

Extra-Curricular Activity: Learning About Ourselves – Knowing Our Own Downsides and Advantages

<p>Description of educational activity:</p>	<p>Duration: 60 minutes (this activity will take 60 minutes in total but can be split into smaller lessons)</p> <p>Pupils' age: 9-12 (senior cycle in primary school)</p> <p>Organisation of the class: Group work activity; pupils will work on their own masks but will be working in a group setting. The activity will be book-ended by group discussions on the topics also.</p> <p>Pupils' task: Step 1: Introduce pupils to the topic of 'Masks We Wear in Society'. The teacher introduces some social scenarios and discusses how we each can put on different faces and act differently when we are in certain social situations. One of the main reasons for this is that people tend to compare themselves to others or tend to have an 'idea' of themselves in their minds and depending on if they are in a group of their peers, family members, etc. they can act in different ways to portray the persona that they think fits the social situation. This is a normal behaviour and this should be explained. Wearing 'masks' is a way of hiding our true selves – it acts as protection so that we don't expose our true selves and risk getting hurt or judged; it is also an effective way of feeling like we fit in with our peers. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Step 2: Pupils are invited to participate in a short group discussion on this topic. The teacher introduces three scenarios to the pupils, asking them to identify how they act 1. At home; 2. In school and 3. In social situations with their friends, or perhaps with their team-mates if they play a sport, etc. Pupils are given a sheet of paper and a pencil and are asked to write down 3 characteristics of their behaviour in those 3 social situations. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Step 3: Art supplies are distributed to pupils. They are each given 3 paper plates and 3 elastic bands – these will become their 3 masks. Pupils will be asked to design 3 masks which represent the 'masks' they wear in the 3 scenarios; at home, in school and in social situations with their peers. They will be given art supplies such as paints, colouring pencils, crayons and markers; and also newspaper and magazines so that they can take clippings of relevant images and create a collage on their mask – for example, if they pretend to like a certain type of music in</p>
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	<p>front of peers, or if they pretend to like a particular football team at home to connect to a sibling – these are elements of their masks that they can incorporate into their design. (30 minutes)</p> <p>Step 4: Group discussion - pupils are asked to discuss the masks they wear in each setting. The teacher introduces the following questions and asks pupils to answer them as they feel comfortable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which mask do they feel most themselves in? 2. Is there a mask they wear when they are completely alone and which mask is this most like? 3. If they could, which mask would they eliminate? 4. Are there elements of one mask they would like to change? 5. How will they use the information they have learned about themselves today? (10 minutes) <p>Evaluation and assessment method: This activity will be assessed based on the quality of the group discussions and on the quality of the masks produced. If necessary, pupils can complete a short (200 word) essay on how the activity made them feel and what they learned about themselves.</p> <p>Effect of the activity on increasing the capacity and raising awareness in combating bullying: This activity will help pupils to identify and examine the different ways they act around important people or important groups that they interact with in their daily lives. It will help them to become more self-aware and to understand that just because someone acts a certain way in school, for example, this is not their whole persona. Incidence of bullying in school tend to arise from an over-simplification of an individual's traits, i.e. if a pupil is considered to be "weak" or a "nerd" – this activity helps pupils to understand that all people take on different roles and different characteristics depending on their social situation and the way they act in school does not define them as a person.</p>
<p>Tags:</p>	<p>Self-Awareness as a Defence Against Bullying, Causes of Bullying, Bullying related to Perceived Differences, Knowing Yourself, Understanding Strengths and Weaknesses</p>
<p>Objectives:</p>	<p>This activity intends to enable students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be more self-aware and understand that we all take on certain roles and behaviours depending on what social group we are interacting with; 2. Identify how different social situations make them act and how they feel among certain social groups;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Realise the characteristics of their fellow pupils and the impressions their peers have of themselves – is this different to how others perceive them; 4. Understand that everyone wears a ‘mask’ in society and even though we may appear to be different, we are all the same. Pupils will realise that we all have strengths and weaknesses and these should be celebrated and not used as an excuse to bully or engage in the bullying of others.
Material:	<p>Paper and pencils (for brain-storming exercise); Paper-plates x3 for all pupils (for designing masks), elastic bands (to attach to back of paper plate so that it can be worn as a mask); For decorating and designing the masks: pens, pencils, crayons, markers, paints, magazines and newspaper clippings (for collage), glitter, stickers, scissors, glue, other craft materials as available.</p>
Notes for the teacher:	<p>This could be a difficult topic for pupils to address because it asks them to consider that they may have more than one personality or behaviour than that which they show in school. They may have built up a ‘school persona’ and think that their friendships are based on maintaining that persona so they may be reluctant to admit that they act differently at home or in a social situation, etc. Support them to understand that all people act this way in different situations. Where there is reluctance from a majority of the class group it is a good idea for the teacher to also make 3 masks for him/herself and to show that adults can play different roles and wear different masks too.</p> <p>If the pupils are happy to do so, consider making a display in the classroom where the pupils’ masks for how they act in school are displayed on the wall as a reminder that the way they act in school is only one part of their individual personality.</p>
Recommendations for additional activities:	<p>Pupils may wish to work in pairs or small groups to write a short play or scene about the different masks they wear in social situations. This could be as simple as setting the scene in school or at home and asking a few pupils to wear their respective masks for that setting and act how they normally would in those circumstances. This will help pupils to identify their behaviours in different settings, and will help them to become more self-aware as a result.</p>