

We are all different

Year Learning Activity

Description

Students explore the physical, emotional and social similarities and differences between males and females.

Learning focus

The social, emotional and physical implications of individual differences.

Key understandings

- Use the correct terminology for male and female body parts (e.g. penis, vulva)
- Appreciate similarities and differences between males and females.
- Understand that the representations about males and females made by the media are not always realistic.
- Understand how their own gender perceptions are affected by the media.
- Recognise that the similarities and differences include physical, social and emotional aspects.

Materials

1. Two different children's birthday cards, one obviously designed for a boy and one for a girl
2. Butcher's paper to trace body outlines of a boy and a girl

Teaching and Learning Activities

Before you get started

- Teachers should know and understand the [protective interrupting](#) technique, and what, why, when and how it is needed and used, before facilitating this activity.
- It is to be expected that students will have family names and/or slang names for their genitalia. Some teachers are comfortable enough to encourage students to brainstorm family names for genitals so that the teacher can be sure the students understand which parts of the body are being discussed.

Whole Class

Students develop an understanding of similarities and differences in a range of external physical, social and emotional aspects of themselves and their peers.

1. Play the 'match up' game. Have all students sit in a circle. Call out obvious attributes that are similar to or different for certain students (e.g. all people who have the same hair colour as John or all people who have the same coloured eyes as Kate). Ask all students who have the same attribute to run around the circle in a clockwise direction and try to get back to their place as quickly as possible.

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2. Alternatively, play the 'I am different' game. With students sitting in a circle, have one student begin the game by looking at the person next to him/her and describing one thing that is the same and one thing that is different to them. Encourage students to think beyond physical similarities and differences and also consider social (family type/where they come from) and/or emotional (what they like to do, what they are good at) similarities and differences. For example:

Social: Jane and I both have a sister; I was born in Australia and Jane was born in Capetown.

Emotional: Jane and I are both a bit shy; Jane likes reading but I like playing sport.

3. Ask:

- *How are you different to other people in our class?*
- *Are our differences just on the outside? (no, we all have different thoughts and feelings, things we are good at, families that we belong to, things that we celebrate)*
- *How are you similar to other people in our class?*
- *Are our similarities just on the outside?*
- *What would our class be like if everyone was exactly the same?*

Independent or Small Group

Students explore the physical similarities and differences between males and females.

1. Show students two different children's birthday cards, one obviously designed for a boy and one for a girl. Have them examine the pictures on the front of the cards.
2. Ask:
 - *How can you tell which cards are designed for boys/girls?*
 - *How are they similar or different?*
 - *What does the front of the card seem to be saying about little boys/girls?*
 - *Do you think all boys would like the message on the cards for boys? Why or why not?*
 - *If you were making birthday cards for boys/girls how might you change it from this one?*

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- *Can you think of any TV shows, TV ads or video games where boys just do fun outdoor stuff like playing footy or riding their bike, or girls just do fun indoor stuff like playing with dolls or cooking with Mum? Share these.*
 - *Do you think this is an accurate (or real) way to show boys' and girls' interests? Why/why not?*
 - *Does this reflect the sorts of things the boys/girls in this class like to do?*
 - *What are some good things about being a boy/girl? What can and can't you do?*
3. On butcher's paper, draw two child-sized body outlines - one to represent a girl and one to represent a boy. Stick the outlines up on the whiteboard leaving enough space between them to write down parts of the body that both boys and girls have in common.
- Ask students to name all the parts of the body they can think of that both boys and girls have. As they call them out, label the body parts that both boys and girls have (for example, legs, arms, nipples). Write them on the whiteboard between the girl and boy outlines.
 - Ask students to name the body parts that only a boy has: penis, scrotum and testicles. As they call them out write these on the whiteboard beside the boy.
 - Now ask the students to identify some girl body parts: vulva, uterus and vagina. As they call them out write these on the whiteboard beside the girl. Reinforce that boys and girls have most parts the same and some that are different.
4. Debrief the students using the following questions:
- *How did it feel to say and hear the names of body parts that girls and boys have that we can see? (comfortable? easy?)*
 - *How did it feel to say and hear the names of boys and girls sexual body parts that we can't see? (embarrassed? comfortable?)*
5. Explain why it is important to use the correct names for body parts, e.g. to tell a doctor or a trusted adult if something is wrong.

Reflection

1. Students write an acrostic poem about themselves, highlighting their individual characteristics.

For example:

Just arrived from Capetown

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Always singing

Narrow long fingers

Enjoys dancing in her room

2. Revise that our differences are not just physical (what we can see), they are also what we think and feel; what sorts of families we have; where we come from; what sorts of things we are good at, etc.
 - Discuss and emphasise that it is okay to be unique and express who we are in different ways and that it is important to respect others' differences as well as their similarities.
3. Ask students to write an acrostic poem about one of their friends that highlights their personal qualities. Emphasise to students that the acrostic needs to focus on positive attributes.

Related assets (links to sections within GDHR site)

Teaching Note

[Protective interrupting](#)

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