Goal
To experience the effects of inclusion and exclusion in a simulated activity.

Time
15 minutes

Materials
Blank mailing labels or blank name tags, cut in half. Make as many labels as you have students. On the labels, write, “Smile at me,” “Say, ‘Hi,’” “Pat me on the back,” “Shake my hand,” “Give me five,” and “Give me an ‘okay’ sign.” Use other responses that are typical for the group. On 10 percent of the labels, write, “Turn away from me.”

Procedure
Begin the lesson by asking students if they think we sometimes label people because they belong to different groups. Tell them that the labels we put on people often limit their participation in groups.

Tell students that you are going to give them each a sticker. Tell them that you will put it on their foreheads so that they cannot see what it says. Distribute the labels randomly. Ask everyone to remain quiet and not reveal to each other what their labels say.

When everyone has a label, ask students to get up and mill around as if they were in the lunch room at school or at a party. Remind them that they should not reveal what is on anyone else's label. Let students mingle for 4 to 5 minutes, then ask them to return to their seats without looking at their labels.

Discussion
Ask students the following questions:
1. How were you feeling?
2. Without looking at your label, do you know what it says? How do you know?
3. All of you who think you have the “Turn away from me” label, please come and stand together in front of the room. How did you feel?

Allow students to look at their labels now. Explain that all of us have experienced times when we felt like we were wearing a “Turn away from me” label—when we felt left out or targeted. However, some groups experience this more than others, even regularly. What are some groups in your school that get targeted or left out? What groups in society seem to have a “Turn away from me” label on them? (Some examples include people with disabilities, people of a different religion, people of a different race, people who speak with an accent, and underprivileged people.)

Remind them that no one said anything negative to them; it was just in our nonverbal communication—our body language and our expressions. Without words, they got the message. Point out that 94 percent of all communication is nonverbal. We need to pay close attention to our body language and nonverbal expressions as well as our words.

End with the following additional questions:
- What can we do to change our nonverbal behavior to help everyone feel included?
- What do people from groups that are left out or excluded sometimes do? (Sometimes they get together and form their own groups and isolate themselves; perhaps this happened during this activity.)
- Any new thoughts about why members of excluded groups act in society the way they do?
- Any new insights on how being in an oppressed group feels?

Smile at me.

Pat me on the back.

Give me five.

Say, “Hi.”

Shake my hand.

Give me an “okay” sign.

Turn away from me.