

Candy Bar Contract- Sample Lesson Plan

This activity is designed to introduce lower elementary students to some of the main concepts involved in contract law and the attorney's role in resolving disputes concerning legal contracts.

The following props are required:

enough candy bars for the entire class, some plain and some with peanuts
a black crepe-paper "Judge's Robe;" a sheet of black crepe or tissue paper works well once a hole is cut in the center to go over the child's head

Set up the props as follows:

Place a desk or other table at the front of the class to use as the "Judge's Table."
Remove one of the candy bars from its wrapper, hiding the candy and making the wrapper appear to be an actual candy bar.
Place on the "Judge's Table" both the empty wrapper and a real candy bar (of the opposite kind: if empty wrapper is "with nuts" then real candy bar should be "without").
The children are to think that two real candy bars are on the table: one with nuts and one without.
Keep the remaining candy bars out of sight. DO NOT let the children know that there is more candy.

Begin the activity:

Assign one child to be the "Judge." Give him or her the "robe."
Take a "hands up" vote on candy bar preferences (with or without nuts) and divide the class into two groups: "With Nuts" and "Without Nuts."
Have one volunteer from each group approach the "Judge's Table."
Have the child from the "With Nuts" group stand by the candy bar wrapper without nuts and the child from the "Without Nuts" stand by the candy bar wrapper with nuts. DO NOT let the either child touch the candy bar wrappers or your empty wrapper will be discovered.
Explain that each has received the candy bar that they do not prefer. They may freely talk and work out an arrangement so that each gets the bar he or she prefers.
Once an arrangement has been made, have each child pick up the candy bar obtained in the arrangement (not their original candy bar!).
Ask the "cheated" child to explain how he or she feels.
Ask the "not cheated" child to explain how he or she feels.
Direct a discussion between the two children to help settle their dispute. Let the children bargain and dispute on their own as much as possible.
Call upon the "Judge" to decide the dispute.

Follow-up:

Briefly tell the children about the attorney's role in deals and disputes.

Explain that people constantly get into arguments because one person thinks that a situation, not necessarily another person, has been unfair, like the child who had expected a candy bar but got only the wrapper.

When someone feels hurt at losing to another what he thinks should rightfully be his, he and the other each hires an attorney to solve the problem. Because lawyers are experienced and know

the rules, they can make a deal for the person each represents (the client) and then help decide a fair result if the deal later turns out differently than expected.

Because lawyers are not so involved, they can more easily reach a bargain or deal and resolve a later dispute.

Finally, if even the lawyers can't agree or persuade their client to agree, the lawyers and clients can go to court and allow a judge to make a decision.

Keep in mind the following points as you discuss the exercise with the children;

Even at a young age, children are able to apply concepts of fairness and common sense, which in general underlie the law, to resolution of disputes.

Even though events may seem unfair to one party, there is something that can be done to rectify them in a reasonable way.

Two people can exercise control within the rules, as did the children in negotiating their own deal. Only when the bargain struck was found lacking an expected element (in this case a candy bar) was it necessary to rely on formal "rules" for achieving a fair resolution.

The presentation should end with distribution of the remaining candy bars to the entire class.