

## A Fish Tale Fable

### Overview:

Students hear a fable about treating others fairly without regard to physical characteristics. They discuss the importance of being fair by answering questions related to the story.

### Materials:

- [Fish Fable Handout \(attached\)](#)

### Procedure:

1. Tell the youngsters you're going to read a short story to them and then will ask questions about it.
2. Tell them about the importance of treating classmates fairly no matter what each one looks like.
3. Say: Think about this as you listen to the story.
4. Read "A Fish Tale Fable" aloud, then ask the following discussion questions:
  - What lessons can people learn from these fish?
  - Have you ever met someone who seemed odd at first, but turned out to be really nice?
  - Why do we place so much importance on appearance?
  - If we give others a chance, don't we usually find out that we don't need to be afraid of their differences?
  - Why was the salmon good at making the two groups treat each other fairly?
  - Is it fair to treat others differently because their skin is a different color? Why not?
  - Is it fair to treat others differently because their eyes are a different color? Why not?
  - Is it fair to treat others differently because their hair is different? Why not?

# A Fish Tale Fable

Adapted from *The Classics Modernized* by William Roufberg (P.O. Box 432, Kingston, NJ 08528).  
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## McREL standards

### Language Arts

**Standard 8.** Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

**Level II, Benchmark 3.** Responds to questions and comments (e.g., gives reasons in support of opinions, responds to others' ideas).

## **IDEA #70 Story: "A Fish Tale" Fable**

Every spring, for as long as anyone could remember, melting snow from the mountains would cause torrents of water to rush through the valleys forming a great river that flowed into the sea.

But over time the climate changed and this particular river began to dry up and many freshwater fish eventually were forced to swim out into the ocean.

The saltwater fish were not pleased about having to share their waters with these strange newcomers. "How funny looking these river fish are," said an old salt. "They don't belong here."

He announced to his school, "We have more cartilage, but they have mostly bone. We have live births, but they lay eggs. We can tolerate the cold, but they like warmer waters."

A huge spray of bubbles was caused when the entire school in unison said, "They must go!"

The freshwater fish were angered by these remarks. They also pointed out how the other school differed from them. One responded, "We eat plant life while you swallow other fish. We rely on our sight, but you judge things by more by smell. We have many pretty colors, but you are gray and drab."

A huge spray of bubbles was caused when this entire school in unison said, "We belong here. You should go!"

A nearby salmon overheard this arguing and swam closer. Salmon are special fish and have been living in both rivers and oceans for a long time. The wise old salmon, who had known both kinds of fish all her life told them to stop their bickering. "How silly of you to focus on these differences when it's clear that our similarities are far greater. Can't you see that? We are all fish. We swim. We live in the water. We travel in schools. We have gills to breathe. We have fins to navigate. We are covered with scales. Let's focus on these things instead."

The salmon made everybody think about this and asked all the fish to get to know one another before they made any decisions about those in another group. Though all of them were still aware of their differences, they soon realized that these differences didn't really matter much. Once they got to know those who looked different from them, they understood that looks weren't that important. Soon they began to mix, darting about happily among each other.

. . . The next time you go fishing, look closely how the fish puckers his mouth after he is caught. If he seems to say to you, "I am just a fish," no matter how strange he looks, then you know he has been well schooled.