

Lesson 3: "The words we use"

Stonewall Plan KS1: Year 1 or 2

National Curriculum links: Key Stage 1 joint non-statutory framework for PSHE and citizenship 2. Pupils should be taught: a) to take part in discussions with one other person and the whole class (Cross reference to English En1.3); b) that they belong to various groups and communities, such as family and school. Pupils should be taught: c) to identify and respect the differences and similarities between people; d) that family and friends should care for each other; e) that there are different types of teasing and bullying; that bullying is wrong, and how to get help to address bullying.

Key vocabulary: insult, gay; emotional vocabulary, e.g., hurt, upset, lonely, etc.

Learning intention: To begin to recognise the way homophobic and other insults operate, and how they affect people

INTRODUCTION

Whole Class

The introduction to this lesson involves you telling a brief story. It's much better to tell it than to read it, and to personalise the story to suit your style. The main features of the story are these: Firstly, a group of children in a class just like yours were noticed as having green eyes. One girl in the class didn't like one of the green-eyed boys and began to tease him by calling him 'greeneyes' as if this were a bad thing. Before long, other children copied, and soon all the green-eyed children were being teased. The other children would shout 'greeneyes' at this group without ever really thinking about what might be 'bad' about having green eyes. It got worse. Some children began to call others 'greeneyes' just because they didn't get along with them, whether they had green eyes or not. 'Greeneyes' became a 'bad word' which children called to one another just to get a reaction or cause upset. That may seem crazy, but things got even worse when some children started calling *things* they didn't like 'greeneyes'. They would say things like 'your phone is so greeneyes'.

Having told the story, you might bring to the front a small group who you say have got green eyes. Whether this group of children actually has green eyes is one which you should decide (of course, particular circumstances might mean that 'green eyes' is not the criterion used at all, but 'long ears' or some such like instead). After 'greeneyes' has become a 'bad word', how do the people with green eyes feel? Those with dramatic skills might like to build on this, 'taunting' a teaching assistant with the word 'greeneyes' at which s/he might look downcast in order to help some children understand the effect of the name-calling. The dramatic possibilities could be developed at length if you so choose.

ACTIVITY

The children are going to create a 'storyboard' to show how an 'innocent' word like 'greeneyes' can be turned into an insult. This involves tracking the stages of the story you have told through several panels on a piece of paper. Perhaps A3, cut lengthwise and folded into four would be a possibility.

DIFFERENTIATION OPPORTUNITIES

Older & more able children

Older or more able children might draw a sequence of four pictures on one side of their storyboard, with accompanying text on the reverse. The sequence could involve the targeting of an individual, then a group, then the general use of the term, then the use of the term for inanimate objects; the effect on green-eyed children could be shown.

Some children could produce a pictorial storyboard with captions or labels showing how a word or term turns into one of abuse.

An entirely visual storyboard with no text might suit some children.

Younger/less able children

Younger children might simply produce a pair of pictures illustrating the effect of the name calling on children who feel they have been targeted.

PLENARY

Whole Class

The activity above need not last very long, but serves to reinforce the story and help children understand the way words take on negative meanings. In the most sensitive part of the lesson, you should begin to make the connections which children might have already recognised with real-life examples of such arbitrary victimisation. With due regard to the sensitivities of the particular class, you might ask children to think whether they have ever heard children calling others by names which turn a characteristic into a negative term. Here you will probably want to draw together the previous sessions and remind children of the loving relationships which were talked about earlier. In this context, the use of the word 'gay' as a negative term should be recognised as being as arbitrary and absurd as 'greeneyes'. This is not to say that all children or their parents will approve of gay relationships, but rather to recognise that some people are gay, just as some have green eyes, and to use the term negatively has an effect on that group, and on everyone else by making it OK to act in this way about *any* minority.