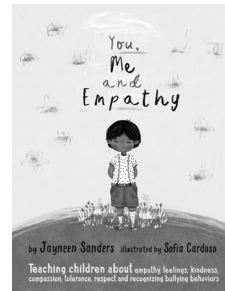


3 Lessons in Developing Empathy



FOCUS TEXT: *You, Me and Empathy* (ages 3–9 years)

Depending on the age of the children, the following lessons will take place over three sessions. Please adapt the lessons to suit the needs and ages of the children.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Children will understand that:

- everyone has feelings
- recognising our own feelings allows us to show empathy towards others
- we can show empathy by helping others
- everyone has the ability to show empathy.

In these lessons children will:

- discuss emotions and feelings such as happy, sad, worried, angry, etc.
- analyse situations that evoke certain emotions, and realise that others experience emotions in similar ways

- reflect on the people in their lives who help them
- explore ways they can show empathy in their everyday lives.

For the lessons you will need:

- *You, Me and Empathy* (book)
- large sheets of poster/butcher's paper
- whiteboard, markers
- coloured pencils, textas
- 3 dolls or soft toys to use for role play
- resource masters: 'Feelings Cards', 'Who Helps Me?' and 'Empathy Star'

Lesson 1: Understanding Feelings

Tuning In: Show Me the Feeling!

You will need: resource master 'Feelings Cards' cut out and shuffled, a small open area to allow students to move around

Have students sit in a circle on the floor. Ask them to make a happy face. Have them look around at each other's faces. Ask, 'What did you see?' Discuss their responses. Now, ask students to make a sad face and observe others; then an angry face. Ask, 'When we were making the faces to show different emotions, did only our faces move, or did other parts of our bodies move too?' Discuss. Have students stand up. Inform them that this time they can move around and use their whole body to show how they are feeling. Draw a card from the 'Feelings Cards' pile and read it out. Have students demonstrate this feeling. Choose another card and repeat. Discuss as required.

Whole Class Discussion: I Feel Happy

You will need: resource master 'Feelings Cards' cut out and shuffled, large sheets of poster/butcher's paper, textas

On a large sheet of butcher's paper, write the following sentence, 'I feel happy when...' and write an example of when you feel happy, e.g. '... I'm walking my dog.' Ask, 'Does walking your dog make you feel happy too?' Discuss. Next, select students to give examples of what makes them feel happy. Write their suggestions on the poster. Ask the other students to raise their hands if that makes them feel happy too. As students raise their hands, promote the idea that everyone feels happy at times, and that we can feel happy for the same reason as someone else, or for different reasons.

Note: school-age children will move on to the Small Group Activity; for younger students, it may be preferable to discuss another emotion as a group, e.g. sad or angry, and share examples. Students could then draw a picture of themselves when they are happy/sad/angry. These could then be used for the Reflection Activity (see below) and later displayed in the classroom.

Small Group Activity: Think and Share

You will need: resource master 'Feelings Cards' cut out and shuffled (or perhaps 2 sets, depending on the class size); a coloured version of the Feelings Cards can be found & downloaded for free at www.e2epublishing.info/posters, large sheets of poster/butcher's paper, textas

Have students work in groups of three. Provide each group with a different 'Feeling Card'.

Note: you may choose to remove 'happy' from the set to avoid repetition, or give this card to students who may require extra support.

On the large sheet of paper, have one student in the group write their sentence using the given Feeling Card (in this case 'embarrassed'), e.g. 'I feel embarrassed when I trip over.' Repeat with other group members. Encourage the group to brainstorm and write as many examples as they can when they have had this feeling. Once each group has a provided a few examples, have them stop writing, and select one group member to stay with their poster. The other group members separate and move to a different poster (ensuring the group size remains at around three students per group). Have students share their ideas with their new group, then write in any new suggestions from new members. Repeat if time allows. Have students move back to their original group and 'poster', ready for reflection.

Reflection

Have each group share their poster with the class. When they have finished, select one or two of the examples and ask the class to raise their hand if this is something that makes them feel that emotion too. When relevant, ask, 'How would you know if someone was feeling like that?' Link the discussion back to the body language activity from the Tuning In. Then ask, 'How are you able to understand the way they are feeling?' Steer the discussion towards the idea that we understand how someone feels when we can recognise that we have felt that way before — this is called empathy.

Lesson 2: You, Me and Empathy

Tuning In: Introducing the Text

You will need: You, Me and Empathy by Jayneen Sanders

Have students lie down on the floor with their eyes closed. Read *You, Me and Empathy* to the class, skipping the questions. This should allow children to feel the rhythm of the poem, and to hopefully put themselves in the position of Quinn, reflecting on their personal experiences and feelings. Have students sit up, and if time allows, briefly have some students share their thoughts.

Whole Class Activity: In-depth Reading

You will need: You, Me and Empathy by Jayneen Sanders

Read *You, Me and Empathy* to the class — this time showing each illustration and stopping at the discussion questions. Present the idea that each of us has a person or persons who can help us out. Discuss who helped Quinn and how they helped.

Independent Task: Who Helps Me?

You will need: resource master 'Who Helps Me?'

Have students complete resource master 'Who Helps Me?' Provide students with time to think about the people in their lives who help them.

Reflection

Have students sit in a circle to share some of their responses to the questions, i.e. ask, 'Who helps you when you've fallen over?' Move around the circle, allowing each child to read their responses. Discuss similarities and differences in their responses.

Lesson 3: Be an Empathy Star

Tuning In: Empathy Role Play

You will need: 3 dolls or other toys (teddy/fluffy toy)

Introduce the dolls to the class. Give them names that are easy for the students to remember. Set the dolls up and use them to demonstrate one of the following situations:

- one doll has no one to play with at play time, while everyone else is having fun
- one doll is scared to balance over the bridge (a ruler between two chairs) while the others are doing it confidently
- one doll slips over and hurts her/his arm.

Note: select the scenario that is most relevant to your class, or make up another to better reflect their needs. Using dolls as a tool for role play, rather than people, externalises the problem and assists younger students to problem solve.

Within the chosen scenario, first point to the doll who is having the problem, and ask, ‘How do you think X is feeling? Have you ever felt like this before?’ Then, point to one of the other dolls and ask, ‘How is this doll feeling? Is there any way this doll could help X? Have you ever had to help someone in this way?’

Whole Class Discussion: When Can We Show Empathy?

You will need: whiteboard (or large sheet of paper), markers

As a class, brainstorm as many scenarios as possible for when we can show empathy towards others, e.g. ‘When I see a person with no one to play with, I can ask them if they’d like to play with me. When I see someone who is having trouble with their school work, I can ask them if they need help. When I see someone fall over, I can offer to help them up.’, etc.

Independent Task: Empathy Star

You will need: resource master ‘Empathy Star’

Have students complete resource master ‘Empathy Star’ by filling in each of the five corners of the star with ways in which they can show empathy towards others. They may use examples from the Whole Class Discussion or they may like to think of their own examples.

Note: for younger students, have them draw one way they can show empathy towards another person.

Reflection

Select students to share an example from their work to the class. Ask, ‘How does it make you feel when someone offers to help you out/when you have helped someone else?’ Encourage students to be aware of the needs of others around them, and to keep in mind that the smallest acts of kindness can have a large impact on the lives of those around them.

Teaching notes written by Yale Mercieca

Feelings Cards



worried



proud



calm



happy



sad



brave



angry



scared



disappointed



confused



lonely



shame



guilty



embarrassed



excited

Who Helps Me?

Name: _____

Draw or write about the people who help you ...

when I'm feeling sad ...	when I'm feeling happy ...
when I'm scared to try something new ...	when I've fallen over ...
when I'm feeling sick ...	when I'm feeling lonely ...
when I'm not sure how to finish my school work ...	when I'm feeling angry...

Empathy Star

Name: _____

I can show empathy by ...

