

Self-Awareness Activities

1. Feelings Uno (lower/upper Elementary)

Why It's Important: Self-awareness is a critical skill that helps individuals understand their own emotions. In this activity, students can improve their emotional vocabularies by discussing a variety of different feeling words and what they mean. It also helps to normalize talking about different emotions and being comfortable sharing how we are feeling in the moment. Getting kids talking about emotions is key.

How It Works: This game just adds a simple twist to your normal Uno game, which all kids absolutely LOVE! Using the Uno colors, discuss what each of the colors might mean. Blue can stand for feeling sad, tired, bored, or sick. Green stands for feeling happy, calm, focused, and in control. Yellow means feelings frustrated, worried, or nervous. Finally, red should stand for angry. Every time a student plays a color of a card, teach them to use an emotion word that matches the color, share a time they felt that way, or discuss when someone might feel that way.

2. Emotions Jenga (lower/upper Elementary)

In order to play this hands-on game, you simply need a Jenga set and a marker. On random blocks, write different emotions that you want your students to learn about. This should include such emotions as anger, happiness, worry, bored, jealous and more. A student pulls an emotion Jenga block out. Then, they tell their partner what that emotion means and what makes them feel it. For example, if they pulled the anger block, they would have to describe what anger means and express what makes them angry.

3. **Playing Card Hierarchy** (upper elementary and middle school)

Let all of the students know that they are about to receive one card but they cannot look at what card they have. Hand out the cards. Instruct the kids to put their card face out on their forehead, so that everyone but themselves can see what they have. The goal is to figure out what card you have based on people's reactions.

Instruct them that the higher the card's value (2=lowest, ace=highest) is how important the person is. If I look at someone who has a 2 I am allowed to treat them like they are the least important person in my life. If I come across someone who has an ace I should treat them like I am meeting my favorite celebrity or leader. Next, pass out the cards and let them interact. After a few minutes of observation, let everyone look at their cards and have a seat in small 3-4 person groups. Begin the following discussion with everyone:

1. Did any part of this game make you uncomfortable? Raise your hand.
2. How long did it take you to figure out whether you had a high or low card?
3. Who had difficulty in figuring out where they ranked? Raise your hand.
4. Once you had an idea of the kind of card you had did you change how you interacted with others?

Explain the two competencies Self-Awareness and Social Awareness:

Self-Awareness

The ability to understand your thoughts, emotions, and values, as well as knowing how those factors influence your behavior. Added to this understanding is the capacity to open-mindedly and realistically assess your strengths and weaknesses while maintaining your confidence, drive, and desire to grow.

Social-Awareness

The ability to understand the perspective of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures

Display the following questions somewhere where everyone can see and have them answer the following questions in their small groups.

1. How can keeping these skills in mind be valuable to you this year?
2. When did Jesus display good self and social awareness?
3. How is asking for forgiveness an example of self and social awareness?

Finish with addressing the class with the following: God gives us the ability to be self-aware. God gives us the ability to be socially aware. This is how He made us to relate to one another and to understand how he made us? When we know what's going on inside we can do a better job at the next Competence Self- Management. We will talk about that next but first let's play another game.

Extra tip: Hand specific cards to specific kids. If there is a kid who is more quiet and kind of an outcast, give them an ace or king. Then, pay particular attention to how their behavior changes (or doesn't change) once they figure out that they have a high card.

4. Feelings buddy (ELC/Kinder)

Help the child to be self-aware of rage triggered in the environment and build rage awareness about their bodies. When the Children are in a relaxed, alert executive state help them discern where they first feel rage. Print a blank Feeling Buddy handout (can ask for one from WHL team) and instruct children to color where the yucky feeling starts in their bodies. Do all their muscles feel tight, do their faces get hot, ect? Use this information to teach children to recognize when rage is coming on and teach them ways to discharge the yucky feeling.

You can roll your neck or shoulders if they feel tight, deep breaths if chest hurts, Go to a safe place and hug a toy.

Social Awareness Activities

1. Photos of Us (All ages)

In this activity, photos of the students are taken and displayed around the room to enjoy and to stimulate discussion concerning physical characteristics. It encourages students to recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate individual differences while also acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual student.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Name physical characteristics that they have in common.
- Recognize unique physical features in themselves and others.
- Recognize and appreciate characteristics that all humans have in common.

Materials:

- Digital camera
- Construction paper or lightweight poster board
- Colored marking pens

- Spray mount or glue

What to Do:

1. Tell students that you are going to take photos of them and that you would like each of them to select a special place - either indoors or outdoors - for the picture to be taken. Encourage them to think carefully before selecting the perfect spot for their picture.
2. With a digital camera, take multiple photos of each student and select the best one. Then print out copies of the photos.
3. Mount each photo on a small sheet of construction paper or lightweight poster board, and leave space around the pictures for students to decorate their “frames.” Then have them sign their photos along the bottom margin.
4. Display the mounted photographs around the room. Look at the pictures with students and discuss any similarities and differences they observe in the pictures. List their observations on the board or chart paper.
5. Have students stand in a large circle facing one another while you lead a wrap-up discussion. Ask questions like: *Who in the room looks exactly like you? In what ways is every person you see just like you? In what ways are we all different?*
6. When you take down the photo display, place the photos inside protective sheets in a three-ring binder so that students can continue to enjoy them throughout the school year.

2. If you really Knew me (upper Elementary)

Lead a discussion about attentive listening before beginning the activity. Help students define what “attentive listening” means and what it looks like. It is fully hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting and not thinking about your own thing or how you want to respond while being spoken to. It includes facing the person who is speaking, making eye contact, nodding or other physical responses to what is being said, etc.

- Make sure students know if they are A or B
 - **How to Play**
- Group students in groups of two and decide who student A is and who is student B.
- Student A silently listens to student B for one minute (or shorter for younger groups).
- Student B finishes off the sentence, “If you really knew me, you would know that...” What is being shared about themselves can range from
 - Family information- “If you really knew me you would know that I am the youngest of 4 siblings.”
 - School information - “If you really knew me you would know that my favorite topic in school is Art.”
 - Favorite/ least favorite things- “If you really knew me you would know that I hate broccoli.”
 - Anything else they want to share about themselves.
 - Student B repeats this sentence over and over again completing it with a new piece of information each time. After a minute the roles are reversed and student B listens while student A shares.
 - 1. Why do you think it’s important to listen to others?
 - 2. How do you feel when you feel no one is listening to you?
 - 3. Who is someone who always listens to you?

Read Jeremiah 29:12-13

God always listens to us, he knows us, and he cares for us.

3.

Self-Management

1. Group Rules (Lower/Upper Elementary and Middle school)

Objectives

Students will work together to create a common ground around what is expected from them and others in the group built upon shared values.

Material: Butcher paper, Marker, and Tape

Gather your kids together and come up with a set of rules for your group. Let them play an active role in thinking of rules that everyone should follow. Give them some guidelines like the rule has to be safe and respectful and no singling people out like (Timmy isn't allowed to be too loud) When the kids feel ownership over the rules they are more likely to follow them. The rules can be broad which can cover many different scenarios. Example Rule 1. Show respect to others and to St. John's, so for example if you are breaking things in the room is that showing respect? If you get new kids during the year that didn't get a chance to help make the rules, maybe make some time to let them add to the list.

2. **Bad Romance Challenge:** Middle School

The goal is to not laugh. Have the entire class go one at a time and sign the chorus portion of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance". The goal is not to smile or break when each person sings. If the student is too embarrassed to sing they may rap each syllable!

Explain the competency: Self-Management

The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes the ability to manage stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself to set and achieve goals.

You may be familiar with the terms self-control, or self-regulation, which are similar. They encompass the concept that you can and should control yourself in a way that is good for you and those around you. However, self-management is a bit different in that there is a greater sense of proactive choices and planning that have an impact now and in the future. How do you turn your self-awareness and your feelings and emotions into positive actions so that you can have agency and advocacy for what you believe? These are all part of self-management and are critically important for not just home and school, but for life itself.

Discuss the following questions as a large group:

1. On a scale of 1-10, how hard was it to keep your composure?
2. Point to the person you had the hardest time keeping your composure?

Discuss the following questions in groups of 2-4:

3. What situations tend to challenge your composure the most in your job?
4. What do you do to take care of yourself?
5. How do self-awareness and social awareness help you with self-management?

COnclude with the following idea: Jesus made time to pray alone with His Father, Jesus made time for friendships, these are all examples of Self-Management. For us it is also important to spend time in God's Word and with our Church community.

3. **Sleeping Cow Group Game:** (lower/upper elementary and middle school)

Step 1: The game master will assign a farmer from the group, while the rest of the players will act as sleeping cows. Apart from the game master, the farmer will only be the person standing in the room. His goal is to wake up each cow by making them laugh.

Step 2: Once the game master says, “Farmer, you may begin your harvest,” the game starts. The farmer cannot touch or tickle the cows. However, he can crack a joke, make funny faces, or do funny gestures just to make the dead cow laugh.

Step 3: The players assigned as dead cows must be on all fours with eyes open (because that is how cows sleep). They cannot move, smile, or laugh. Once the cow does any of these, he will be tagged as a farmer. The farmers will then hunt other sleeping cows and find ways to make them laugh.

As the game goes on, each player gets the chance to showcase his skills in making a good laugh. The last cow to laugh will play as the farmer on the next round.

Self-Management

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Bible verse (Sarah laughs) Gen 18:12-15

Questions

1. Have you ever laughed when maybe you weren’t supposed to?
2. Have you ever said, “he or she made me do it”?
3. Do you think other people can control your behavior? Does someone else have the power to make you do something?

Say: You are in control of your own self-management, it might be hard sometimes. If someone really makes you mad, you might want to yell at them. You might say they made me do that. But that’s not true. You can do things to help control yourself.

You can take a step back and breathe, when you feel angry. You can find a different place to sit, if the person next to you won’t stop talking to you. If someone is trying to make you laugh when it’s not a good time to laugh you can ignore them like we did in the game. The choices we make need to honor God, others, and ourselves.

Laughter is a gift, but we want to use it when it brings joy to others and not harm. Same can be said about all of our thoughts and feelings.

Relationship Skills

1. The Magic Chair (All ages)

Receiving honest, positive feedback from others is one way students develop a positive self-image. Through this activity, students receive positive feedback from one another when they sit in the “magic” chair.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Give and receive positive feedback.
- Develop enhanced self-images.

Materials:

- Decorative materials and a chair.

What to Do:

1. Select a spare chair that can be used as the Magic Chair. Decorate it in a fashion that makes it regal-looking, like a throne. For example, cover it with gold fabric, silver foil, or a fake fur throw.
2. Tape a sign reading “Magic Chair” to the back of the chair.
3. Tell students that when they sit in the Magic Chair, they will hear lots of wonderful and positive things about themselves.
4. Ask the group to sit in a semicircle on the floor in front of the chair. Invite one student to sit in the chair.
5. Go around the circle and ask each student to say something nice to the student in the chair - a positive observation, an admired trait, or an attractive feature. Make the first comment yourself to model the process.

6. Allow two or three students to sit in the chair each day. To avoid mechanical responses and excessive repetition, don't feature too many students per day.
7. Wrap up the activity with discussion questions: *What is magic about the Magic Chair? How do you feel when you sit in the Magic Chair? Why is it important to say positive things to each other?*

2. Team Pictionary (Lower/upper Elementary)

Why It's Important: Teamwork is a critical skill for all ages. This is a skill kids and young adults use throughout the school day, but also outside of school, whether it is during a sports game or playing a game with friends at home. While learning to work together as a team, kids also learn other valuable skills including assertive communication, how to listen, turn-taking, doing a fair share of the work, and how to respectfully disagree with each other. These are not only school skills, but life skills.

How It Works: Split up into two teams. Let each team pick an artist who will draw for their team. Let the artists pick a card with a phrase they will have to illustrate on paper or on the board. Let both artists draw at the same time, while their team tries to guess the correct phrase they are drawing. The catch is that the artist can only draw images and not words, so team members must work together to come up with what the artist is drawing. The team that guesses the phrase first wins! The game can continue again and again, as different artists from the group should be chosen.

3. Pick a side (Middle school/lower/upper elementary)

Have students stand in a single file line in the middle of the room. There should be enough space for them to then move either left or right as a large group.

You MUST pick one side or the other (no "it depends")

Mac n Cheese or Spaghetti

Chocolate or Vanilla

Front of the class seat or back of the class

Like to hang out with a lot of friends or just one or two friends
Be the pitcher at kickball or an outfielder
Draw or read
Avoid conflict or confront conflict
Team player or work alone
Seek a leadership role or contributor role
Inward processor or out loud processor
Deep connections at school or away from school
Value small group Bible study (one to four people) or large group worship (church with everybody)

Explain the competency: Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed. This activity was to help us see how similar and different we are from each other and to learn things around each other that might be helpful.

Discussion questions:

Large Group

1. Was it hard to pick a side? No why or why not!

Small Groups

2. What do you value in your relationships with friends? Family? With coworkers?
3. How did Jesus show that He valued His relationships?
4. What evidence do we have that God is relational?
5. How do you bring your faith into your relationships?

We have a relational God. The Trinity is proof of that because the Father, Son, and Spirit are in relationship with each other while also being the one with each other. God made us to be relation with Him and each other.

4. We Care Center (ELC or all ages)

Every social-emotional skill requires structured opportunities for meaningful practice. The We Care Center provides children with a symbolic way of expressing empathy. The symbolic form will vary depending on the age and literacy of the children. Teach the children how to use the We Care Center and its significance, just as we would teach the color purple or multiplication tables. Tie this center into language arts and core standards.

Examples For Kindergarten/ELC: Mrs. Lee's kindergarten class decided the We care Center would be a tote bag filled with ways for children to offer empathy to each other. Mrs. Lee wrote the following quote on the bag: "In our school family we care about each other." One day Mrs.

Lee was reading a book during circle time. All of a sudden, Kasy began to cry. Kareem, who was the We Care Person for that week, picked up the We Care Bag and walked over to Kasy. He said "Would this help?" In the We Care Bag was a stuffed animal, band aids, a bottle of lotion, and a blanket. Without a word she reached in, pulled out the stuffed bear and held it, Her body began to relax.

Responsible Decision Making

1. Problem solving activity (Middle school/upper elementary)

Everyone writes about a problem that can be related to everyday life, example: *When someone isn't sharing time on the swing set.*

After everyone submits a problem you decide as a group how you would rate each problem from 1-5 1 being a small problem and 5 being a big problem. Then as a group you problem solve and come up with a solution. The problems can be related to school, home, issues with respect and responsibility and even annoying issues. Knowing when you can resolve an issue yourself or if you need to bring in help. 1 - I can let it go, 3 I need to address it and resolve it with the other person, 5 I need to tell an Adult right away. Now sometimes a 1 moves up to a 3 for any different reason like, the problem is recurring over and over again, you are feeling irritated in the moment, or there is a bigger issue you haven't dealt with and now this small problem feels like the tipping point. Discuss ways to keep the problem from escalating.

2. Magic carpet (Middle school)

Kids will stand on a blanket and attempt to flip it over without stepping off the blanket. Kids might try to climb on top of each other to make this happen, if the situation becomes unsafe make them start over. They must problem solve and work together to accomplish this goal.

Questions:

1. What worked? What didn't work?
2. Who were some leaders that stepped up?
3. What helped you all to accomplish this goal?

3.