

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.