



Circle Time: Looking on the bright side of things

Introduce the topic of being positive by reading *Two Frogs in Trouble* (see below). You could retell this fable without the book if necessary.

Ask: What do we mean by 'positive' and 'negative'? Make two word lists, one of positive words (e.g. good, terrific, happy, hopeful) and one of negative words (e.g. bad, wrong, sad, unhelpful). Highlight that being positive means looking for the good things in what happens, in yourself and in other people. It also means looking for at least one small good bit in every bad thing that happens. Being positive also means 'looking on the bright side' and believing that things will work out well or improve. Ask students to offer examples of when they have been positive.

→ Follow up with:

- ⊙ students acting out the story
- ⊙ singing 'Mr Frog' as a class
- ⊙ making a class book (see **Handbook**, page 97) called 'Our bright side book', in the shape of the sun. Students can each write and illustrate one page about what being positive means.



Picture books

Two Frogs in Trouble

This is a Buddhist fable about staying hopeful and never giving up. Two frogs are leaping around one sunny day when they accidentally leap into a bucket of milk. They both madly swim around trying to get out, but with little success. Finally, the less optimistic of the frogs decides that all is lost and gives up and drowns. The other frog stays hopeful and eventually, by continuing to swim around in a frenzied fashion, he accidentally makes the milk turn into butter and this enables him to climb out. The moral of the story is 'Never lose hope and never give up'.

Tell Me Something Happy Before I Go to Sleep

Willa, a little bunny, is afraid to go to sleep because she is sure she will have nightmares. Her older brother, Willoughby, shows her how to think only about all the happy things that will be waiting for her when she wakes up again.

→ Follow up by asking each student to talk, draw or write about what happy and positive things they can think about just before they go to sleep so that they sleep well and wake up in a good mood. Encourage them to consider cute animals they have seen, holidays or visits they have enjoyed, fun times they have had at school or with a friend or a pet.

The Feel Good Book

With child-like smiling stick figures, bold colour and upbeat text, this book tells us the many different things that can make us feel good, e.g. saying 'I love you' in sign language; having a ladybird land on your hand; making a new friend; sharing your treats. The closing message is that it feels good to think about good things.

→ Follow up with pairs of students creating a poster about what makes them feel good.



Songs

Start each day with a positive song to put students in the right frame of mind and reinforce the concept of being positive. Here are some suggestions for songs, but the students will have many other ideas to contribute. Consider putting the song titles in a lucky-dip container and asking one student each day to draw out a song.



'What a Wonderful World'
 'On the Sunny Side of the Street'
 'Here Comes the Sun'
 'Oh What a Beautiful Morning!'

'Keep Your Sunnyside Up'
 'Zip-a dee-doo-dah'
 'When You're Smiling'



Activities

Smiley ball questions

Use the 'Smiley ball' strategy (see **Handbook**, page 92) to ask the following positive questions.

- ⊙ Samantha, what is one good thing that has happened to you today?
- ⊙ Con, what have you got to look forward to tonight?
- ⊙ Jamal, what is one thing you have done well today?

Stress that the 'good things' can be quite small. After a while students will start the day ready to answer all those positive questions even if they don't get asked that day! They can also suggest other positive questions.

Our 'bright side' tree

Set up a tree branch in a pot of sand in the classroom. Each time someone in the class or another teacher reports hearing a positive comment or seeing a positive action from a class member, write it on a cut-out green cardboard leaf and attach each leaf to the tree.

We love our class because ...

Brainstorm all the good things about the class and its members and then make a class poster. Ask: What do students in this class think is the very best thing about our class? Carry out a survey. Give the students a sheet of paper containing statements of the best things about the class that have been taken from the poster. Then the students colour in, cut out and 'post' their selection of the one 'best' thing into a voting container. Graph the results and have students write a conclusion.

Positive portfolios

Every student has a plastic folder (or an online portfolio) in which they keep their two best pieces of work from the past week. This can be done each Friday afternoon. It is important to make sure that the portfolio doesn't go 'stale'. Ask each student why those two selections were their best piece of work. Folders can be taken home and returned, or shown to the principal or other grades. Consider allowing students to include photos of their products and recorded performances.

Hearts and flowers (or maybe footballs)

For each student you will need:

- ⊙ a small photo of themselves
- ⊙ red cardboard
- ⊙ scissors and rulers to share.

Select two students each week as the focus of this strategy. Students draw and cut out red hearts. Each student first makes one very large one, about 20 cm × 20 cm. Then they make as many smaller hearts as there are students in the class minus one (themselves). Their small ones should be about 10 cm × 10 cm and have a hole in the top for ribbon. If you have a large class, this may need to be done over a few sessions. Students write their name on the back of their large heart, and then store all of the small ones in one plastic bag with their name on it till their turn comes around. Each week, the two selected students stick a photo of themselves onto their large heart. They give their small shapes to the teacher. Over the rest of the week, ask each student in the class to tell you one good thing about each of the two students. Write these in the smaller shapes and place