

Unit One: Basic Emotions Exploration

Through the course of these 8 units, we will explore the four main emotions. For this first unit, let's just start with the basics!

Have students sit in a circle where they can see each others faces, and remind them that we all have a range of feelings; happy, mad, sad, scared. It's ok to feel all of them, and we don't always have to say or feel "good." Go around the circle and have your students use their words to share how they are feeling.

When everyone has shared, tell the students it's now time for you to tell *them* how *you* are feeling, and that you will do it as a guessing game. Hold a piece of fabric, about the size of a handkerchief, over your face and then slowly lower it to reveal your emotion. Students then guess by just your facial expression how you are feeling. Make sure you have a neutral expression before you put the fabric in place, so they can see a true shift in your face!



After you've modeled each main emotion, ask if any students would like to use the fabric to share their own non-verbal emotion. As each student shares their silent facial expression, verbalize what you see such as downturned eyes, scrunched up lips, and and furrowed brows.

If students are still engaged, see if you can begin incorporating storytelling into the emotional exploration. Verbally state different scenarios that might elicit emotions, and have students share with just their faces and bodies how it would make them feel.

Basic Emotions Exploration Continued

To deepen the experience for you and your students, try using fine art to continue your exploration of the main emotions. Let students know art is oftentimes communicating an idea or emotion, and that they will be investigating famous pieces of art to try and decipher the emotions within.



Click the image above to be taken to a collection of fine artwork

Probing Questions

- **What do you think this person is feeling?**
- **What about their face and body makes you think that?**
- **How are the colors helping you think this?**
- **Can you show me how this artwork feels with your face and body?**
- **How might this person use their words? What might they say?**
- **Why do you think the artist decided to paint this?**
- **What is something you might say to this person?**

Show students the provided images, and have them model with just their faces what emotion they think the artist was trying to convey. Take some time to discuss each piece. Why do you think the subject feels this way? What is this subject thinking? What might this subject say?

After this, see if students can model with their entire bodies what they see in the artwork. This can then be turned into a guessing game; have a student choose from a small collection of fine art to emulate with their bodies, and the rest of the group must guess which piece they chose.

While we provided a few images to work with, feel free to bring in your own emotional images to incorporate into the experience. Or have kids find emotional images within books or magazines to recreate with their bodies!