

Relaxation

5 – 30 mins

KS 1/2

This is a whole class activity, looking at where we feel emotions in our bodies and how to relax. It also explores the vocabulary we use to describe how we feel. Great for teachers too.

What you will need

Enough space for children to sit or lie on the floor and have their own space.

'I'm a Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXbFK5ITBFs>

Flipchart paper or board to write down the adjectives the children come up with.

Method

- Ask the children to lie on the floor (or sit down with their head resting on the table) and make themselves feel as heavy as possible.
- They should then slowly lift one arm, imagining it to be really heavy.
- Next allow it to fall and repeat with the other arm.
- Then lift each leg in turn, again as if it were dead weight. Then allow each to fall.
- Next they should tense and tighten the muscles in their face, grimacing, clenching their teeth, feeling the skin stretching tight over their faces and screwing up their eyes.
- Then relax their faces completely.
- Next tighten their shoulders then relax.
- Tighten their necks then relax.
- Tighten their tummies then relax.
- Help the children to breathe slowly & deeply by counting in '1,2,3,4' and out '1,2,3,4'.
- Allow them to carry on breathing slowly & deeply, establishing their own pattern.
- Explain that relaxation with slow deep breathing is a good way to help control yourself if you feel tense, angry, worried or anxious. Counting to ten, perhaps in your head is another way to regain self-control.
- You could develop this further through dance & drama.
- Sing with children 'I'm a jingle jangle scarecrow with a flippy floppy hat'. Let them do the actions, moving in a floppy way. Ask them to move around the hall, using all the space in a relaxed & floppy way, then when you signal they must tense up. Imagine they are now the Tin Man (Wizard of Oz) or the Iron Man as they move tensely around the room. Then get them to flop as they relax completely, taking deep breaths.
- Ask them to move in the way they would if they were angry, unsure, frightened or angry, relaxing between each one.
- They then choose words which describe how being tense or relaxed feels.
- Describe what happens to our bodies when we feel tense?
- Explain that we sometimes need to move quickly and sometimes to be more relaxed. It is not good for our bodies to be tense too much of the time to feel angry, stressed and worried. We feel better inside and in our bodies if we can relax. Counting to ten and breathing steadily & slowly can help. It also helps to fold our arms very loosely so that we are holding our forearms with the opposite hand, and gently stroking our arm. To feel good about ourselves we need to know how we are feeling and to be able to calm down when we want to.
- It is good to do relaxation techniques after break times/PE to calm back down & concentrate better.
- This can be adapted for older children – after every lesson 5 mins to relax before next lesson.