



# Lesson 1

## Empathy: Walking in Someone Else's Shoes

### Say:

There is a saying that we can't understand someone until we've walked a mile in their shoes. What do you think that means?

We could literally put on the person's shoes and walk a mile, but that wouldn't help much! What this is really talking about is trying to put ourselves in the other person's place to understand how they feel. When we do this, it's called *empathy*.

We are going to watch some students explain what empathy means to them.

### Watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icIUdTEQnU>

### Discuss:

What are some of the ways the kids in the video showed empathy to others or had empathy shown to them by others?

What are some ways we can show empathy to the people around us?

### Do:

The following activity is adapted from a lesson in the Transformative Teachers video collection, co-produced by The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at MIT with WGBH on PBS Learning Media. For more information and for examples of student work, visit the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDsihszIJRg>.

Say: We have been talking about empathy and trying to put yourself in someone else's shoes. For this activity, we're going to try to put ourselves in the shoes of... a shoe!

Provide several different kinds of actual shoes for children to pick from.

Say: Let's pick a shoe together and talk about what its life might be like. (Choose a shoe together.)

Ask:

What might the shoe's name be?

What might the shoe do when it wakes up?

Where might the shoe go every day?

What might the shoe like about being a shoe?

What might the shoe *not* like about being a shoe?

Continue asking as many questions as needed. If necessary, show examples of student work or complete a story together. Then, each child can write his or her own story about a different shoe.

## Wrap up:

This week, try to put yourself in other people's shoes. Notice what is happening to you parent, friend, teacher, or classmate, and think about how he or she might be feeling.



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