MASKS

A PLAY FOR STICK PUPPETS

By Barbara Roy

AUDIENCE: Appropriate for elementary school students.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS NEEDED:

Puppets: Download a print copy of each member of the Club Crew from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/schoolsab.asp. Cut out each member of the cast and attach to a craft (Popsicle) stick.

Masks: Download the “Masks” file from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/schoolsab.asp; print on cardstock. Place tape or glue on the back so that the mask will stick to the puppet.

Stage/Theater: Create a stage by turning a large table on its side. Students can draw and color a setting for the front of the table. The setting could include the name of the play or a scene. Actors hide behind the table, and the puppets appear over the edge.

PURPOSE: The role play is an interactive method designed to creatively engage elementary school children to learn options for handling bullying situations.

GOAL: Children learn what to do when they see bullying or are bullied.

CAST: Mrs. Bridge, Carmen, Chandra, Molly, Sally, Shannon, Brad, Jay, Matt, Mickey, Nick, and Pip.

THE PLAY

(The crew is in the classroom)

SHANNON: (raises her hand and calls) Mrs. Bridge? (louder) Mrs. BRIDGE???? (louder yet...insistent) MRS. BRIDGE!!!!!!!

CHANDRA: Gee whiz, Shannon! Pipe down. Can’t you see Mrs. Bridge is busy feeding Pip?

SHANNON: Right! Like I am going to listen to someone like you! You can’t even walk! Am I right, Molly?

MOLLY: (shyly) Hey, everybody. Let’s not fight, please.

MATT: I think Shannon is right. Chandra’s got bug eyes and her brother’s nothing but a dummy!! STUPID!! BUG EYES!!

(Now the whole class erupts into a loud argument. Some support Shannon and some support Chandra.)

MRS. BRIDGE: Class! Stop it this minute!! This isn’t like you at all!! You know it’s not cool to call people names. (thinks) Hmmmm. I have an idea. Here—everybody put these on.

(All puppets, including Pip, duck down and come up wearing masks.)

BRAD: Yo? Mrs. Bridge? What’s with the masks? It’s not even Halloween. What’s with the disguises?
MICKEY: I think Halloween ROCKS!!
CARMEN: You got that right! This year for Halloween, I got this HUGE, GIANT bag of goodies and . . .
(The whole crew chimes in with their own Halloween stories.)

MRS. BRIDGE: (regains order) Quiet, quiet . . . I know it’s not Halloween. We’re playing a message game. Here’s how it goes: First, everybody look around you. Look at the crew member next to you.

JAY: Hey!! Everybody’s wearing a mask. Even Pip!! (Everyone laughs.)

PIP: squeak, squeak

MRS. BRIDGE: That’s right, and we all look pretty much the same. Now, everybody act like this: hands down in front of you, feet together, and look straight ahead. (Everybody does this.) Good. Now, everybody talk like a robot and say, “I like pizza.”

ALL: (robotic voice) I like pizza.

MRS. BRIDGE: Now, use the same voice and say, “I like dogs.”

ALL: (robotic voice again) I like dogs.

PIP: Squeak! (in protest)

MRS. BRIDGE: (laughs) OK, Pip, I hear you!! Robots, all say, “I like hamsters.”

ALL: (robotic voice) I like hamsters.

MICKEY: This is boring.

MATT: Yeah. This could get old really fast.

PIP: Squeaks! (in agreement)

MOLLY: Mickey’s right! So is Pip!! (All laugh in agreement and chime in that it is boring.)

MRS. BRIDGE: Do you see, Crew? If we all looked and stood and sounded exactly the same, if nobody was any different from anyone else, what would the world be like?

SHANNON: Not much fun.

MATT: Man. That is true. Me, I’d be sound asleep. (snores)

ALL: (laugh at Matt)

MRS. BRIDGE: That’s right. Remember—differences are cool. Everybody’s different in some way and that’s a great thing. So, let’s be really careful from now on to remember that and not call each other names.

MOLLY: Names hurt people’s feelings.

SALLY: Names can make you to lose a good friend.

SHANNON: I’m sorry, Chandra and Sally. I hope we can get along.

MATT: I’m sorry, too.

CHANDRA: Hey, it’s OK. We’re all still part of the Crew, right? And differences are cool!

ALL: Right!!

JAY: Mrs. Bridge?

MRS. BRIDGE: Yes, Jay?

JAY: Can we all decorate our own masks in a different way?
MRS. BRIDGE: That’s a great idea!! Let’s all make our own special and different masks.

PIP: Squeak!

MRS. BRIDGE: Yes, of course, you too, Pip!!

ALL: (laugh)

MRS. BRIDGE: (or everyone)

Here’s a special thing for all to do,

Make a mask that is just about you.

Remember at home or at the school,

Crew Kids say, “Differences are cool!”

THE END

POST PLAY ACTIVITY: Download the “student mask” file from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/scripts.asp. Invite each student to create his or her own special and unique masks.

-OR-

Invite each student to choose his or her favorite Club Crew member, print a copy from PACER.org/bullying/bpaw/scripts.asp, and write something special about themselves or the Club member

POST PLAY DISCUSSION: Students can benefit from group discussion about the how the bullying scenario was handled in the play and by brainstorming other methods to handle the situation. Questions for the group could include:

• What was the bullying scenario in the play?

• Who was involved in intervening in the situation? What did they do?

• What are other options for handling the situation?

In discussing options, it is important to note that students often will decide on “direct confrontation,” such as telling the person bullying “to stop.” This can be effective, but for many students, it is the most difficult method to implement. Encourage students to reflect on indirect options—such as asking the other student to play or telling them “that no one deserves to be bullied.”

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