



Sooper Puppy: What's the Difference?

Theme

Accepting others

Background

All of us are different in some way. When other people judge us because of our physical appearance rather than our personality and character, they shortchange not only us but themselves. Baxter (alias Sooper Puppy) learns that being afraid of someone or something just because of differences is wrong. In this videotape, Baxter's Grandpaw gently guides him to discover that in order to love and accept others, you have to love and accept yourself.

Outcomes

Viewers will

- appreciate ways in which people are similar and different
- explore what it means to be prejudiced against something or someone
- learn that calling people names based on how they look can hurt feelings
- understand why a difference in appearance may take time to get used to
- recognize how to learn and grow from mistakes
- learn something about tolerance

Before Viewing

Invite children to discuss how easy it is to be afraid of things they know nothing about. Use questions such as the following to begin:

1. Have you ever ended up liking something that you were afraid or not sure of at first?
2. Have you ever gotten a terrible haircut or new glasses or something else that other people made fun of? How did you feel?
3. Have you ever been afraid of someone who looked different or spoke a different language? This happens to many people. Why do you think it does?
4. You are different from your friends because no one else in the world is exactly like you. Do those differences prevent you from playing and working together? Why or why not?
5. Some people sometimes call someone else a name because that person has a different skin color, or uses a wheelchair,

speaks with sign language, or is just different. Why do you think people do this? How do you think the person who is called the names feels? Why?

6. Have you ever made up a story about something you didn't really know much about? What are some reasons why you and other people might do this?
7. What is prejudice? Is it fair? Does it hurt people? Who does it hurt? Why?

After Viewing

Encourage discussion of the videotape, perhaps by using questions like these:

1. Why did Baxter and Pickles make fun of the dogs in Grandpaw's book?
2. Why were Baxter and Pickles so afraid of the kangawallaroobie? Why did they want to keep kangawallaroobies out of their club? Why did they want to keep Grizzle and Stoops out of their club? Why was that different?
3. Why didn't the purple bird have any friends at first? Why did the forest turn gray after all the other birds left?
4. What happened when the purple bird saw his reflection in the lake? Was he really purple?
5. Was Grandpaw any different after he got his glasses? How do you know?
6. How did Baxter feel when he realized that Joey was the dreaded kangawallaroobie?
7. What lesson did Baxter and Pickles learn about differences?

School Activity

- Ask children to illustrate a story they have read or seen on television in which someone is prejudiced against someone else. Have volunteers display their pictures and tell the class about the story.

Home Activities

Give each child a copy of Home Activities 17 and 18 to take home. Encourage families to carry out the activities with their children. It is not necessary to have children return the worksheets; they should not feel pressured if their families choose not to participate.

Sooper Puppy: What's the Difference?

To the Family from Your Child's Teacher:

We have seen a videotape called "Sooper Puppy: What's the Difference?" It has helped us understand that all people are different in some way and that we should not be afraid of people who appear to be different from ourselves. In the story, Grandpaw helps Baxter (also known as Sooper Puppy) understand that Baxter's fears about an unknown monster called a kangawallaroobie are misplaced. Baxter and his friend Pickles have formed a new club, whose purpose is to keep kangawallaroobies out. They have invited a new "dog" named Joey into their club. Below is part of the story from the videotape that your child will probably remember. Read the story aloud with your child, encouraging her or him to tell you more detail from the videotape. Then go on to the activity on the following page.

Grandpaw asked how Baxter and his friends knew the kangawallaroobie had fangs and drooled.

Baxter answered, "Uh, I think somebody said it." But he had to admit that person didn't know much about kangawallaroobies.

Grandpaw said, "Hm, I see. So, you've made up your mind about something before you've experienced it or learned more about it. When you're afraid of something or someone just because they're different, well, that's a prejudice and that's not really fair. Can you imagine someone being afraid of you or being mean to you just because of the color of your fur?"

Baxter said, "That would be silly."

"I'm afraid it happens all the time," Grandpaw answered. "But when you can accept and love all the parts of yourself, it's a lot easier to accept and love others even if they're different."

When a zookeeper came to find the runaway Joey, Sooper Puppy and Pickles discovered that their friend was a baby wallaby, which is something like a kangaroo. Joey was the "kangawallaroobie" they had been afraid of!

Baxter said, "Well, we got carried away and started to make things up in our imagination because we didn't understand. It felt good to make a new friend and to realize that sometimes even Sooper Puppies can be prejudiced when they let fear take over instead of love. From now on, I'm not going to judge people just on how they look. I'm going to find out more about them and learn to appreciate their differences."

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Discuss with your child some of the issues raised by the video. You may want to begin by discussing some of the questions below. Invite your child to illustrate each answer in the box above the question. Your child may write words in the box if he or she prefers.

Talk about the questions. Draw pictures about your answers.

How did Sooper Puppy feel about Joey? Why?

How did Sooper Puppy feel about kangawallarobies? Why?

What are two things about you that are different from other people you know and you think help make you very special?