

INSIDE HAPPINESS



Inside Happiness is an activity brought to you by The Happiness Project.

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| Length | 1 hour |
| Age | 8 - 14 |

Learning objectives

- To explore the foundations of what happiness means to you
- To understand that happiness is an emotion and all emotions come and go in life
- To notice how your brain, thoughts and behaviours sometimes don't help us, and we can manage them better to find ways to improve our emotional wellbeing

Activity overview

Inside Happiness is the foundational activity and should always be used as the starting point for The Happiness Project.

Students will begin to discover what happiness is and learn that happiness is not a constant, it is something that comes and goes along with many other emotions that make us human. They will discover that happiness is something that is personal and may mean different things to different people. Through this activity, they will explore their own ingredients for happiness.

| Step | Overview | Time (mins) |
|--------|--|-------------|
| Step 1 | Introducing the Happiness Project | 10 |
| Step 2 | Mindfulness activity | 5 |
| Step 3 | Let's begin the discovery to find out what's Inside Happiness! | 10 |
| Step 4 | Making a happiness ice cream, scoop by scoop | 20 |
| Step 5 | Reflection circle | 10 |

Step 1: Introduction

10 Mins

Explain: today you are going to be exploring what's inside happiness. The most important factor in the whole discovery of happiness is, it is not possible to feel happy all the time.

Ask students:

- If you had to describe happiness as a colour, which one would it be and why?
- If you had to describe happiness as a type of food, what would it be and why?

Explain: Sometimes, we think about happiness as something huge, but what we will discover today is that it is about small daily actions to improve our overall wellbeing and happiness.

Ask students:

Which organ in the body do you think is responsible for happiness?

Explain: The brain is really important when it comes to happiness. The Brain naturally has a negative bias because it's designed to help us survive. To the brain, bad is far stronger than good. Some studies show that you need 5 positive things for every 1 negative thing to counteract the negative.

Ask students:

- Who felt any negative emotions this morning?
- Who didn't want to get out of bed when you were woken up?
- Who didn't enjoy the journey to school?
- Who has laughed today?
- Who felt pleased to see a friend this morning at school?

Step 2: Mindfulness

5 Mins

Feel free to adapt this activity in any way that suits the context of your classroom. This is a guide.

Ask students to lie down on the floor and close their eyes. This can also be done seated. Ask students to notice their breath, notice the rhythm of the breath. Are they breathing through their mouths or noses? As they draw attention to this breath, ask them to breathe in through their nose, and out through their nose noticing the rhythm of this breath. Working up through the body, starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them and wiggling them, working up through the body squeeze the thigh muscles and release them, squeeze the bottom and release, stomach, hands, shoulders, finishing with the face, nose, eyes, cheeks. Now, try and relax every muscle in the body, allowing the body to float into the ground. Try and keep as still as possible. Allow the students to lie/sit in this stillness for a minute or 2. Now, slowly bringing attention back into the here and now, ask students to stretch their bodies out and slowly open their eyes coming back into the room.

When back in the here and now, ask students if anyone feels comfortable sharing how that felt.

Step 3: Discovering what's Inside Happiness.

Explain: Happiness is about the day-to-day decisions and actions we take in life, and to increase our wellbeing, these need to be consistent with things that impact positively on our lives.

Ask students:

- In pairs, discuss what happiness means to you? Write these ideas down.
- If you feel comfortable to share your ideas. Was there anything you agreed/disagreed on?
- Why might happiness mean something different to different people?

Step 4: Making a happiness ice cream!

20 Mins

Explain: we are going to begin the Happiness Project by making ourselves an ice cream, a happiness ice cream. There are lots of different flavours of ice cream, some of these flavours work well together and we all seem to have different opinions about what our favourite flavours are. The same could be said about happiness. Depending on what flavours we put together, how strong the cone is, and what is put on top of the ice cream, will affect the taste. It is personal. So let's see what yours looks like!

THE CONE: THE BASE

Explain: This is the base to your happiness ice cream. What are the most important factors to allow you to build your happiness? Ideas: Rest and sleep, feeling calm and not too stressed, eating well and being active.

Ask students:

- What would happen if there was no cone?
- How would you like your cone to be?

THE FIRST SCOOP: MEANING AND PURPOSE

Ask students:

- What makes you feel good? – note down all the things that bring you joy or good emotions.
- What gives you a sense of meaning and purpose? – think about the things you value the most in your life and what you find to be important.

THE SECOND SCOOP: POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Ask students:

- What are the positive emotions which make you feel happy?
- What are the positive emotions which make those around you feel happy?

THE THIRD SCOOP: THOUGHTS

Ask students:

- What everyday thoughts do you have that can help you discover what's Inside Happiness?
- It is impossible to think positive thoughts all the time, note down the negative thoughts too, leave these on the outside of your ice cream

THE HEART

Ask students:

- Is there anything you've forgotten?
- What is one small thing that brings you joy?
- What is something that makes you happy but is something you sometimes forget about? Something you might take for granted.

Step 5: Reflection Circle

10 Mins

Ask students:

- How did today's session make you feel?
- Did you notice anything new about yourself?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Sometimes with the pressures of life, we often forget about what makes us truly happy. How can we use our happiness ice creams to remind ourselves of what makes us happy? Where could we put our happiness ice creams to remind us?