

Extension activity for A FRIEND LIKE SIMON by Kate Gaynor

Objectives:

- Students will understand that it's OK for friends to be different
- Students will learn that everyone has something to offer
- Students will learn how to approach a new friend

Materials: Copy of *A Friend Like Simon*

Activity #1

1. Read *A Friend Like Simon* aloud to the class.
2. Ask students to name something that is the same about them and their friends. Take 3-4 answers, then ask students to name things that are different between them and their friends.
3. Ask students, "Why is it a good thing to have friends who are different than you?"
4. Have students draw a picture of them and a friend that shows how they are the same and different from each other.

Activity #2

1. Read *A Friend Like Simon* aloud to the class.
2. Tell students: today we will practice how to be friends with Simon.
3. Explain that you will pretend to be Simon. Tell students that it's recess and they see you playing alone. What should they do? What if Simon doesn't want to play or doesn't answer? Have students give answers or perhaps act out what to do.
4. Ask students, "If Simon doesn't want to play with you, is it because he's trying to be mean?" Help students understand that kids with autism are not trying to be mean or rude, sometimes they just prefer to be alone—and sometimes they like to be with friends! Remind them that they can always ask Simon to play again another day.