help, it means he's not being strong, even though that's not true."

Buzz, who usually acted quickly, took a deep breath and said, "Okay, let's go over there, but we'll be gentle. If he doesn't want to talk, we'll just sit with him."

The group walked over to Benny and sat down quietly, giving him space to speak if he wanted to. After a moment, Harriet, using her energy and encouragement, gently said, "Hey, Benny. We noticed you're looking a little down. Want to talk about it?"

Benny hesitated but then sighed. "I don't know... I just feel overwhelmed today. I've been trying to help everyone with their projects, but I haven't had time to do mine, and now I'm behind. I feel like I'm letting everyone down."

Betty, always ready to solve problems, immediately spoke up. "We can help you catch up! Let's make a plan."

But before she could rush into fixing the situation, Ollie gently put his hand on her arm. "Maybe we should ask Benny what kind of help he needs first. He might just want to talk for now."

Betty paused, realizing Ollie was right. "Sorry, Benny. How can we help you?"

Benny looked up, grateful for their patience. "I guess I just need a little space to get my thoughts together. I've been helping so much that I forgot to take care of my own stuff."

Sammy smiled softly. "It's okay to take a break and focus on yourself. We're all here for you, but we understand if you need some time."

Benny smiled, feeling relieved. "Thanks, guys. I think I'll just sit here for a little while. I appreciate you checking in."

As the group walked back to their tree, Buzz buzzed excitedly. "That was empathy, right? We figured out what Benny was feeling by imagining what it'd be like to be in his situation!"

Harriet grinned. "Yeah, we didn't rush in to fix things. We listened, gave him space, and tried to understand what he needed."

"And it helped us all connect better," Ollie added. "Empathy isn't always about fixing things—it's about understanding and being there for someone, even if they just need a friend."

Betty, thinking about how her strength was problem-solving, realized something important.

"Sometimes, I try to fix problems right away, but today I learned that empathy means slowing down and listening first. Then, we can help in a way that really supports the person."

Grandma, who had been nearby and overheard the conversation, came over with a smile. "You all used your strengths beautifully today. Betty, your problem-solving skills are great, but it's

wonderful to see you learning to wait and listen first. And Buzz, you used your energy in just the right way by being gentle and waiting for Benny to open up."

"Empathy is about tuning into other people's feelings," Grandma continued. "Just like Lisa Feldman Barrett's theory of constructed emotion teaches us, our brains make predictions based on what we know, but when we empathize, we gather more information to make better predictions. By asking questions and imagining what someone else might be feeling, you're creating more accurate ideas of how to help."

Ollie nodded. "So empathy is like expanding our predictions. Instead of guessing, we're learning and listening to get the full picture."

"Exactly," Grandma said. "And the more you practice empathy, the better you'll get at connecting with others and supporting them in the way they need."

The friends smiled, feeling proud of how they had used their strengths to help Benny. As they headed back to class, they realized that empathy wasn't just about understanding someone else's feelings—it was about using their superpowers to make sure everyone felt seen, heard, and cared for.

From that day on, they promised to keep practicing empathy, knowing that with their combined strengths, they could always find a way to support each other and grow together.

### 3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** "Well, Ollie and his friends are putting their superpowers to good use to help each other out. Maybe they'll be helpful for us too."

### 4. Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- What did you learn about empathy from how the friends helped Benny?
- Why is it important to slow down and listen before jumping in to fix a problem?
- How did Betty learn to use her problem-solving strength in a different way?
- How did Ollie's ability to plan help the group approach Benny's situation?
- Why do you think Benny felt better after his friends practiced empathy?
- How can you use your own strengths to practice empathy with your friends or family?
- What might have happened if the friends hadn't stopped to think before helping Benny?
- How does asking questions help you understand someone else's feelings?
- How does empathy help us build stronger friendships?
- How will you practice empathy in your everyday life?

## Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice empathy in various scenarios, using their personal strengths to understand how someone else might feel.

## Activity: Set Your Own Smart Goal (20 minutes)

### 1. Introduce Activity

"Now that we've seen how Ollie and his friends use their Superpowers to have empathy for their friends, let's give it a try using our own superpowers!."

### 2. Activity Instructions

- Divide students into pairs or small groups.
- Remind everyone to review their Superpower Shields from the previous class
- Provide each group with a role-play card that presents a situation where empathy is needed.
- Ask students to role-play the situation, taking turns being the person who needs empathy and the person offering empathy.
- After each role play, discuss how students used empathy and their strengths to help the other person.

### 3. Reflection



"Today, we learned about empathy and how to use our strengths to support others. We practiced imagining what it's like to be in someone else's shoes and how asking questions and giving space can help us understand how someone is feeling. Empathy helps us build stronger friendships and communities."

## Wrapping it Up

### Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

#### 1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- Review what they learned about the importance of empathy

- Ask a few children to share when this might help them.

## Review and Reflection Teacher Script

### 1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- “Let’s all come back together in a circle.”



“Before we finish, I want you to think about how you can use empathy in your life. What strength can you use to be more empathetic to others?”

- Listen to a few responses and provide positive reinforcement.

### 2. Closing

- "Great job, everyone! Today, we worked on using your superpowers to show empathy for a friend."

## Home Connection Letter

### 1. Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. It explains that we talked about empathy and how to show empathy to a friend.”
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave. “Great job, everyone! This is going to be a super year using our Superpowers!”

## Parent Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Today in class, we explored the concept of empathy, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. We read a chapter from \*Ollie's Superpower Squad: Fourth Grade Challenges\*, where Ollie and his friends learned to practice empathy by using their personal strengths to help a friend who was feeling upset.

The students discussed how important it is to slow down, listen, and ask questions when someone might be struggling with their emotions. We also did a role-playing activity where students practiced how to show empathy in different situations.

To help reinforce this lesson at home, you can:

- Encourage your child to talk about times when they have practiced empathy with family or friends.
- Discuss ways they can use their personal strengths to help others.
- Remind them that empathy is not just about fixing problems, but about listening and understanding how someone feels.

Thank you for supporting your child's learning. We look forward to continuing our journey of learning and empathy together.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]





Your friend looks upset during lunch, but they're not saying why. What do you do?

A classmate gets frustrated after losing a game during recess. How can you respond?

Your sibling is nervous about a school presentation. How can you show empathy?

Your friend feels left out because they weren't invited to a party. What can you do to help?

Your classmate is frustrated because they didn't get the grade they wanted on a test, even though they studied hard. How can you show empathy and support them?

Your friend has to sit out during gym class because they injured their ankle. They're feeling left out and upset. How can you make them feel included?

A new student in your class looks nervous and unsure during lunch. How can you help them feel welcome and included?

A classmate is upset because they accidentally spilled their lunch in the cafeteria. They feel embarrassed. How can you offer support and make them feel better?