

Drug and Alcohol Prevention

Video Title: Ashley

Lesson Title: Lean On Me Part 1

Grade Level: High School



Project and Purpose

Students determine the qualities of supportive relationships through examination and creation of song lyrics.

Essential Question

What are the characteristics of a strong friendship?

Materials

- Speakers (for playing music)
- Copies for all students of the lyrics of one song about friendship (see below for a list of recommended songs)
- **Note:** Alternatively you can teach this lesson using several songs in a jigsaw activity. See the "Possible Extension" below for a description about how to do a jigsaw

Procedure

1. Introduce this activity by quoting Ashley's mom from the video. "As a parent, you need to know what's going on with their (your children's) friends." How do you know what's going on with your own friends? How do you choose your friends? How do your friends influence your own decisions? In this lesson and the next, students will determine the qualities of a strong, supportive friendship through song lyrics.
2. Invite students to think about their closest friend(s) and to brainstorm a list of what makes that friendship so valuable. You may want to model this by providing an example from your own life: a friend who is dependable, listens well, etc.
3. Distribute the lyrics for the song about friendship that you've chosen to analyze with your students. Explain that in this session students will look at how one songwriter chooses to describe friendship.
4. Play the song that you have chosen to analyze with your students and ask them to follow along with the printed lyrics that you handed out to them.
5. After the song is over, model for students what they will do in small groups: Identify a word or phrase from the song about what makes for a good friendship.
6. Divide students into small groups. Ask them to re-read the lyrics as a group and to circle any words or phrases about the positive qualities of a good friendship.
7. Bring the class back together and construct a list of the terms and phrases that students identified.

Conclusion

1. Share with students that for decades music stars have written songs about the attributes of supportive relationships. Now that students have analyzed the lyrics from one song (or several) about friendship, what are some of the core characteristics of a strong friendship? In their opinions, how would they rank those characteristics from most to least important for building a strong friendship? Ask them to defend their ranking.
2. How does this relate to Ashley's story?
3. Explain to students that in the second part of this lesson, students will write lyrics for their own original songs about friendship.

Additional Resources

For this activity you'll need to choose between one and four songs about friendship. Below is a list of songs you may choose to use – this list is by no means exhaustive. You can search online for the recordings and lyrics for these songs about friendship

- "Friendship," Cole Porter
- "Lean On Me," Bill Withers
- "I'll Be There," Jackson 5
- "I'll Be There For You," The Rembrandts
- "That's What Friends Are For," Dionne Warwick
- "You've Got a Friend In Me," Randy Newman
- "With A Little Help From My Friends," Joe Cocker
- "You've Got a Friend," James Taylor
- "Count On Me," Bruno Mars
- "Wind Beneath My Wings," Bette Midler
- "Umbrella," Rihanna, Jay Z

Possible Extension

This lesson can be taught as a jigsaw where students are divided into groups to read different song lyrics about friendship. Divide the class into up to four groups. Group A will read song A, group B will read song B, etc. After analyzing the lyrics in their home groups, reshuffle the groups to form new jigsaw groups in which there is a representative from each of the home groups. In their jigsaw groups students share out about the song they analyzed and what their home groups identified as important elements of a good friendship, based on the lyrics. In their new groups they can generate a list of common qualities in a good relationship from based on all of the songs that they analyzed.

Notes
