

# MINDING YOUR MANNERS . . . OR HOW NOT TO GROSS PEOPLE OUT

## OBJECTIVES

- Emphasize the importance of manners and etiquette in everyday life.
- Learn that cultures dictate manners that often vary from country to country.
- Write a proper thank you note.
- Learn that manners and etiquette evolve and change.
- Understand that practicing good manners is empowering.

## MOTIVATOR

Introduce this unit by giving the students a spaghetti dinner. Ideally, it should be set up before the students come to class because the spaghetti is blue, the sauce is red, and it is served on newspaper without the benefit of utensils. Have them take a seat and enjoy themselves; continue writing their reactions on the board. This leads to a great discussion of cultural differences, expectations, what is considered proper etiquette, etc. (50 minutes)

NOTE: Word gets around among students . . . vary the menu in order to keep the students entertained (grits, couscous, hummus and pita, mystery soup, other foods with which they may not be familiar and don't know how to eat, especially without the proper utensils).

## PROCEDURES

This unit can take up to four 50-minute class sessions or longer to complete. One class for the motivator, one for the worksheet answers 1 through 5, and one for answers 6 and 7.

The thank you notes take a least one complete period. To avoid wasting the nice cards, have students do rough drafts first on scratch paper and once you approve them, on the cards. They must not start the notes with I, but should focus on the person to whom the note is sent and the act or gift. Most have no clue on how to properly address an envelope, either. Each is stamped and sent once complete. Give points for proper completion.

Practice handshakes, proper introductions, telephone etiquette, and talk about work ethics. The kids really get into this and class time flies.

## SUMMARY

This unit helps to emphasize the importance of proper manners and etiquette in creating a positive self-concept, developing communication skills, giving good first impressions, and having appropriate social skills. Specific meal etiquette is presented during the foods unit.

## RESOURCES

### Book

Packer, Alex J. *HOW RUDE! The Teenagers' Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and NOT Grossing People Out*; Free Spirit Publishing, 1997.

### Videos

Etiquette Video Series (7 videos in all) CEV Multimedia, 1020 SE Loop 289, Lubbock TX 79404.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

## **MINDING YOUR MANNERS . . . OR HOW NOT TO GROSS PEOPLE OUT.**

1. What are manners?
2. Is etiquette the same as manners? Explain.
3. How are manners often sexist?
4. When can manners be snobbish?
5. List 10 reasons why manners can be good for you.

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_____	_____

6. Below we will develop our TOP 20 list of which manners are considered to be the most important.

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_____	_____
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7. Discuss this statement, "If someone is rude to me, it's okay to be rude in return."

## Minding your Manners

1. “Manners are customs and traditions of a society that govern how people treat one another and behave in social situations. They are meant to smooth the rough edges of human nature. Manners maintain order, promote the values of a society, and foster positive human interactions.” What would happen in our world if everyone did what they wanted to whenever they wanted? Manners are thousands of years old and a study of their evolution can be fascinating. (For example, when forks were first used for eating in France in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, they were condemned. Reasoning? The church clergy decided that since food was a gift of God, as were fingers, only the human hand should be fit to touch it).
2. Etiquette—the sets of rules that give expression to manners—can vary from culture to culture. It changes as society changes . . . some of the old rules are thrown out while new ones emerge. It is context sensitive . . . meaning some of the old rules are thrown out while new ones emerge. (Great discussion topic here). Etiquette is context—sensitive meaning that in many cultures there are subcultures . . . teenagers, bikers, office holders, minorities, same-sex settings, etc. Etiquette often requires constant adjustment such as who pays in restaurants or who buys the movie tickets. Point/Counterpoint: Although we stress manners to make people feel comfortable, manners should often serve to make people feel uncomfortable, such as those who make racial slurs; children running wild; invading a person’s privacy; destroying our environment.
3. We can say manners are sexist when men are encouraged to treat women as the weaker sex and therefore inferior; that girls should never ask guys for a date, etc. Certain rules of etiquette may be based on discriminatory practices, but kindness knows no gender.
4. When manners are snobbish, they serve to make people feel inferior and ignorant. Manners are one thing money can’t buy, although some manners are practiced more by how we treat household help; tip the doorman; or set a very formal dinner table. Picking your nose at the table, however, is unacceptable regardless of class, income, gender, or breeding.
5. “Why manners are good for you: 1. They put people at ease. 2. They impress people 3. They build self-esteem. 4. They are attractive 5. They allow people to live and work together without a lot of friction. 6. Good manners can save your life 7. Good manners are rare 8. Good manners make you feel good. 9. Good manners make others feel good. 10. They don’t cost anything. Manners can also help you get a job; get what you want from your parents; get compliments and respect; impress the opposite sex (and their parents); get help from teachers.”
6. The TOP 20 List. 1. Use the accepted phrases: please, thank you, may I, excuse me, I’m sorry. 2. Write thank-you notes. 3. Look people in the eyes. 4. Clean up after yourself. 5. Respect adults. 6. Don’t interrupt. 7. Treat people the way you would like to be treated. 8. Use good table manners. 9. Give a firm handshake. 11. Have compassion. 12. Be thoughtful about opening doors, helping, and offering your seat. 13. Listen! 14. Show special consideration to guests. 15. Say yes, rather than yeah. 16. Don’t say hurtful things. 17. Think before you speak. 18. Respect the property of others. 19. Respect the feelings of others. 20. Use good telephone manners.
7. Rudeness: The two best ways to respond: 1. Ignore it . . . knowing you possess good manners and self-control. 2. Be polite . . . a sign of strength but an acquired skill.

Quotation marks denote quoted phrases or concepts from *HOW RUDE! The Teenagers’ Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and NOT Grossing People Out* by Alex J. Packer, Ph.D. Free Spirit Publishing, 1997.