

CHARACTER provides opportunities for students to study characterization of literary figures while strengthening character education concepts that are fundamental to successful human relations. The unit includes 5–7 hours of instruction. Students work in cooperative groups. Literature response activities educate students about five core ethical values of character education: fairness, respect, responsibility, honesty, and caring. At the conclusion of the unit, students apply what they have learned about character attributes to recognizing the value of establishing and being a part of a caring community.

RESPECT

Objectives

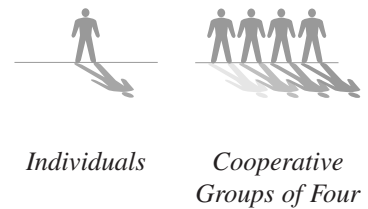
- Learn about respect

Materials

- **Monster Masks** — *teacher reference*
- **STEREOTYPES** — *one per group*
- Dictionaries — *one or more per group*
- Lined paper — *class set + one per group*
- Stapler — *one per group*

Procedure

1. Read the **Monster Masks** story starter.
2. Place students in cooperative groups of four. Assign one student to be the **Leader**, one to be the **Recorder**, one to be the **Researcher**, and one to be the **Facilitator**. Distribute **STEREOTYPES** and have the students discuss the handout within their groups. Allow 10–15 minutes for the groups to work.
3. Tell the students that they have five minutes to discuss the *Monster Masks* story. At the end of five minutes, students will have 10 minutes in which to complete the story starter. Each student will write a different ending for the story:
Option 1: Daniel is treated kindly at the party.
 - a. The **Leader** writes the end of the story from Daniel's point of view.
 - b. The **Facilitator** writes the end of the story from Lindsey's point of view.



Option 2: Daniel is treated cruelly at the party.

- a. The **Researcher** writes the end of the story from Daniel's point of view.
- b. The **Recorder** writes the end of the story from Lindsey's point of view.

4. Read the following definition of a *respectful person*:

one who accepts differences, values others for their unique qualities, and is mannerly and considerate of the feelings of others.

Compare this to definitions devised by the students. Post several definitions of a respectful person for students' reference.

5. Collect the story endings, the handouts, and any other papers.
6. If there is time, ask some students to share their story endings. If there is not time now, find another time for students to share their insights with each other. Post some stories for students' reference.



Monster Masks (RESPECT)

Most students at Jackson Middle School loved lunch period. Daniel, however, dreaded it. This was the time of day when it became obvious that Daniel had no friends. Today it was even more evident than ever. The buzz at the next table was about the big costume party on Saturday. Lindsey, the party hostess, had so many friends around her; she never stopped talking long enough to eat her lunch. Daniel felt a rush of excitement as he heard Lindsey call his name. A sudden hush came over the lunchroom.

“I would love for you to come to my party, Daniel.” Lindsey sounded so sincere. Daniel smiled back at her. The look of compassion and her pleasant expression made his heart lift with joy.

Just as he tried to answer, Jacob and Cody interrupted. “Yeah, come to the party Daniel. With that face of yours, you won’t even need to wear a mask.” Their words echoed in his ears as he trudged home. Tears welled in his eyes as he recalled the laughter that followed.

Daniel knew he wasn’t the best looking boy at school. He was “blessed” with a prominent nose and an extra chin. He didn’t exactly fit the “look” that so many others tried so hard to achieve. But given the chance, Daniel also knew he would make a great friend. He was loyal, and caring, and fun. Why couldn’t the other kids see this?

“Because they are wearing monster masks,” his Grandpa told him. “They cannot see you for who you really are because they are afraid to show who they really are. And by teasing you, they think it will keep them from being teased.”

Daniel didn’t fully understand his grandpa’s explanation, but he was sure of one thing that Gramps had said. He needed more confidence. Going to this party was a big step.

Daniel’s hand shook as he reached to ring the bell at Lindsey’s door. And then he waited—waited to reveal what a great friend he could really be.



STEREOTYPES

Facilitator Ensure that every group member is heard and that every suggestion is recorded.

Leader

1. Lead a group discussion of the following questions.
 - a. Give an example of respect from the story.
 - b. Do you agree with Gramp's explanation of why some students tease others? Why or why not?
 - c. Discuss how difficult it might be to stand up against this kind of teasing at your school.

Researcher

2. Look up the words *respect* and *stereotype* in the dictionary and read them to your group.
3. All members of your group write down at least one definition of each value.

Leader

4. Lead a group discussion about what the dictionary definitions mean.
5. Come up with a definition of a *respectful person* using words from your group members. All group members must agree with the definition.

Recorder

6. Write your group's definition of a *respectful person* here:

Leader

7. Lead a group discussion to answer this question:
How do we "win" when we judge others on inner qualities, and how do we "lose" by judging on outward appearances?

Recorder

8. Write down some of your group's ideas:
