Alexis O’Neill’s book, *The Recess Queen*, sparks conversations and activities that explore self-concept and identity. It teaches children how to get along with others and how to solve problems peacefully. This lesson is geared toward early childhood, but can be modified for older students. Activities and other resources are shared in this lesson plan.

| Title of NCSS Notable Trade Book: | *The Recess Queen*  
Alexis O’Neill  
Preschool – 3rd Grade  
32 pages  
Scholastic Press  
This lesson should last approximately 45 minutes. |
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<td>Summary:</td>
<td>Mean Jean was the recess queen. No one could play until she said it was okay. If another student got in her way, she would push them down. One day, a new student named Katie Sue came to school. When Mean Jean tried to bully her, Katie Sue did not let it intimidate her, nor did she wait until Mean Jean said it was okay to play at recess. One day she invited Mean Jean to jump rope with her. In the end, Mean Jean was not the recess queen anymore and all of the children played together.</td>
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| NCSS Standards: | • Individual Development and Identity  
• Power, Authority, and Governance  
• Civic Ideals and Practices |
| Materials: | • Chart paper  
• Markers  
• *The Recess Queen* by Alexis O’Neill  
• *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr  
• *A Little Peace* by Barbara Kerley  
• Student-sized bench  
• Paint markers, paint pens, or acrylic paint and brushes |
| Objectives: | 1. Students will analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs in the development of personal identity and their effect upon human behavior.  
2. Students will describe how individual perceptions and attitudes develop, vary, and can lead to conflict.  
3. Students will work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.  
4. Students will examine the rights and responsibilities of the individual in relation to their families, their social groups, their |
community, and their nation.

5. Students will examine issues involving the rights, roles, and status of individuals in relation to the general welfare.

6. Students will identify sources and examples of citizens’ rights and responsibilities.

7. Students will create a definition for peace.

### Procedures:

**Exploration/Introduction:**

1. Before reading *The Recess Queen*, ask the students what they think the book will be about. Take a brief picture walk through the story with the students, sharing things they notice, as well as predictions they have about what will happen in the story.

2. Read *The Recess Queen* to the students.

3. Discuss the story, focusing on the actions of Mean Jean and Katie Sue. What kinds of people were they? How do you know? Did any changes occur in their characters? What happened? Why did it happen? What would you do if something like this happened during recess?

4. On a chart, list responses of how the children would solve the problem of bullying.

**Assessment:** Check for prior knowledge by examining the students’ responses and discussions.

1. Discuss the idea of peace.

2. Chart students’ ideas on a chart entitled “What Is Peace?”

3. Read and discuss *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr and *A Little Peace* by Barbara Kerley.


5. **Assessment:** Using anecdotal records record students’ responses.

**Expansion:**

1. Introduce the idea of a special place in the classroom called the peace bench. The peace bench is a special bench placed in the classroom for us to sit on when we need to take a break, calm down, get our thoughts together, or solve problems.

2. Discuss the purpose of the peace bench and ideas for how it might be used in the classroom.

3. After the discussion, have students take turns drawing ideas of peaceful things on the peace bench.

4. Lesson summary. Hang the class charts on peace constructed earlier and how to solve problems by the peace bench so that children can refer to them when needed. Place the referenced books (as well as other peaceful books) by the peace bench for children to read. Discuss peace and what it means to be peaceful.

**Assessment:** Look at the peace drawings and listen to students’ explanations. What did the student draw and why did they choose that idea? Use anecdotal records to record their responses.
Suggested Extension Activities:

1. Have students paint river rocks with peaceful ideas or words. These can be “planted” in a school garden or placed around the classroom.
3. Have students write a class book about peace modeled after Todd Parr’s *The Peace Book*.

Additional References & Web Links


**About the Author**

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Appendix

Peace

- not fighting (war, punches, weapons, with our bodies or words)
- being nice - manners, kind words, help others
- Treat others like you want to be treated!

Quiet (moment of silence, thinking)

Yoga, deep breathing, rest your brain, clear your mind, think of peaceful thing

Doing fun stuff with friends and family

Massage

Sleeping late/resting

Doing something you love
How do we solve problems?

- TALK it out with the people CALMLY
- If 2 want the same thing, play a game to see who gets it.
- Take turns/share
- Walk away, calm down, come back
- Think BEFORE you speak and act
- Think about an appropriate solution
- Go to Ms. Daniel for help after talking to
- Go STRAIGHT to Ms. Daniel if fighting, hitting, etc.

Peace Rocks
Pinwheels for Peace