

Citizenship

**Judgements &
Decision-Making**

*The 'Judgements and Decisions' entries on this page are designed for teachers to read to (or print out for) their students. Responses could either be written down or discussed among the class; some may spark lively debate.
(for ages 10 and up)*



Cleaning Lady

During my second term of school, our teacher gave us a pop quiz.

I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions, until I read the last one: “What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?”

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times.

She was tall, grey-haired and in her 60s, but how would I know her name?

I handed in my paper leaving the last question blank.

Before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. “Absolutely,” said the teacher. “In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say ‘hello.’”

I’ve never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

Talk about or Write about

It’s possible that Dorothy the cleaning lady felt a greater sense of belonging after the quiz....(i.e. more a part of the school community). She might now have had more interactions with the students and enjoyed her job more -whereas before she could have felt lonely, detached and depersonalised.

- 1) Was there a time (perhaps starting at a new school) when you felt depersonalised?
- 2) Why is it important to acknowledge people rather than ignore them?
- 3) Here are two quotes from Mother Teresa: “*The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved.*” and “*One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody.*” Which of these quotes can best be applied to the story about Dorothy? (explain your answer)
- 4) We all have a need to belong. Why is this need so strong in us?



Not enough Money

Anton Guillemo is a fairly shy boy in your class. Though he sits not far from you he's not someone you know very well.

You know that Anton's family is not too well off. He was the last person in class to buy the required textbooks and, even after the big Fundraiser, his family could not afford to pay for Daniel to go on the recent school excursion to Canberra.

Outside class you overhear a boy say to his friend, "Anton Guillemo dresses awfully." You observe that Anton overhears the remark and is obviously very upset.

What is the best thing you can do?



Wise Old Owl

*A wise old owl lived in an oak.
The more he heard the less he spoke;
The less he spoke the more he heard.
Why aren't we all like that old bird?*

Talk about or Write about

- 1) Why is it wise to listen more than to talk?
- 2) When is it especially important to listen?
- 3) What is gossip? Is gossip always negative?



Clever Boy

Karl Grunder is a gifted student. He regularly tops class tests in maths, science and English and the teachers are always saying what an excellent student he is.

You become aware that the 'cool' group in class has started teasing Karl about being so smart. In the playground you notice that Karl seems to be spending a lot of time by himself and he appears to be quite unhappy.

Soon Karl stops trying in tests (he's even putting in wrong answers - deliberately). You know this because Karl's mother told your mother.

What is the best thing you can do?



Zofia's Kittens

Zofia's family recently arrived from South America and don't speak much English.

Zofia herself can speak a little English but, as she hasn't been at your school very long, hasn't yet developed any firm friendships.

You hear the popular Carmella Zeni say to some other girls, "Zofia smells," and you notice that this group is not friendly to Zofia in the playground. Feeling sorry for Zofia you befriend her and, before long, you're invited to her house and she to yours.

Some months pass and one day Zofia brings a cute little kitten to school. It is a fluffy little ball of white and has big, light-blue eyes. All the students -and the teacher- pat the kitten and generally make a very big fuss of it. When Zofia says that her parents breed these cats she is, suddenly, someone everyone wants to know. Zofia, finally, is accepted and liked and she's now welcomed into all the playground games.

But there's something no one but you is aware of...the cats bred by Zofia's parents are cooped up in small cages with barely room to move.

What is the best thing you can do?

