

TEAM SPIRIT

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS



‘I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.’

Maya Angelou



IDEAS AND ISSUES TO EXPLORE WITH YOUR CLASS

CLASS PROJECT

During the animated film, *Team Spirit*, a number of feelings and emotions are experienced by members of both teams involved in the match.

- Discuss the importance of expressing feelings/emotions in words.
- A safe environment is key to allowing children to express themselves and 'circle time' can be a perfect opportunity for children to find the confidence to talk openly. Before beginning, remind the children of the rules of circle time and reassure them that their words and thoughts are accepted without prejudice.
- Can the children list the feelings and emotions, and the situations that gave rise to the feelings and emotions, felt by the children in *Team Spirit*, eg fear, nervousness, worry, hope, power, excitement, happiness?
- Can the children empathise with the team members? Have they had similar feelings? Can they give other examples of situations that give rise to these feelings and emotions?
- In *Team Spirit*, we saw Abbi openly ask Sadiq about his feelings, and Sadiq answered her honestly, explaining that he was unable to talk to his grandmother on her birthday. There seems to be a sense of trust between these two friends – perhaps Abbi understands what Sadiq is going through as she had a similar experience when her father was not granted a visa to attend her Graduation Ceremony (see *The Memory Box* animated film and Teaching Guide). At times, it can be difficult to verbalise our feelings, especially if we are unsure that our friends have similar feelings.

If children felt unable to verbalise their feelings, how could they communicate their worries? It might be possible to have a 'worry box' in school/classroom where children can privately explain (in writing) how they're feeling, or write a letter to a friend, draw a picture (visual representation) to express a feeling or explain a situation. Or a 'buddy system' could be set up whereby children are linked with another child in the class/school that they can talk to in times of need.

Children with specific emotional issues who find it difficult to talk could become a member of a Rainbows group (peer support groups to help children deal with death, separation, divorce or other painful transitions in their family).

See www.rainbowsireland.com

THE OBSERVER

During the match between the Bashers and the Rockets, Abbi's mother is watching from the sidelines. She is unhappy with the way the match is being refereed. There is a sense of frustration when she observes the unjust situation playing out in front of her (bully-tactics from opposition team). Abbi's mum is unable to effect change. The management of the behaviour is out of her control.

- What could have happened if Abbi's mother started interfering and talking to the referee?
- Have the children ever been in a situation that made them feel frustrated and powerless? Can they explain what happened to make them feel this way? What did they do (or not do) about their feelings?
- What might Abbi's mother have done or said to try and fix the situation?

EXPECTATIONS

In *Team Spirit*, when Lucy says, 'I knew this would happen', she shows that she is fearful of losing even before the game begins.

- What could Lucy have done to make herself feel better or more positive?
- Have the children ever felt they were 'fighting a losing battle'? Generate discussion around what situations made them feel this way. Did the outcome match their expectations? Did they do anything to change the situation or could they have prepared themselves better to change the outcome?



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BEING OVERCOME

Sometimes our feelings and emotions seem to take over our bodies. During these times, we cannot control the physical effects of our emotions. For example, we saw that Sadiq was unable to play due to his sadness. At this time, the supportive words from Abbi gave him confidence and hope.

- Can the children think of times their family or friends have supported them in this way?
- Have a 'thought shower' to generate phrases and/or idioms linked to emotions (rooted to the spot, frozen, over the moon, butterflies in my stomach, blow your top etc.). Possible follow-up lessons could include: creative writing exercises, responding to poetry, writing poetry, representing idioms/phrases visually in a visual arts lesson.
- Talk about physical outbursts as a result of frustration, anger or build-up of emotions. Where necessary, a class may benefit from problem-solving workshops, conflict-resolution workshops or relaxation techniques (eg counting to ten, deep-breathing, meditation).

The 'Stop, Think, Do' programme is beneficial for children with social/behavioural difficulties; see:

www.stopthinkdo.com.

The 'Retracking Programme' is 'a photocopiable resource pack aimed at supporting students who have been experiencing difficulties at school which may have led to, or be leading to, their exclusion.'

www4.devon.gov.uk/eal/epbss/retracking.doc

ISOLATION

During Coach's pep-talk, Sadiq was standing apart from his team-mates. Although he was part of the team, he was isolated from the group. Use drama to create empathy for the characters in the film by recreating the image in a 'freeze frame':

- organise the class into groups of about five.
- focus the children on body language and facial expressions.
- when the scene has been recreated, unfreeze some of the children and 'interview' them about how they are feeling at that particular moment.

The logo on the Bashers' kit is reminiscent of a skeleton. Why might the team choose this image? Are they trying to instill fear into their opponents? See 'Logos' section for additional/subsequent lessons.

VISUAL ARTS – colour/line as expressions of emotions

Conduct a (guided) meditation session with the children on a variety of feelings/emotions, eg

- leaving worries behind
- growing in self-confidence
- telling their secrets to a trusted friend
- finding inner peace/strength.

After the meditation, children could visually represent what they imagined/experienced. To explore colour and emotions, children could respond to a rainbow meditation; an example can be found here: <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/meditate/rainbow.htm>

- Create artwork showing children with people they care about. What colour would they use to show the relationship? Would the colour change depending on different situations?
- Integrate with SPHE Walk Tall Programme for fifth class: Unit – Feelings Lesson – Painting Feelings.
- Children might make drawings and paintings as suggested in the curriculum. Drawing – 'make drawings based on themes reflecting broadening interests, experiences and feelings (pastimes, outings, special events).'

Painting – 'make paintings based on recalled feelings and experiences and discover ways of achieving spatial effects; interpreting themes chosen for their colour possibilities that reflect broadening experiences and interests, experimenting with colour and tone, with warm and cool colours, with overlapping, with basic aerial and linear perspective' [NCCA, 1999].

MUSIC

Listen to a selection of musical excerpts, asking children to explore the emotions they portray. While listening, children could suggest colours they might use to describe the music. The selection could include:

- Robert Schumann: 'Perfect Happiness'
- Frédéric Chopin: 'Funeral March'
- Saint Saens: 'The Swan'
- Carl Orff: 'Carmina Burana'





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Often, music is used as an expression of a political stance, adding the voice of the people to a cause. The themes of oppression, human rights, homelessness or other topical issues could be explored through a selection of famous songs that stand strong in the memory of many. Children could access a period of history while learning the songs and exploring the lyrics. The selection could include:

- ‘Free Nelson Mandela’, by Jerry Dammers/
The Special AKA
 - ‘Homeless’, by Ladysmith Black Mambazo
 - ‘War’ or ‘Get up, Stand up’, by Bob Marley
 - ‘Imagine’ or ‘Give Peace a Chance’, by John Lennon
 - ‘The Times They Are a-Changing’, by Bob Dylan
 - ‘Where is the Love?’, by The Black Eyed Peas.
- ‘Instant Karma’, a CD released by Amnesty International with proceeds in aid of Amnesty’s work to end the human rights crisis in Darfur, Sudan, has a selection of musical artists covering John Lennon’s music. Children might listen to the CD, discussing the power that music has to unite different artists to come together with a common goal.
 - Why not explore sound in film using this FÍS Film Project for Primary Schools lesson plan? www.fis.ie/LessonPlan/LessonPlansArt10.pdf
www.trainingzone.co.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=185069

FEELINGS IN NOVELS

You might read some extracts from *Daughter of the Wind*, by Suzanne Fisher Staples. This is a powerful story for young adults, featuring dust storms and desert rangers, about the lives of a nomadic family in the Cholistan desert of Pakistan in a society that denies women any form of independence. Shabanu is the twelve-year-old daughter and already betrothed, and it is through her eyes that

we get a glimpse of her life, both within the family and in the desert. The telling of Shabanu’s story is both real and raw and challenges the reader to re-think beliefs around tradition and individual rights, especially those of women. *Walker Books, ISBN 978-0744590116*

- Ask the children to imagine that Shabanu is writing in a diary, describing her days and the unexpected and unhappy adventures that she experiences; or they could record Kestrel’s feelings as the song of the mudpeople fades and she and her companions make their way up on to the plains (see *The Wind Singer* below).
- Children might exchange reactions regarding the feelings of the characters at various moments in the story, or role-play aspects of the story.

(It is important to check the suitability of this material for the age level/cultural background of your class before using this book.)

The Wind Singer, by William Nicholson is an award-winning book featuring salt mines and mud dwellers and mighty battle fleets of land- and wind-craft fighting ancient wars across the desert. It was first published in 2000.

‘In the walled city of Aramanth, exams are everything – not only for children, but for whole families. When Kestrel Hath dares to rebel, the Chief Examiner humiliates her father and sentences the family to the harshest punishment. Desperate to save them, Kestrel discovers that life in Aramanth was once different – and if she can find the secret of the Wind Singer, maybe life can change for the better once more. So she and her twin brother, Bowman, set out on a terrifying journey crossing both desert and a forest – to the true source of the evil that grips Aramanth ...’
Mammoth ISBN 978-0749744717

- Read Chapter 14 ‘Return of the Old Children’ for a vivid description of the children’s long trek across the dusty plains. Children might illustrate this episode.

Note to teachers

A counselling service is available for teachers (and family members where appropriate) through the DES funded VHI Employee Assistance Service (EAS). The EAS offers face-to-face or telephone counselling sessions to help with coping with work and personal related issues.

See www.vhi.ie/pdf/employers/easbrochure.pdf for further information.

