

Understanding differences

Key stage 1

Lower key stage 2

Learning Intention:

- To know the importance of valuing oneself.
- To begin to realise that everyone is different

Learning Outcome:

- To describe and begin to value individuality and to recognise and celebrate their emotions, gifts and talents.
- To know and value the different groups to which they belong.
- To recognise similarities and differences between themselves and their peers.

Resources:

- Paper or card leaf shapes for each child printed with "I am good at".
- Tree trunk and branches drawing or printout (large).
- Individuality Bingo grid.
- Piece of paper either printed with the heading "WANTED" or with a simple plain shield shape.

Teacher Introduction:

These lessons will help us to learn that everybody is different.

We all like different things – for instance I like sprouts! But I know some of you don't. Some of you like football – but I don't! [insert appropriate contrasts that match the class dynamic]. Sometimes we might look different to each other or talk in a different way. Some of us might wear different clothes or do different things when we are not at school. The important thing that we will be learning today is that each of us is special. We all have different skills and different abilities. By being able to recognise what makes us different and special, we encourage our self-esteem and confidence to grow.

Activity 1:

Give each child an Individuality Bingo grid. They have five minutes to find someone in their class who has one of the characteristics listed, ticking off each one as they find it (adapt these to the class so that at least one child represents each characteristic). As soon as one child has ticked all the boxes they should shout "Bingo."

Belongs to a club like Brownies or Cubs	Supports a football team	Can speak another language
Doesn't have any brothers or sisters	Belongs to a club at school	Has a pet at home
Can cook something yummy	Makes their own bed at home	Is learning a musical instrument
Has a big brother	Wears glasses	Has a little sister

Ask the children if they found out about any other differences that were not on the grid. Scribe a list of these. Highlight those differences which we can see (like hair colour) and those which we find out about when we talk to other people (for instance, whether someone has siblings).

Total up all the differences which were noted and compare these to the number of children in the group – “so just in our class, which is 25 children, we found 17 ways of being different.”

Also useful for: FP, CF

Activity 2:

Ask the children to pair up with someone they do not normally work or play with. Give them 5 minutes to complete the following task:

“Talk to each other and find four ways in which you are alike and four ways in which you are different to each other.” Give an example of each so the children understand the concept – for instance, “you are alike in that you are both six years old but you are different because one of you is a boy and one is a girl.”

Ask one child to scribe a list or draw a picture of the similarities and the other to scribe a list or draw a picture of the differences. Discuss as a class what is different and what is similar.

Did each pair find the same things? Did each pair interpret “alike” and “different” in the same way?

Also useful for: FP, CF

Activity 3:

Place the outline of a tree and branches on the wall. Give each child a paper or card leaf shape printed with the words, “I am good at...” (or ask the children to write this). Ask the children to write their name on the leaf and then to write or draw to complete the sentence. Children can have as many leaves as they wish but make sure that each child completes at least one. Give some examples so children do not focus solely on school work:

- I am good at helping people
- I am good at keeping my table tidy
- I am good at cheering up my little sister

Ask the class to stick the leaves on the tree, reading out to the rest of the class what they have written.

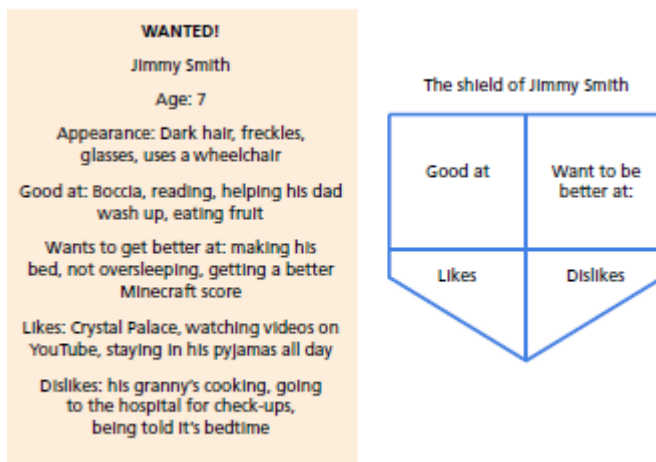
Also useful for: FP, UE, CF (see also activity 2 in “body parts” below)

Activity 4:

Explain to the children that the word “unique” means that there is nobody in the world quite the same as them.

Provide each child with a ‘WANTED’ poster or a shield outline. (If using the shield, explain how heraldry was used to illustrate important things about someone so that other people could recognise them).

Ask the children to complete the poster or shield to illustrate themselves, their skills and abilities, and the things they want to get better at. Encourage them to add a self-portrait and make sure they give separate examples for each section. Exemplars are shown below:



Also useful for: FP, UE, CF

Plenary:

Remind the children what they have learnt:

- We are all similar and different to each other.
- We each have different skills and abilities and are special in our own way.

Debriefing activity:

Ask each child to name the thing they like best, either about themselves or their favourite hobby. Allow a minute's quiet reflection on how these things make us feel happy and proud, then end the lesson.

Differentiation for SEND:

Some children may see themselves as defined or limited by their condition or disability, especially those who have lots of medical intervention. These children may say things like “I can’t do that because I’m autistic” or may give their disability as the first of their characteristics – saying “I am blind” before anything else.

It is of course important to acknowledge the realities of life for these children and teachers need to be sensitive to the ways they may be affected by their disabilities or condition.

However, it is useful to show children how they have much more in their lives. Encouraging them to focus on things they can do allows them to explore these other facets of themselves. All activities in this topic allow teachers to include this within the lesson.

Another useful resource is a blank cardboard jigsaw puzzle, available from craft or stationery shops. Children can put different things about themselves on each piece, including their condition or disability, but including other things such as talents or aspirations. Teachers can then remove the pieces relating to the disability; the child can then see how much is left and how the jigsaw still holds together even if that important piece is taken away. This can help children to see that they are more than someone with a challenging circumstance. (This activity is also useful for children who feel defined by other issues, such as “I am no good at games” or “I am the only one with two dads”).