

On My Back

OBJECTIVES

1. To build self-esteem
2. To encourage giving statements of appreciation
3. To build inclusion

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student a large piece of paper, a felt marker, and two pieces of masking tape.
2. Ask each student to print his or her name at the top of the paper.
3. Have the students attach the papers to each other's shoulders so that they hang down like capes on their backs.
4. Have the students stand and circulate so that each person in the group can write statements of appreciation on other people's paper capes. Emphasize that the statements need to be positive.
5. When each student has several written statements on his or her cape, ask the community to sit in a circle or have them form tribes. Have the students read their statements aloud or have them exchange papers and read to each other.
6. Encourage people to save their papers, perhaps to use as posters for their bedroom walls.

SUGGESTED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

CONTENT (COGNITIVE LEARNING)

- What were some of the neat things people wrote?
- What similarities did you see in what people wrote?
- How did the fact that this activity was anonymous help you to be honest?

COLLABORATIVE (SOCIAL LEARNING)

- How did you take care of each other?
- How did you take turns?
- What can you do to offer positive statements to others more often?

DISCOVERING GIFTS (PERSONAL LEARNING)

- What feelings did you have while people were writing on your back?
- What feelings did you have while your statements were being read aloud or while you were reading your statements?
- What statements felt very special to you?
- What new gifts did you discover after hearing the statements that were written about you?

APPRECIATION

Invite statements of appreciation (and recognition of gifts):

- "I like it when..."
- "I felt good when..."

TIME: 20 minutes

GROUPING: community,
tribes

MATERIALS: large paper,
tape, markers

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS:

Independence/Autonomy
Social Competency
Sense of Purpose

OPTION

Use as a learning strategy for well known characters in history, politics, current events, literature, etc.