

Respecting Differences - Drama

Aims:

To explore people's differences through the medium of drama

To develop a greater understanding of discrimination, stereotyping and prejudice

Activity description (Group)

Pupils will work in groups to reflect on the ways in which humans use difference (including physical difference) to treat people differently.

Starter activity:

Please organise yourselves into small groups, according to eye colour (blue, brown, green, hazel). This task requires teamwork and non-verbal communication skills.

Once the eye colour groups have been established and everyone knows their eye colour, the whole group should make one big standing circle. Make sure that there is a mix of eye colours across the circle. The group are now going to play a game of catch across the circle, using the following rules -

- Players with blue eyes can only use their non-dominant hand to catch (keep the dominant hand behind your backs). The rest of the group can use both hands to catch the ball.
- If a player drops the ball, they lose a life. Once a player runs out of lives they must sit down and are out of the game. Players with brown, green and hazel eyes have five lives. Players with blue eyes only have one life.

Play the game for 5 minutes. Once the game has been played, consider the following questions:

- Are the rules of the game fair?
- How did playing the game feel for pupils with blue eyes?
- How did pupils with brown, green or hazel eyes feel?
- Was the game fun to play knowing that rules were different for different pupils?
- Is it fair that pupils are given different rules because of things they cannot change?

Respecting Differences - Drama

Main activity:

Here is a definition of discrimination;

Discrimination means treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics. If you have been treated differently from other people only because of who you are or because you possess certain characteristics, you may have been discriminated against.

Equal Opportunities Commission

Now in your class discuss and explain who was being discriminated against in the first activity, and how?

Still using eye colour as an example, consider the following imaginary scenario and questions:

Imagine that the grown-ups in your life tell you that you cannot be friends with anyone that has a different eye colour to you. In pairs, discuss and write down if you wish:

- What questions you would want to ask and / or what you would want to say and to whom;
- What you would do and why;
- How you would feel about the grown-ups telling you not to be friends.

Extension activity:

One or both of the next activities could be undertaken.

Paired Performance

Still thinking about the eye colour activity, act out in pairs a conversation between a young person and an adult. Rehearse and show the conversation to the class. In order to do this, you should think more deeply about reasons why the adult doesn't like the friend(s) with the different colour eyes. You could use the below examples or make up your own:

- Perhaps they have never met someone with eyes that colour and so are scared of them;
- Perhaps something negative once happened with a person who had that colour eyes and now they have decided all people with those eye colours are the same;
- Perhaps they have read or seen something about people with that eye colour that is untrue.

Respecting Differences - Drama

Rehearse and take it in turns to show your scenes.

How might you help the adult realise that difference is not something of which to be frightened; consider how you might help the adult see the benefits of difference; make sure they listen carefully to the adult's fears; make sure you make the adult aware when they have relied on unreliable information for their opinions about people with that eye colour.

Circle time

Using your ideas, place an adult, teacher or pupil (if confident and happy to do so) in the centre of the circle. Take it in turns to go round the circle and tell the character in the centre what they think of the situation and why.

Final discussion

Discuss together how the activities might relate to the real world. Who are the groups of people that are most likely to be discriminated against? In what ways might this happen and why? Do they think discrimination is right? What can you do if you encounter discrimination?

Time required

1 - 2 hours

Materials required

Small ball (or bean bag)

