

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

I'm Gonna Like Me Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem Tr 0-06-028761-6

With fun rhyming verses and fresh lively artwork, this new book from the beloved team of Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell celebrates the joys of self-esteem. Through alternating points of view, a girl's and a boy's, *I'm Gonna Like Me* shows kids that the key to feeling good is liking yourself because you are you!

Introduction

To some, the term “healthy self-esteem” conjures up images of a fearless four-year-old romping through the house wearing a bath-towel cape and a smile while saving the pets from aliens. To others, it might be the five-year-old taking the giant leap onto the school bus amid flashing cameras of the “momandpop-arrazzi.” However defined, a healthy self-esteem must be carefully fostered in our youngsters if they are to realize, and eventually assume, all the promises and challenges that life sets before them. Now more than ever, parents and educators are being called upon to guide children through a rather rocky path to young adulthood. We must equip our children with tools that will aid in decision-making and challenge their abilities, while providing a large emotional “comfort zone.”

I'm Gonna Like Me by Jamie Lee Curtis is a wonderful place to start. Her clever verse and the vivid illustrations of Laura Cornell provide the perfect backdrop for educators to teach life skills to young students. This teacher's guide is designed to provide group activities highlighting self-esteem and personal growth, while maintaining the high enjoyment level generated by all the books in this delightful series.

Pre-Reading Activity

Discuss the cover illustration. Have children describe what they see. Ask them to talk about the children on the cover. Read the title and subtitle *Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem* out loud and ask students what they think it means. Discuss the statement, “Like yourself everyday—no matter what” and ask students to predict what that statement might have to do with the story and the children on the cover. Then ask students what they do to “let off a little self-esteem.”

Classroom Activities

Building Up Your Self-Esteem

Create cutouts of different tools (a hammer, a screwdriver, a wrench, etc.). On the front of the tool present a scenario, such as a bully picking on a classmate. These scenarios can be general or tailored to the specific needs of the class. Read the scenario to the class and ask students to react to the situation. Ask them questions, such as, How does that make you feel? What would you do? The class can either discuss answers openly or write responses on the backs of the tools to be shared when finished. The tools can be displayed in the reading corner for future reference or stored in a Toolbox of Self-Esteem!

Special Greetings

Help teach students empathy and introduce them to the special needs of our elderly. Contact a local nursing home or senior citizens organization and get a list of participants who might benefit from a greeting card. The children are then assigned a pen pal from the group to whom they write a special greeting. This can happen year round or coincide with a holiday. The letters can be autobiographical and include a photo of the children, and if possible a visit can be arranged between the school and the organization. This is a very rewarding way for children to learn the importance of reaching out to the community.

Star of the Week

Each week a different student will have the opportunity to be a star. Explain to the class that everyone will have a turn. Begin each week by asking for a student volunteer to be the star of the week. He or she is to create a poster collage describing himself through photos, special awards, etc. He or she may also bring in various belongings that might represent the child. Emphasize to the class that all accomplishments, no matter how big or small, should be included (i.e., learning to spell a new word, being a star athlete, making a new friend). The student may bring the poster and other items to class on the first day of the week. Then he or she will have time that week to describe the poster and any other memorabilia brought to school. The last day of the week he or she brings in a special snack to share with the class. Other privileges can be given to the star, such as helper, messenger, line leader, etc.

The Yucky Cookbook

Reread the passage from the book on pages 24–25. “I’m gonna like me / When I eat something new / Even if Grandma makes / Octopus stew.” Ask the class what is their least and most favorite foods. Write down the responses on a list and send notes home asking for a recipe using the hated food, as well as the favorite food. Parents send in one recipe for each. Create a class cookbook, whereby each child gets a page that reads “Mary hates to eat . . . [other side] But, she loves . . .” The recipes are then glued into the book, and the children illustrate the pages. Assemble the book and display it in the classroom in time for open house. Parents will truly get a chuckle. The class may even want to try cooking some of the recipes. The children can also create menus and a restaurant using the yucky foods.

School Bus Safety Mural

The right of passage most associated with bravery for youngsters is the first trip on the school bus. “I’m gonna like me / When I climb on and wave / As the bus pulls away / And I’m feeling so brave” (pp. 10–11). This is a great opportunity to examine school bus safety with the children. Provide a line drawn mural of a bus and discuss the rules of bus safety. Write out a list of the rules as the discussion progresses. Then have the children dip their hands in yellow paint and print their hands on the mural. Once the paint is dry, have students write on their handprints. On one handprint they write “My name is _____ and I ride on bus number _____.” On the other handprint, they write one bus safety rule they remember. By the time everyone has done this, the bus should be colored yellow and is ready to be displayed. In the windows, the children can draw pictures of themselves, or the teacher can place photos of the children in the windows. (If students’ hands are too small to accommodate this activity, the teacher can provide larger yellow handprint cutouts.) This activity will not only build knowledge of safety rules, but it will help younger children remember their bus numbers and will be an invaluable resource for substitute teachers.

Bus Bravery

As an extension or alternative to the School Bus Safety Mural activity, have students write their own bus bravery story entitled “The First Time I Rode the Bus.” These can be hung on larger yellow hand cutouts and used to cover the bus. Incorporate math by charting how children get to school—riding the bus, walking, or being driven in a car—and write the results in the bus windows.

A Good Deed, Indeed!

Chores, often the bane of a youngster’s life, can actually be a great learning tool. *I’m Gonna Like Me* touches on trying new tasks and helping with chores. These traits are invaluable for building responsibility and enhancing solid self-esteem. Begin by looking at the illustrations in the book. Ask the class what they observe the children doing. Then ask if anyone has chores to do at home. What chores do they have here in the classroom? What is the most difficult chore they do? What do they think is the most difficult chore their moms and dads must do at home? Is it something they can help with? How? A chart can be created using the discussion questions as headings. Record responses on the chart. For example; Johnny feeds the dog; he picks up blocks in the classroom; his dad mows the lawn; he helps by raking the cuttings. The class then analyzes the chart and discusses similarities and differences in the responses. From here they create A Good Deed Coupon Book. Students can put together three good deeds to do for someone (mom, dad, sister, etc.) These are written out in a coupon book designed and given as a gift.

Banana Bunch Biographies

Have students interview a classmate. They are to find out what their classmate does well and what they would like to learn or improve. The biographies are then written on a cutout of a banana, where each peels open to tell something about the person. What the student does well should appear on the outside of the banana and what he/she would like to learn or improve is written on the inside, which is revealed when the banana is peeled. (Each student should have two banana cutouts—one for the inside and one for the peel. Attach a fly clip to the bottom of the two images to make the banana peel open.) The banana bunch biography books can be shared while eating a friendship fruit salad snack.

Hands Across the Classroom

Have students trace both their hands onto colored construction paper and then cut them out. On one hand they write, “One thing I like about me is . . .” On the other hand they write, “One thing I like about the person next to me is . . .” Display the hands around the room.

Teaching ideas prepared by Mary Moriarty, teacher Mahopac Central Schools, Mahopac, NY