

Discovering myself

Activity 7: Who do I influence?

Play a game of 'Simon says', increasing the pace until many of the children are eliminated. Explain that what makes the game tricky is that it is easier to copy actions first, without always listening to instructions. We see someone put their hands on their heads and immediately do the same, without listening for the magic words 'Simon says'. We all find it easy to copy someone else. How many times have we heard someone say: 'But he did it first...'? What do adults usually reply?

Ask the children if any of them have younger siblings who copy what they do. Emphasise that being a role model to a younger person is quite a responsibility. It is not only younger brothers and sisters who copy them, but also younger pupils at school. It is through copying them that they learn to be polite and behave appropriately. Sometimes they might also copy inappropriate words and actions; they are too young to think whether something is right or wrong. They see an older pupil whom they admire doing it, so they copy that person.

Display and discuss Kimberly Sedlacek's poem *Little Eyes Upon You* from the CD-ROM. Then ask the children to complete the core photocopiable page 27 *Little eyes upon you*, or the support or extension version on the CD-ROM.

Conclude by reminding the children that they do have an influence on the behaviour of younger children and should therefore act responsibly at all times.

Activity 8: How do I look?

Begin by reminding the children that there are billions of people living on the Earth, and each one of us has physical traits that make us unique. Some of us are small; some of us are big; some are fair, some are dark; some are girls, some are boys. Ask the children to look around the room at their classmates; look at all the differences between the people in just this one room!

Collect magazine images that reinforce the 'ideal' body images for women and men. In small groups, the children should make montages of these images and superimpose the words 'Love your body, not theirs'. Discuss how images in magazines have often been touched up or airbrushed, so they are not even real photos of people.

Describe a scenario where aliens travelling through space come upon a deserted space station where they find a pile of discarded magazines. Ask the children to imagine that they are the aliens and write a description of a typical earthling, based on what they've seen in the magazines.

Remind the children that even though they are not aliens, they might have a picture in their mind of an 'ideal' body image. What advice would they give to 10- and 11-year-olds who are unhappy about the way they look? Use the *Body image advice* interactive activity to discuss appropriate advice, and reach a consensus in organising them in order of usefulness.