

Flip the Switch

The Case of the Annoying Teacher

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Object Lesson

Grades: 5-12

Group Size: 3 or more

Time: 15 minutes

Introduction: An important part of accessing resilience is having the ability to “flip the switch” and see your problems in a different light, even in situations that might otherwise seem unbearable. This humorous activity will demonstrate that students can move forward and be resilient, even in the face of difficult challenges.

Materials:

- Whiteboard and marker

Activity:

Have students think about the behaviors, characteristics, and personality traits of the worst teachers they’ve ever had. Have students share their thoughts, and write a list of responses on the board. Caution students to not use anyone’s name.

Ask for a student volunteer. Try to pick a student who you have observed is outgoing and funny. Tell the student that you are going to randomly call out different personality traits from the list and the student will be acting them out as if he/she were the teacher and the other students were the class. You might play upbeat or silly instrumental music during this portion of the activity to build energy and an atmosphere of humor. (One example is the instrumental music from the film “Napoleon Dynamite.”)

After you’ve called out several items on the list, have the class give the student volunteer a round of applause for this performance and have the student return to his/her seat.

Instruct the class to imagine a teacher with a composite of these personality traits. Have them imagine that they are in this teacher’s class for the entire semester with no option of transferring out.

Processing the Experience:

- What are some examples of flipping the switch in this situation?
- Is it possible to still learn something from this teacher’s class?