

Self- Awareness



Emotions and Me

Emotions come in all shapes and sizes. Some emotions can feel comfortable, while others can feel unpleasant or even distressing. But all types of emotions can impact your thoughts and behaviors. Learning to recognize and share your feelings can help you express your needs and communicate with others.

How many feelings can you name? Set a timer for one minute and write down as many as you can!



Relationship Skills



I Hear You

When listening to others, it is important to have a focused body and mind. This shows respect to the speaker and helps you listen to what they are saying.

Here's how you can show others you are listening:

- Keep your body still.
- Think about the speaker's topic.
- Wait for the speaker to finish.
- Share connections you may have with the speaker.
- Ask questions.

Try it out! Start a conversation with a partner. Take turns and use your listening skills.



Responsible Thinking



What Might Happen?

Imagine that you are spending time with a friend, and they do not want to play the same game as you. Frustrating, right? How might you solve this problem?

Think about these possibilities and share with a partner.

What might happen if:

- You play the game your friend wants to play?
- You insist on playing your game?
- You take a break and then suggest a different game or activity?
- You ask for help from a trusted adult?



Self- Management



Ready, Set, Go!

Tricky situations can bring on a range of feelings, big and small. Checking in with your feelings is a helpful way to stay in control during these situations so you can be your best self!

When you are faced with a challenging situation, follow these steps:

Ready

Take a deep breath in and then let it out. How are you feeling right now?

Set

Do you need a break, or can you handle the situation now?

Go!

Once you are ready, regroup and go!



Thinking About Others



Thank-You Note

Saying thank you is a simple and positive way to show gratitude for the people in your life.

Think about the important people in your life. Whom are you thankful for?

- Name a friend that you are thankful for.
- Name a family member that you are thankful for.
- Name someone else, like a coach or teacher, that you are thankful for.

How might you tell or show them that you are thankful for them? Try it out the next time you see them!



Ornaments

SUMMARY

Students will be making an ornament to hang in their house or give to someone. This activity requires students to follow multistep directions and adjust their approach to completing a task based on what they see and feel. It is a great activity that can be done before a holiday and teaches students how to follow a very simple recipe. This activity can also be successfully completed with students with significant needs because there are very few steps and few verbal communication requirements. The recipe included makes four to six ornaments.

OBJECTIVE/GOALS

- Students will follow multistep directions successfully.
- Students will adjust their plans based on what they see and feel.
- Students will share resources with others and take turns.

SKILLS SUPPORTED

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| • Cooperation | • Organization |
| • Flexibility | • Planning |
| • Following directions | • Problem-solving |
| • Frustration tolerance | • Self-advocacy |
| • Impulsivity | • Sequencing |
| • Initiation | • Shared attention |
| • Life skills | • Taking turns |
| • Listening | |

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

- 1–4

MATERIALS

- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1½ cups ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons of glue
- Mixing bowl
- Measuring spoons and cups

- Rolling pin
- Cookie cutters
- Straw or pencil
- Spatula
- Cookie tray
- String or ribbon
- Glitter or other decoration items

PREPARATION

- ___ Check for students' food allergies.
- ___ Purchase the needed materials.
- ___ Make some example ornaments to show students.
- ___ Create a visual with expectations.
- ___ Create a visual with outlined steps.

INTRODUCTION

Students will be making an ornament to hang in their house. They will have to work together to create the base material made of applesauce, glue, and spices. Sometimes, the consistency does not turn out right; it can be too thin and runny or too thick to roll out and cut. They will have to make some adjustments based on what they see and feel. The ornaments they end up making will smell great, but they are *not* edible. Once students have made their ornaments, they will need to leave them to dry and pick them up later in the week. If you plan to have the students decorate them, it will take two sessions to complete.

EXPECTATIONS

Before you begin, review the expectations for the group and emphasize any behaviors you want to see during the session:

- Wash your hands first.
- Look at the materials and think of what type of ornament you want to make.
- Follow directions and work together.
- Help each other if someone gets stuck.
- Share.
- Be patient.
- Ask politely.
- _____
- _____

STEPS

1. Show the students your example ornament as a model for what they are going to make.
2. Require students to wash their hands.
3. Place materials in the middle of the table.
4. Ask students to follow the recipe and mix together the applesauce, cinnamon, and glue in a bowl.
5. Encourage all of them to try kneading the dough with their hands until it is smooth. If it is too sticky, add more cinnamon. If it is too dry, add more applesauce.
6. Divide the dough into sections so that each student has a small ball.
7. Encourage students to pat their ball into a flat shape so it is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Make sure that the flattened dough is large enough for the cookie cutter to form it into the desired shape.
8. Press the cookie cutter into the dough and pull the excess off the sides.
9. Pull the cookie cutter away from the counter.
10. Make a hole in the top of the dough with a straw or pencil.
11. Carefully use a spatula to remove the ornament from the table, and place it on a cookie sheet to dry. You should leave them out to dry for a few days, making sure to flip them occasionally.
12. When the ornaments are dry, insert a string or ribbon in the hole and tie it in a knot.
13. If desired, you can use a second session to decorate the ornaments.

Note: This activity can present sensory challenges (e.g., texture, smell, etc.). If students have a sensitivity to the texture of the dough, encourage them to use utensils to stir it, manipulate it, and roll it out. If they have a sensitivity to the smell, have other options they can try, such as clove, nutmeg, and so on. You can also add flour instead to have no smell; just be sure it is a dry powder.

CHALLENGES TO INCORPORATE

- Do not have all the necessary materials out.
- + Add too much applesauce.
- + Have unnecessary ingredients on the table (see if they question it).

DIFFERENTIATION FOR AGE OR SKILL LEVEL

- **Beginner:** Follow the steps as is. Students may need some help kneading the dough and rolling it out to the right thickness.
- **Intermediate:** Add small challenges and do not provide help until someone asks. If the students do not roll the dough out to the correct thickness, or if they add too much

applesauce, you can problem solve with them when they notice that the ornament does not dry or is too flimsy.

- **Advanced:** Show the students your final ornament and give them the three ingredients (e.g., applesauce, glue, and cinnamon), but do not tell them how much of each ingredient to use. Let them experiment to find the right consistency. See if and when they ask for help. This approach also leads to a great discussion.

REFLECTION

Reflection for this activity focuses on following a recipe to make something correctly and figuring out what to do when things are not turning out as expected.

FOLLOW-UP

This activity can easily be generalized to any other simple recipe that requires following directions. You can find some simple food recipes online that do not require an oven. You can also help students look up simple recipes online, print them, and take them home so that they can try to expand on what they can cook for themselves at home. Consult with their parents so students have some support at home. Other activities that require similar skills include the following:

- Pumpkin Pudding
- Cookie Decorating
- Friendship Mix

GENERALIZATION TO THE CLASSROOM

This activity simulates classroom activities in which students are required to follow a specific series of directions to complete a project. It is also a great activity to facilitate conversations with parents about how to incorporate cooking with their child at home so they can learn this important life skill.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES AND THOUGHTS

LESSON PLAN EXAMPLE:

Ornaments

Date: 12/17

Activity: Ornaments

Students:

Michael

Allie

Patrick

Jesse

Materials:

- ☐ Applesauce
- ☐ Liquid glue
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ Bowl
- ☐ Measuring spoons and cups
- ☐ Cookie cutters
- ☐ Rolling pin
- ☐ Cookie sheet
- ☐ Straw/pencil
- ☐ Spatula
- ☐ Ribbon/string
- ☐ Glitter/decorations

Expectations:

- Wash your hands first.
- Look at the materials and think of what you want to make.
- Follow directions and work together.
- Help each other if someone gets stuck.
- Share.
- Be patient.
- Ask politely.

Steps to Complete:

1. Look at the example ornament.
2. Wash your hands first.
3. Measure out your ingredients.
4. Place ingredients in a bowl and mix with your hands.
5. Check the consistency.
6. Divide the dough so each person has a small ball.
7. Roll out your ball so you can place a cookie cutter on it.
8. Press the cookie cutter onto your rolled dough.
9. Peel away the extra dough.
10. Push a hole at the top with a straw or pencil.
11. Carefully place your ornament on a cookie sheet to dry.
12. Let the ornament dry and come pick it up in a few days.
13. Tie a ribbon in the hole when it is dry.

Successes:

- Michael figured out that the dough was too wet, and Jesse suggested that we add some dry things.

Challenges:

- Patrick did not want to touch the dough with his hands and refused to try something else for five minutes.

Next Time:

- Brainstorm ways students can mix things if they are uncomfortable with touching slimy or sticky things, and practice with utensils or gloves.

STUDENT REFLECTION:

Ornaments

Date: _____

Activity: _____

Who was here today?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What did you do today?

Today we _____

How did it make you feel?

<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated	<input type="checkbox"/> Bored	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> Irritated	<input type="checkbox"/> Sad	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Happy	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxious	<input type="checkbox"/> Shy	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

What did you do well today?

Today I was able to _____

What was the hardest part of the activity?

The hardest part of the activity today was _____

Have you ever followed a recipe before? Yes No

What happens when someone messes up following a recipe?

When someone messes up a recipe, _____

How do you handle it when you try to make something and it does not turn out the way you expected it to?

When things do not turn out the way I expect, I _____

What are some simple recipes you can try at home?

At home, I can make _____

List of suggested recipes for home:

- Brownies
- Cupcakes
- Mac and cheese
- Oatmeal
- Smoothies
- _____
- _____



ORNAMENTS

Given that this activity is particularly useful when working with students with significant needs, I often complete this activity with Christie Bowers and another paraprofessional as well. In one particular instance, we had three students who were mostly nonverbal in the group, with one student requiring hand-over-hand support. Prior to starting the activity, we had made sample ornaments for each student to have in front of them, and Christie had created a visual set of directions that were very simplified and included real pictures for each step. With our adult-student ratio, we were able to have one adult support for each student, and we slowly went through each step together, with an adult modeling the action before requiring the student to complete the step.

We spent a lot of time focusing on how to measure ingredients, showing the students the different measuring cups and spoons and how to fill them appropriately. One student measured and added the applesauce, another student measured and added the cinnamon, and the third measured and added the glue. I stirred the ingredients together while Christie reviewed what we had completed and what was going to happen next. Once the mixture came together, I sectioned it off and gave each student a small amount. We showed the students how to roll out their dough and encouraged them to select a cookie cutter to press into their dough. Although the students needed some support kneading the dough and rolling it out, they were able to practice some of their fine motor skills. Some students even made two ornaments, and they beamed when we helped them pull away the rest of the dough and they saw their gingerbread men and snowmen ornaments.

Although this activity can typically be done in one session, we broke up this activity into two sessions to ensure that the students received enough support at each step and because we also wanted to give them a chance to decorate their ornaments. For the second session, we prepared smaller amounts of glue, glitter, and beads in small plastic cups so students could easily access whatever materials they wanted to use to decorate their ornament without struggling to manipulate larger containers. Then, we placed their dried ornaments in front of them, stepped back, and gave them the freedom to add the desired finishing touches to their ornaments. The students all paused, seemingly unsure of how to proceed, until we encouraged them to go ahead with the decorations. They then began decorating their ornaments fairly independently and with much less support required from us. The student who required hand-over-hand assistance did need help reaching for and picking up the decoration items, but Christie worked with her to communicate which items she wanted to use.

Once the other two students started, they never once looked up at us for guidance as they dove into their decorations. This display of independence was important to me because, in class, they would not initiate a task or move through a task without looking to an adult for help first. Watching the mess taking place was a little hard, requiring some restraint on my part, but I used it as an opportunity to model for the paraprofessional

that we did not need to step in to support students every time we were uneasy about a task. Each student ended up using every ounce of every decoration—whether on the ornament or on the floor—and smiled proudly as holding up their masterpieces for us to see. We then invited their teacher into the room so they could show her as well. Through this dual-session activity, not only did students learn how to complete a multistep project with assistance from us, but they also learned they that did not always need to look to an adult for guidance to successfully complete a task on their own.