

EMPATHY LESSON: IDENTIFYING FEELINGS



students will

- Identify the facial expressions and body language used by others that correspond to different emotions

materials

- Chalkboard, white board, or smartboard
- slips of paper (optional)

approximate lesson length: 35 minutes

Understanding how another person may be feeling in a given situation helps children be able to respond with care and kindness. This activity will help students identify different emotions that their classmates will act out.

Pre-Activity Discussion (5 minutes)

Begin by talking with the group about the importance of recognizing other people's feelings. Invite discussion with these sample questions:

- Are other people always going to tell us how they are feeling using their words?
- Raise your hand if you can tell when another person is happy? How about when another person is mad? Scared?
- What are the clues that help you figure out what the other person is feeling?

Students may respond with such answers as "*I can tell they're happy if they are smiling*" or "*I can tell they are upset if they are crying.*"

Say: We can tell a lot about how someone is feeling through their body language (how you are standing or sitting, how you're holding your hands and arms, etc) and facial expressions (smile, frown, scrunched nose, squinted eyes, etc), without hearing them talk.

Activity (20 minutes)

(Note: For large groups, consider splitting students into smaller groups so more people get turns to act out the charades.)

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In this game of Feelings Charades, just like regular charades, the actor cannot talk. One student will act out an emotion word, and the rest of the group will guess the emotion.

1. Invite students to come up with a list of different feeling words, and write them on the board.* Try to have about the same number of enjoyable feelings (i.e. happy, excited) as uncomfortable feelings (i.e. frustrated, confused, angry). Demonstrate how to act out one of the emotion words, and have the group guess.
2. Ask a student to come to the front of the room and select one of the feeling words that is listed on the board. That child will then face the other group members and act out the emotion using facial and body expressions, while the other children try to guess which feeling it is. The child that correctly guesses the feeling will get to go next. (You may want to have students raise their hands to guess rather than calling out.)
3. Put a check mark next to each word as it is used (or erase the word), and continue playing until all the words in the list have been acted out, or as many fit in your time frame.

*If you would like to make the game more difficult, eliminate the word bank from the board before you start the game. Instead, write the words on slips of paper as students come up with them, then have students choose from the slips of paper.

Post-Activity Discussion (8 minutes)

After completing a game of Feelings Charades, help students reflect on the activity by discussing some of the following questions:

- What clues did you use to guess what another person was feeling during the game?
- If it was easy at times, what helped make it easy? What made it challenging?

Help students realize that it can be difficult to know what another person is feeling, especially when we don't know the other person that well, or when that person is experiencing multiple emotions at the same time.

Encourage students not to jump to a conclusion about someone else's feelings.

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Explain that we can make educated guesses like we did in the game, but the best way to know and understand another person's feelings is to ask him or her. Suggest the following response:

"It seems like you may be feeling <insert feeling word>, would you like to talk about it?"

Remind students that it is okay if the other person does not want to talk about their emotions, and that, as friends, we should respect that decision. Offer this suggested response for that situation:

"Okay, I understand. If you change your mind, just let me know."

The goal is to communicate support and understanding.

Educator Notes