

Classroom Activity

What If? Roleplay - Primary School Activity

Objective

To help pupils see how different kinds of words (positive vs negative) can shape how someone feels, what they do next, and how others respond. Pupils explore how changing words can completely change the outcome of a situation.

Time

15-20 minutes + reflection time

Age Group

KS1/2

Introduction

Words are powerful because they don't just affect the person who hears them once - they can change what happens next. Today you're going to act out some short 'what if' plays, where we see how words can change the story in two very different ways.

Group Setup:

- Divide class into small groups (4-6 pupils)
- Each group will act out:
 - A short positive scenario chain (compliment/encouragement)
 - A short negative scenario chain (unkind/hurtful words)

Example Demo (teacher led)

Scene 1 (positive):

- Pupil A shows their drawing
- Pupil B says *'Wow that's amazing - You're really good at art!'*
- Resulting scenes: Pupil A enters an art competition > gets more confident > starts helping others with drawing > makes new friends

Rewind scene (negative):



- Same start: Pupil A shows their drawing
- Pupil B says: 'That's rubbish, you can't draw. You should probably stop trying'
- Resulting scenes: Pupil A feels upset > stops drawing > hides work in lessons and stops putting hand up to answer > feels lonely and lacks confidence

Instructions:

1. Choose one of these starting situations (feel free to come up with your own):
 - Someone shares their work in class
 - Someone is picked for a team in PE
 - Someone gives an answer in a lesson
 - Someone sings/dances/performs on stage
2. Act out the first version: positive comment/compliment > act out 3-4 follow-on scenes showing how things could play out from there as a result of hearing those words
3. 'Rewind' and act out the second version: unkind comment > act out 3-4 follow-on scenes showing how things might have been change
4. Be ready to share your play with the class

Sharing and Reflection:

- Invite a few groups to perform their plays
 - After each, ask the class:
 - "What difference did the words make?"
 - "What were the main impacts in each scenario?"
 - "Which version would you rather experience in real life?"
 - Teacher reinforces key message:
 - Words can change the story. We can use our words to help people grow, feel proud, and try new things. Each of us has the power to make someone's day better with just a few words.
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