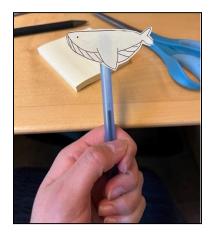
What Creature Are You?

Overview:

Participants are going to put themselves in another creature's shoes! In this exciting role-play, participants make themselves an alter-ego mask or an easy cut-out of another creature, then think of ways to describe to others who they are. This art activity promotes empathetic thinking about other creatures' characteristics and needs.



Objectives:

- Practice empathy¹: putting oneself into other people's shoes and trying to imagine and understand their perspective.
- Promote curiosity about other creatures.
- Gain experience sharing thoughts with others.

Materials:

- 1. Paper for writing and making masks. Paper plates work well, too.
- 2. Crayons or colored pencils
- 3. Scissors
- 4. Glue
- 5. A rubber band or thread to make the masks wearable
- 6. Or ice-cream sticks or pencils on which to mount the character masks

¹ Empathy can promote a value or sense known as nature connectedness: "Any deep, personal connection or need gives rise to an inherent motivation to protect, sustain and foster that which we feel close to and that we feel is a part of us and essential to our sense of self (e.g. George, 1998; Ryan & Brown, 2003). By corollary, an elevated sense of nature connectedness (by virtue of it fulfilling a basic psychological need and encompassing nature into our sense of self) appears to engender pro-nature behavioural motivations and subsequent actions." (Richardson et al., 2020, p. 833)

Activity:

- 1. Let's role play! Explain to the participants that in this activity, they can decide to be another creature...an animal, a plant, or even a mushroom!
- 2. First, give students some time to think of the creature they want to be. The facilitator can provide reference books as a way to spark ideas.
- 3. Once a creature is selected, have them take a piece of paper and draw themselves as that creature. They can turn their picture into a mask or use the sticks to make a "Creature lollipop." Also, have them write down a few things about their new identities. You can give them ideas for questions like:
 - 1. What's their new name?
 - 2. What's a sound they might make?
 - 3. What powers do they have?
 - 4. What do they eat?
 - 5. How do they interact with others?
 - 6. What personal characteristics do they have? (e.g. wisdom, courage, hope)
- 4. Depending on time and capacity, participants can spend a few minutes looking for interesting, fun facts about their creature.
- 5. At the end, everyone gets to share their alter-egos with the group and let the group know about some of the answers they wrote. Other people can ask them questions, too!

Target Age: K-2 and elementary school

Time to Prep Activity: 10 minutes

Time to Complete Activity: 20-30 minutes

Perfect for: Indoors (at home, in the classroom, in the library...)

Other activities that connect:

For a less hands-on experience, try *Spot the Difference*. If you are looking for more indoor engaging activities, try *Audio Puzzle*. And for a basic outdoor activity, *Nature Bingo* is a great option. *Senses* and *One Square Yard* offer more involved outdoor options.