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## Fitting In and Standing Out

*A philosophical enquiry session for young children (aged 5 – 7), designed by Michelle Sowe.*

Duration: 1 hour.

### Resources needed:

- Printed (or projected) images
- Drawing equipment (e.g. paper and coloured pencils/texts)

[Time from start: 00:00]

## Warm-up game

(3 mins)

[Time from start: 00:03]

## Introduction & 'Camouflage' stimulus set 1

(7 mins)

*Facilitator's introduction:*

**Who likes playing hide and seek? ...**

**For animals in the wild, playing hide and seek is more than a game. For many animals, it's a matter of life and death!**

**If you've ever learned about a food chain in nature, you know that some animals hunt and eat others. The animals that hunt others are called "predators." The animals they hunt are called "prey."**

Prey animals often use camouflage to hide from predators. Who can tell us what camouflage is? ... (It's a way of hiding that allows an animal to blend in with its environment so that predators don't notice it.)

Some animals hide themselves by staying against a background that matches their color.

Can you find the camouflaged animals in these pictures?

*Distribute images 1, 2, 3, 4 – (Do not indicate concealed creatures – but for your reference they are a leaf-shaped insect; a fish; and a couple of owls.)*

*(Leave time for kids to study the images and find the camouflaged animals. Perhaps request 'hands up silently when you can see it' so that others have time to search and find.)*

~ ~

*Show image 5 (leopard – distinct)*

Some animals have special markings, like spots, stripes and patterns, that you might think would make them stand out too much! BUT....

*Show image 6 (leopard – concealed)*

... in their natural environment, these special markings actually help to break up their outline, so that they don't stand out!

~ ~

Some really clever animals blend in with their surroundings by looking like a common object. We call this method "disguise."

*Show images 7 and 8 – leaf and stick*

(For example, the 'walking stick' is an insect that looks so much like a twig or branch that it can be nearly impossible to spot in the wild!)

~ ~

Some animals use "mimicry" to help keep themselves safe by looking like another dangerous, poisonous or bad-tasting one.

*Show image 9 – two butterflies*

For example, the Viceroy butterfly mimics the look of the poisonous Monarch butterfly to avoid being eaten by predators.

Let's try to find one more camouflaged animal now, and then we'll have a look at some more pictures later.

*Show image 10 (giraffe)*

What can you see here? Did it fool you?

[Time from start: 00:10]

## **Philosophical discussion 1: Fitting in and standing out**

(10 mins)

OK, it's time to have a philosophical discussion!

*(Pair talk):* **Would you rather fit in, or would you rather stand out? Why?**

**Would it be possible for you to *look quite different* to your friends, but still fit in with them? How?**

**What makes someone fit in?**

**Could you *look a lot like* the other kids in your class, but stand out anyway?**

**What makes someone stand out?**

**Do you like to fit in sometimes, and stand out at other times?**

**When do you like to fit in? Why?**

*(Possible ideas: group belonging; shyness...)*

**When do you like to stand out? Why?**

*(Possible ideas: getting noticed for being really good at something; expressing yourself; being proud of your differences; clowning around and making people laugh...)*

[Time from start: 00:20]

## **Quick game break**

(3 mins)

[Time from start: 00:23]

## **Philosophical discussion 2: Where do we fit in?**

(10 mins)

*Show image 10: The bush and the city*

We've been talking about fitting in... I wonder where you think human beings fit in best. Do we fit in better in the bush, or in the city? ... (Why?)

Are we part of nature? How?

Are we separate from nature? How?

~ ~

Who's ready to try to find some more camouflaged animals?!

[Time from start: 00:33]

## **'Camouflage' stimulus set 2**

(4 mins)

*Break group into four pairs/small sub-groups.*

*Distribute a further eight camouflage images (Images 12 – 19) (not including small square image of human in camouflage) – two images for each pair/sub-group.*

*Once the camouflaged creatures have been identified, pass the images around the group so that each pair/sub-group has two new images to consider... etc.*

Perhaps note: Chameleons are known for their ability to change their skin color. But what most people don't realise is that chameleons change their skin color when their mood changes, not to camouflage themselves in different surroundings!

[Time from start: 00:37]

### **Philosophical discussion 3: How would you avoid being noticed?**

(7 mins)

We've got time for just one more discussion:

*(Pair talk):* Imagine if you were a spy. How would you make sure you wouldn't be noticed? Would you use camouflage?

~ ~

How might you camouflage yourself if you were in the woods?

*Show image 20:*

Would it be something like this?

~ ~

How would you hide yourself in the snow?

How would you hide yourself in the desert?

What about in the city?

*(Pair talk):* Think of ways you might disguise yourself (i.e. change how you look so that nobody can recognise you). How would you make a really sneaky disguise?

[Time from start: 00:44]

### **Quick game break**

(3 mins)

[Time from start: 00:47]

## **Activity: Design a disguise!**

(9 mins)

*Show image 21 (illustrations from the book Animal Masquerade by Marianne Dubuc)*

Here are some illustrations from a book called 'Animal Masquerade'. It's a story of some animals that were invited to a masquerade party: each animal went dressed up as a different kind of animal!

Now it's time for our last activity for today:

I want you invite you to design and draw your own disguise. It might be:

- a fancy dress costume *or*
- a camouflage outfit *or*
- a disguise to make you look like somebody else *or*
- a disguise to make you look like an animal.

*Have the kids to design and draw their imagined disguise.*

[Time from start: 00:56]

## **Share drawings with the group**

(4 mins)

## **Session ends**

[Time from start: 01:00]