



# Autism Awareness Lesson Plan: Grades 3-6

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## OBJECTIVE:

1. Students will learn the definition of autism.
2. Students will be able to state or write basic facts about autism.
3. Students will learn what it might feel like to have different abilities than they do now.

## MATERIALS:

1. Markers
2. Flip Chart or White Board (Flip chart may work better when comparing beginning lesson lists with end.)
3. Autism New Jersey Kids Booklet on Autism or Fact Sheet
4. Book of your choice (See recommendations.)
5. Items for one of the three sensitivity activities you choose.

## OPENING ACTIVITY (10 Minutes)

Draw a line down the center of a flip chart or white board and write the following questions on the top of each side:

- a. What is autism?
- b. How do you think it feels to have autism?

Make a list of all the answers the students give.

## PROCEDURE:

1. Start a discussion about autism, using the **Autism New Jersey Kids Booklet on Autism or the Just for Kids Fact sheet** to choose age appropriate topics. (7-10 minutes)
2. Read a book to the class. After, start a discussion about the book and how it might feel to have an autism spectrum disorder. (15 minutes)

Some recommended books are:

- a. Gagnon, E., & Smith Myles, B. (1999). *This is Asperger's Syndrome*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company. ISBN: 0967251419. 20 Pages.
- b. Thompson, M. (1992). *My brother Matthew*. Baltimore, MD: Woodbine House. ISBN: 0933149476. 26 Pages.

see reverse for more



For additional information, handouts and tools, call 800.4.AUTISM or visit [www.autismnjambassador.org](http://www.autismnjambassador.org).

3. Now it's time for the class to learn what it might feel like to have different abilities. These exercises may give you some idea of what individuals with autism can be experiencing every day. Choose one or more of the following activities (7-10 minutes for each exercise):
- a. **Understanding what's expected of you:**  
Have one volunteer leave the room. The rest of the class chooses an action for the person to perform. Bring the person back in the room. Don't talk or provide gestures. As they begin to walk around the room, clap your hands to give them feedback that they are on track. Clap more when they are closer to either the desired object or action, similar to the game "Hot and Cold." After the person figures it out, ask him or her to explain the experience.
  - b. **Simulate sensory overload:**  
Turn on the classroom radio to a high volume. Try to complete a worksheet for a higher grade level, which requires concentration. Were you able to complete the work?
  - c. **Try communicating without words or gestures:**  
Have someone in a group ask for something she/he wants (a drink of soda, to use the restroom, help using the computer) WITHOUT using any words or hand gestures. Then, have the person describe what the experience felt like.