

Malta Theme: Developing a Growth Mindset

Sub-theme 2: Using emotions to promote growth and wellbeing including happiness, humour, interest, enthusiasm and vitality.

Set of Activities 1: Using Happiness to promote Growth and Wellbeing

Set of Activities 2: Using Humour to promote Growth and Wellbeing

Set of Activities 3: Using Interest, Enthusiasm and Vitality to promote Growth and Wellbeing

Set 1: Using HAPPINESS to promote Growth and Wellbeing

Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

- Talk about happiness and recognize when it is felt
- Recognize that happiness can be expressed in different ways
- Recognize that feelings of happiness can be created by doing something that makes them happy
- Recognize that they can change bad feelings into good feelings
- Attribute their happiness to things they have done
- Choose persons, places, objects and/or events that make them happy
- Recognize the persons, places, objects and events that can cheer them up
- Apply skills and strategies to change bad feelings into good feelings
- Apply skills and strategies to react positively to bad situations and events

Tips for Teachers

1. Take five minutes to let the children sing and dance to songs that are happy and joyous.
2. Leave a camera in class and use it to capture special moments that show children at their happiest times. It might be a student's birthday or a competition they have won. Children can then make a class scrapbook of the times they felt happy at school.
3. Organize a 'Make Someone Smile' day. Encourage children to share their happiness with someone else by doing, saying or writing something nice to another student. Examples can include showing interest in and listening to another child's concerns, telling a person something positive about themselves, making a present, playing with them or writing a special note.
4. One way of incorporating this topic into an English lesson is by having the students learn as many different words used for happiness as possible. They can be encouraged to use these when describing their feelings and in their creative writing.
5. When students feel down or are having a bad day, organize a walk or a hunt where they can look for something that makes them feel better. It could be a toy, a reading book, or a friend they may talk to.

Activity 1: Helen the Hedgehog Feels Happy

Learning Goal

Children will talk about happiness and their experience of it.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this study unit, I will be able to:

Talk about what happiness means to me and describe a time when I felt happy.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Puppets

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read this story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

Helen the hedgehog and Sam the squirrel lived in the forest. Helen and Sam were very good friends. One day Helen rolled down a hill and bumped into a rock. She broke some of her spikes. For a long time, Helen couldn't play outside with her friends until her broken spikes grew back. She had to stay where her mummy could see her and this made Helen very angry. "It's not fair! Why do I have to stay here when all the other hedgehogs are playing out in the forest?! I'm feeling very angry!", said Helen grumpily to Sam. Sam could see Helen was feeling angry. When she felt angry her spikes stood up tall and she could hurt other animals if she wasn't careful. Sam knew that when Helen felt angry she needed to go to a quiet place to calm down. "I'm sorry that you can't join the others to play Helen", said Sam. "But what

about if you go to your quiet place to deal with the angry feelings?” Helen didn’t want to hurt anyone with her angry feelings so she decided to go to her quiet place for a time-out.

In her quiet place, Helen could calm down and think more clearly. “I really would like to go outside to play with my friends”, thought Helen, “but I can still find something fun to do here instead”. Helen loved exploring. “Hhhmm”, thought Helen, “maybe exploring can help me feel better.” “Sam, would you like to go exploring with me?”, asked Helen. “Oh! That’s a brilliant idea!”, said Sam. So Helen and Sam went exploring nearby. They dug their heads under the soil. They scurried under the trees. They searched through the grass. Helen found many exciting things: two colourful bird feathers, different kinds of leaves she hadn’t seen before, an interesting animal track and a spider web! By the end of the day, Helen’s bad mood had turned into a good mood. “Look, Sam!”, said Helen excitedly, “my spikes are becoming flat! I’m feeling happy again!” From that day on, Helen realized that SHE could turn a bad mood into a good mood and that she had a good friend that could help her do it.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Did you like the story?
- How did Helen feel when she could not join her friends?
- What did she do to change her bad mood?
- Who helped her to change her mood?

4. Then relate the story to the children’s own experiences:

- What happens when we feel happy? (we smile more, we have more energy, we laugh, we would want to play with our friends)
- Where do you feel happiness in your body?
- What colour do you imagine the happy feeling to be?
- Can you mention a time when you felt happy?

Take Home Activity

Children can flip through some photo albums with their parents and talk about the happy times and the happy feelings in the photos. In this way, children can be supported in identifying those

activities that make them happy and become more aware of what happiness feels and looks like.

Activity 2: Helen the Hedgehog Lowers her Spikes

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that everyone expresses happiness in their own ways.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Speak about how I show my happiness.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Puppets, Song- 'If You're Happy and You Know it'.

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 1 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Did you like the story?
- How did Helen feel when she could not join her friends?
- What was happening in her body?
- What did she do to change her bad mood?
- Who helped her to change her mood?
- How could her friends know when Helen was feeling happy again?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When Helen couldn't go play with her friends, she felt angry. What other bad feelings can we feel?
- When you have bad feelings, how do you usually deal with them? Do you tell someone about them? Do you go to a quiet place like Helen?
- Helen went exploring with Sam to cheer herself up. What cheers you up when you're in a bad mood?
- Everybody shows happiness in different ways. When Helen feels happy, her spikes go flat. Some children laugh, some children play, some children jump and clap. How do you show that you're happy?

5. Children can then sing and dance to 'If You're Happy and You Know It'. They may also add in their own lyrics at the end (e.g. If you're happy and you know it jump with joy (hey hey)/ turn around (ol-eh)/ nod your head (nod nod)/ slap your knees (slap slap)...

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" (hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, do all three (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, do all three. (clap-clap, stomp-stomp, hoo-ray!)

Take Home Activity

Children can discuss with their parents how different animals show they are happy. For example, dogs wag their tails, cats purr, elephants flap their ears, birds sing. Children may even develop a picture book made from magazine cut-outs, photos or drawings of the different ways animals show they are happy. Animals show they are happy in different ways and so do people.

Activity 3: Helen the Hedgehog Goes Exploring

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that happiness can be created if we do something we love.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that I can create good feelings and become happy by doing something I love or that is fun. I will also be able to talk about and draw something that makes me happy.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Puppets

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness Activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 1 using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - How did Helen feel when she could not join her friends?
 - Why did Helen feel angry when she couldn't play with her friends?
 - What did she do to change her bad mood?

- What might have happened if Helen didn't go to her quiet place? Can you imagine how her day would have been like?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When Helen couldn't go play with her friends, she felt angry. What other things can make you feel bad?
- How could thinking only of the bad make us feel?
- When you have bad feelings, how do you usually deal with them? Do you tell someone about them? Do you go to a quiet place like Helen?
- Helen became happy by doing something she really liked. And she asked a friend to help her change her mood. Can you think of something that makes you feel happy, just like Helen did? Can you think of someone special that can help you change a bad mood into a good mood?

5. Children can then draw or paint a picture or make a collage about the activity or person that makes them feel happy. They can then share this with the rest of the class.

Take Home Activity

Children may choose something from home that makes them feel happy. They can talk about the happy feelings this object generates and why it does so with family members, who may also choose an object of their own. These objects can also be presented in class during circle time and a chart entitled "I can change a bad mood into a good mood by..." may be set up.

Activity 4: Helen the Hedgehog Changes her Mood

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that bad feelings can be turned into good feelings.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that a bad feeling can be changed into a good feeling by doing something that makes me happy.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Puppets, Song- 'Shake My Sillies Out' (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MUxZPC1TEU>)

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the following story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

Helen the hedgehog and Sam the squirrel lived in the forest. Helen and Sam were very good friends. One day Helen rolled down a hill and bumped into a rock. She broke some of her spikes. For a long time, Helen couldn't play outside with her friends until her broken spikes grew back. She had to stay where her mummy could see her and this made Helen very angry. "It's not fair! Why do I have to stay here when all the other hedgehogs are playing out in the forest? These things always happen to me!", said Helen grumpily to Sam. Whenever Helen's angry feelings got out of control, Sam always told her that she could be the boss of her feelings. She could do something about them. Sam knew that when Helen felt angry she needed to go to a quiet place to calm down. "I'm sorry that you can't join the others to play Helen", said Sam, "but what about if you go to your quiet place to deal with the angry feelings?" Helen didn't want to hurt anyone with her angry feelings so she decided to go to her quiet place for a time-out.

After a few minutes, Helen already started thinking more clearly. "I really would like to go outside to play with my friends", thought Helen, "and I really feel disappointed that I cannot go. But I can still find something fun to do on my own." Helen loved exploring. "Hhhmm", thought Helen, "maybe exploring can help me feel better." "Sam, would you like to go exploring with me?", asked Helen. "Oh! That's a brilliant idea!", said Sam. So Helen and Sam went exploring nearby. They dug their heads under the soil. They scurried under the trees. They searched through the grass. They explored every place they could think of and by the end of the day Helen had found two colourful bird feathers, different kinds of leaves she

hadn't seen before, an interesting animal track and a spider web! During their exploring time, Helen noticed her spikes becoming flat again. "Look, Sam!", said Helen excitedly, "my spikes are becoming flat again! I'm feeling better!" Helen realized that she could be the boss of her feelings. "I'm glad I didn't stay grumpy all day. Choosing something fun to do made me feel a whole lot better!", said Helen. Exploring was something Helen loved to do and it made her feel happy again.

That evening Sam the squirrel wasn't feeling so good. When he was exploring with Helen, he lost the lucky pebble his mummy had given him when he was born. Sam decided to tell Helen about it. Helen listened and wanted to cheer Sam up, just like he helped her feel better. "Here", said Helen gently, "you can have the bird feather I found in the forest today. It won't be the same as the lucky pebble but it's special because I gave it to you." Sam felt so happy and grateful that he had a friend like Helen. Doing something nice for a friend helped Helen feel happy too. "I did a good job at being the boss of my feelings today", thought Helen as she lay on her bed feeling sleepy, "I cannot wait to see where I'm going to explore tomorrow!"

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Sam always tells Helen that she could be the boss of her feelings. What does he mean by this? How was Helen the boss of her feelings?
- How did Helen's thinking change when she went to think in her quiet place?
- What did exploring help Helen to do?
- What might have happened if Helen didn't deal with her bad feelings? Can you imagine how her day would have been like?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When Helen couldn't go play with her friends, she felt angry. What other things can make you feel bad?
- When you have bad feelings, how do you usually deal with them? Do you tell someone about them? Do you go to a quiet place like Helen?

- Do you remember a time where you were the boss of your feelings? What happened? What did you do?

5. Tell the children that just like Helen, we can change a bad feeling into a good feeling.

6. Ask the children to stand and sing 'Shake My Sillies Out':

Shake My Sillies Out

I gotta Shake, Shake, Shake, my sillies out!

Shake, Shake, Shake my sillies out

Shake, Shake, Shake my sillies out

And wiggle my waggles away

Other verses:

Clap, Clap, Clap my crazies out!

Jump, Jump, Jump my jiggles out!

Yawn, Yawn, Yawn my sleepies out!

Stretch, Stretch, Stretch my stretchies out!

Ask the children if anyone felt sad, worried or angry before the song. Tell the children that it's normal and OK to have these feelings. Now, ask the children to put their hands up if they feel happier after the song. Why do we feel happier? (doing something fun makes us feel better, singing together makes us feel happy).

Idea taken from Bounce Back! (McGrath & Noble, 2011)

Take Home Activity

Children can explore with their parents different ways of changing a bad mood into a good mood. Different family members may discuss what they prefer doing if they are in a bad mood and they want to cheer themselves up. Following some exploration of ideas, children can start a scrapbook filled with ways of changing a bad mood into a good mood using photos, drawings, magazine cut-outs and even contributions from family and friends.

Activity 5: Helen the Hedgehog Uses her Thinking

Learning Goal

Children will choose one activity that makes them feel happy and state why.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that activities that we love doing make us happy and help us get rid of bad feelings.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Puppets, Miming Cards

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.

2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Sam always tells Helen that she could be the boss of her feelings. What does he mean by this? How was Helen the boss of her feelings?
- Let's look at Helen's thinking when she was feeling very upset: "It's not fair! Why do I have to stay here when all the other hedgehogs are playing out in the forest? These things always happen to me!" How does this thinking make Helen feel? Why?
- How did Helen's thinking change when she went to think in her quiet place? How did this thinking make her feel then?
- What did exploring help Helen to do?
- What might have happened if Helen didn't deal with her bad feelings? Can you imagine how her day would have been like?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Helen had to stay at home until she felt better. Sometimes when bad things happen we might think that **everything** is bad or that these bad things **always** happen to us. Can you think of a bad thing that happened? Explore with the children other good things that remained there in their lives even when this bad thing happened.
- When you have bad feelings, how do you usually deal with them? Do you tell someone about them? Do you go to a quiet place like Helen?
- Do you remember a time where you were the boss of your feelings? What happened? What did you do?

5. Tell the children that Helen changed her bad feelings into good feelings by doing things that made her happy: she went exploring. She also did something nice for a friend. There are many things we can do that make us happy.

6. Play charades using the Miming Cards found in the resource pack. Choose a student to mime the action that can create happiness and the other children need to guess what that action is. After the activity is over, ask the children:

- Can you think of any more activities that can make us feel happy?
- What makes *you* happy?

Take Home Activity

Together with their parents, children may choose a photo of their happiest time. They may stick the photo on a coloured paper and write a sentence beginning with “The happiest I ever felt was when...” The photos may be brought to class and hung on the wall.

Activity 6: Helen the Hedgehog Chooses to be Happy

Learning Goal

Children will choose a negative feeling that they have experienced and practice flipping it into a good feeling.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Apply the ‘flipping the feeling’ strategy to deal with my bad feelings and change my mood.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Puppets, 'Flipping the Feeling' handout

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.

2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Sam always tells Helen that she could be the boss of her feelings. What does he mean by this? How was Helen the boss of her feelings?
- Let's look at Helen's thinking when she was feeling very upset: "It's not fair! Why do I have to stay here when all the other hedgehogs are playing out in the forest? These things always happen to me!" How does this thinking make Helen feel? Why?
- How did Helen's thinking change when she went to think in her quiet place? How did this thinking make her feel then?
- What did exploring help Helen to do?
- What might have happened if Helen didn't deal with her bad feelings? Can you imagine how her day would have been like?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Helen had to stay at home until she felt better. Sometimes when bad things happen we might think that **everything** is bad or that these bad things **always** happen to us. Can you think of a bad thing that happened? Explore with the children other good things that remained there in their lives even when this bad thing happened.
- When bad things happen how do you think about them? Do you look more at the good things or at the bad things?
- Do you remember a time where you were the boss of your feelings? What happened? What did you do?
- What things make you feel happy and cheer you up when you're in a bad mood? Is there a special person that can help you change your mood?
- Have you ever given something special for a friend like Helen did? How did you feel afterwards?

- At the end of the day Helen felt proud of herself for being the boss of her feelings. Mention something that **you** did today or this week that you feel good about.

5. Tell the children that everyone has different feelings and this is normal and OK. Everyone has bad feelings but we can choose to deal with these bad feelings and become happier. Of course not all bad feelings go away as quickly as Helen's did but we can still do something to sort the feelings out and cheer ourselves up.

6. Explain the 'Flipping the Feeling' handout found in the resource pack to the children and ask them to complete it with a partner or on their own. The children may share some of their ideas with the rest of the class if they wish.

Take Home Activity

The children may be given an extra blank handout to teach the 'flipping the feeling' strategy to an adult family member. The children will have fun teaching the strategy to their family. Afterwards, the children and the family member/s may even try the fun activity and see how they feel.

Activity 7: Celebrating Life

Learning Goal

Children will discuss certain statements about happiness and then make a collage about a person, place, object or event that makes them happy.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Discuss happiness and my experience of it. I will also choose a person, a place, an object or event that makes me happy and discuss why.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

'Fact or Fiction strips', hat or bowl, colourful charts, magazine cut-outs, photos, drawings, decorations, scissors, glue.

Activity Steps

1. A few days before the activity, ask the children to choose a photo or draw a picture of a person, a place, an object or event that makes them happy. They can bring this to school on the day of the activity.
2. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
3. Now start the lesson by placing the 'Fact or Fiction strips' found in the resource pack in a hat or bowl. Choose a student to pick a statement and read it aloud. Discuss the statement using the discussion points handout if needed (also found in the resource pack).
4. After the activity tell the children that one of the ways we can increase our happiness is by looking at our life and seeing what is good about it, what we are thankful for and what makes us happy. Tell the children to make a collage about the person, object, place or event that they have chosen and write why that person, object, place or event is special for them.
5. The children may then present and talk about their own collages with the rest of the class.

Take Home Activity

At the end of the day, children and their family members may share together what they are most thankful or happy about for that day. To emphasize the control they have over their own happiness, children may be further encouraged to speak about how they contributed to what makes them happy. For example, "I am happy that I got a good mark on my dictation today. I worked hard for it and made an effort to write neatly."

Activity 8: Three Things

Learning Goal

Children will first enter into a discussion about happiness, and then mention 3 things that make them happy and how they have contributed to them.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Identify 3 things that make me happy and mention how I have contributed to them.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

‘Fact or Fiction’ handout, ‘Three Things’ handout

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Distribute the Fact or Fiction handout found in the resource pack and ask the children to complete it on their own. Then ask the children to form a circle and start discussing the handout. You can use the discussion points found in the resource pack as a guide.
3. Following the discussion, distribute the ‘Three Things’ handout found in the resource pack and ask children to think of three things they are happy about in their lives. They then should write how they have contributed to these things happening in their lives. For example, “I am happy about my talent. I am very good at running and have won some competitions. Running makes me happy. I have become better at running because I practice really hard, I train three times a week and I try to do my best.”

Take Home Activity

Together with the help of their family, children can identify a bad time in their lives and talk about how they dealt with it. The emphasis should be on what the child did to deal with the bad time and the bad feelings, and on what he or she did to feel happy again. The aim is to empower children to know they can deal with bad situations and are able to bounce back and create happiness by the things they think and do.

Activity 9: My Choice

Learning Goal

Children will first enter into a discussion about happiness, and then practice flipping a bad feeling into a good feeling.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Discuss happiness and my experience of it. I will also be able to apply skills and strategies to flip a bad feeling into a good feeling.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

‘Fact or Fiction handout’, ‘My Choice’ handout

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Distribute the ‘Fact or Fiction’ handout found in the resource pack and ask the children to complete it on their own. Then ask the children to form a circle and start discussing the handout. You can use the discussion points in the resource pack as a guide.
3. Following the discussion, distribute the ‘My Choice’ handout found in the resource pack and explain it to the children.

Take Home Activity

Children can be given other ‘My Choice’ handouts and continue practicing the strategy with their family.