

FEELINGS INSPECTORS RESOURCE  
Relationships

## Putting On Happy Face Decoupage Mask Making

### About this activity

This activity helps children to reflect on the relationships they need to be able to talk about themselves and to discuss their feelings with others.

### What do we need?

Blank half face masks - one for each child  
Modge Podge or PVA glue  
Wide containers to hold the glue, for dipping the paper  
A variety of decoupage papers (patterned napkins work equally well if separated into individual layers)  
Scissors  
Greaseproof paper or old newspapers to cover the work area.

“

You take your mask off with the people you have good relationships with and the real you is underneath, like when you're at home with your family

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### Check-in

At Children's Parliament, we start every session with a check-in. Children love these short activities, and they are a vital piece of our rights-based practice. Choose a check-in using our [Feelings Inspectors Check-in Kit](#).

## Putting on a happy face

### Instructions

Start by introducing the activity along these lines:

'Today we are going to make masks! People use masks for lots of different things: for disguise, for acting and pretending to be new characters. And sometimes we can use a mask so that people don't know what we are feeling deep down. As we make our masks today, we will be thinking and chatting about our feelings and when we sometimes decide to share our feelings, and when we sometimes want to disguise them for a while until we feel we can share. So first, let me explain the process of making the mask...'

Ask the children to rip the paper into strips while explaining that they are going to think about all the different layers of relationships they have and all the different layers that make up our personalities. The paper is submerged into glue (so that it is soaked) then applied to the mask, building up layers and texture. The sensory element of this activity helps children think about their feelings and it provides lots of time for discussion of the topic.

It is important to cover the masks in a final layer of PVA glue to ensure that the paper is all stuck down. They can be dried on greaseproof paper.



## Putting on a happy face

### Reflection

Explain that the different patterns and textured strips represent all the different feelings and layers we have, and the things that we reveal/hide about ourselves. Discuss how we all sometimes mask our feelings by putting on a happy face, and what we need to be entirely ourselves with others.

**How can other people help us strip away the layers? What qualities do the people who we can be ourselves with have? What do we need to feel happy and safe enough to reveal our true selves with someone else? Do we need the same things from our friends and the adults in our lives? Can we tell how someone is feeling just by looking at them?**

Once dry, the masks can be used in future sessions to act out scenarios that children may feel uncomfortable talking about in the first person. The individual designs of the finished masks convey how we are all unique. Our Feelings Inspectors said...

“ **Asking questions about people’s feelings can make them feel uncomfortable and under pressure. You should respect their privacy and wait until they feel comfortable to reveal themselves to you** ”

“ **The glue made me think about sticky situations and who could help me if I needed someone.** ”

### A mindful moment

At Children's Parliament, we end every session with a mindful moment to reflect on the session and wind-down. Choose a mindful moment using our [Feelings Inspectors Mindful Moment Kit](#).