

Active Citizenship Using Drama

A Stone's Throw



L2

Lesson 2: Peer Pressure

This lesson relates to the central character in the film. It looks at how easily someone can be persuaded to do something against his or her will. The lesson uses hot seating, thought tracking, melodrama script and soliloquy to help pupils understand these issues.

Planning	
Prior Learning	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active citizenship; • lawfulness and what justice is; • human rights and equality; and • the role of the PSNI and Ambulance Service.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss their understanding of peer pressure; • justify why specific decisions are made; • understand the power of persuasion; • talk about fairness and equity; • think about and ask appropriate questions of others; and • use improvisation, script writing and choral work effectively.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Being Creative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use improvisation and work in role • Devise and use choral speaking • Create new text <p>Working with Others and Self-Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in pairs, small groups and whole class • Respect and value the ideas and opinions of others, compromise and respond positively to feedback <p>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve problems with persuasion • Make and justify decisions • Give appropriate reasons for taking a particular standpoint.
Attitudes and Dispositions	<p>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to new ideas • Flexibility: being flexible when using a more practical drama approach • Respect: demonstrating a more caring and respectful attitude towards others.
Resources	<p>An open space in the classroom Film and script of 'A Stone's Throw' Short script 'You Must Pay the Rent'</p>

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Suggested teaching and learning strategies

Lesson Stage	Suggested teaching and learning strategies		
Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the scene in the film where Jack says 'We hated the other side and they hated us, but we both hated the peelers, ambulances and fire brigade too.' • Ask pupils to clear a space in the centre of the classroom by moving the tables and chairs to the sides and standing in a circle. • Stand in the circle with the pupils and introduce the theme of the lesson and the learning intentions. • Lead a class discussion using prompt questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>What is peer pressure?</i> – <i>What pressure can peers put on you? Threats? Violence?</i> – <i>How can someone be persuaded to do something against his or her will?</i> – <i>How can you say no?</i> – <i>How can you avoid being pressured?</i> – <i>What can you do if you are being bullied?</i> • Warm up: Introduce a short warm up with the following exercises. 		
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Activities

Activity 1: Hot seating

- Choose one pupil to be Jack and ask the rest of the class to divide into groups of 3 or 4.
- Ask each group to prepare open questions to ask Jack.
- Each group should nominate one pupil to ask a question. They should include as many references to the text as possible and Jack can refer to the script for answers.
- Different pupils can take it in turns to play the role of Jack.

Tips

Some questions might include:

- *Who do you hang around with and who are your mates?*
- *Can you tell me about your grandad?*
- *Who are the group of people across the interface?*
- *What kind of 'stuff' do the older ones make you do?*
- *Why do you hate the peelers and fire engines and ambulances?*
- *Why are you so angry?*
- *What did you row about with your Ma?*
- *Have you ever been in trouble with the police?*



Activity 2: Good/Bad angel

- Ask pupils to get into groups of 3 and assign each other the following roles:
 - Jack;
 - good angel; and
 - bad angel.
- The activity begins with the pupils playing Jack picking up a stone to throw and saying, 'I was angry... I wanted to fit in...'
- The two angels stand on either side of Jack and feed him suggestions to help him make a decision.
- Jack has to make a final decision to drop the stone or fire it at the ambulance and justify his decision.

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Tips

The pupil playing the bad angel should use a harsh, menacing and angry tone of voice and their facial expression should be screwed up and nasty.

Bad angel – possible suggestions:

- go on, throw the stone
- you hate the police and ambulances
- you hate everyone in a uniform
- they are your enemy
- think about your Ma
- think about your Da
- fire the stone as hard as you can.

The pupil playing the good angel should have a soft, gentle and caring tone of voice and a worried and pleading expression.

Good angel – possible suggestions:

- drop the stone Jack
- you might hurt someone
- your Ma needs help
- think about your grandad
- be strong Jack; don't be bullied
- the police are only trying to help people and keep the peace
- ambulances save people's lives.



Activity 3: Melodrama

- Introduce the pupils to the drama genre of melodrama. A *melodrama* is a short play that has simple, stereotyped characters and an exaggerated script designed to appeal strongly to the emotions through voice, gestures and facial expressions.
- Give each pupil a copy of the eight-line script below with three characters – a victim, a villain and a hero.
- Ask the pupils to get into groups of three or four.
- Give pupils 5 minutes to cast the parts and perform the script in their groups.
- In groups of four, the fourth pupil can be a double for one of the parts or take on the role of director.

Villain: (Loud and angry) You must pay the rent!

Victim: (Pleading) I can't pay the rent.

Villain: (Louder, with gesture) You **MUST** pay the rent!

Victim: (Crying, on knees) I can't pay the rent.

Villain: (Threatening, menacing) Then I will throw you out into the freezing snow.

Hero: (Sudden appearance, happy voice) I'll pay the rent!

Victim: (Beaming) My hero!

Villain: (Deflated) Drat!

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- Ask the groups to stop and lead a class discussion using prompt questions such as:
 - *What might the characters look like?*
 - *How might they be dressed?*
 - *How would they move, speak and react to the script?*
 - *Who might the hero be? A neighbour, lover, friend or relation?*
 - *How can people be bullied?*
 - *How can they be helped?*
- Tell pupils they are now going to improvise their own scene in a contemporary style with Jack as the victim. They do not need to write the script to complete this activity.
- There are still three characters: Jack, a villain and a hero. Ask each group to decide who the villain and hero will be in their scene. *The villain might be a peer or older teenager and the hero might be a teacher, a friend or his grandad.*
- Allow the groups a few minutes to perform their improvised scenes. Ask some of the groups to act out their improvised script and briefly look at how the conflict was resolved.

Tips

You may wish to help the groups by suggesting the following ideas:

- *the villain is an older teenager; and*
- *the hero is another pupil/teacher/caretaker.*

For example:

Older Teenager: *'Give me your phone!'*

Jack: *'No! Please! Don't!'*

Older Teenager: *'Then I'll tell everyone about your Ma and what she's been up to.'*

Caretaker: *'Pick on someone your own size!'*



Activity 4: Soliloquy

- Ask pupils to find a space on their own in the room and take on the role of Jack.
- Remind them of the scene where Jack's stone hits the side of the ambulance.
- Ask each pupil to quietly speak his/her thoughts as Jack.

Tips

Some thoughts might be:

- *'Why did I do that?'*
- *'I might have injured somebody.'*
- *'Do I fit in now?'*
- *'Am I a brave hero?'*
- *'Do my friends like me more now?'*



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Debrief

- Ask the pupils to find a chair and return to the circle.
- Facilitate a discussion on what they have learned using the following prompt questions:
 - *Did Jack make the right decisions?*
 - *Would it be different for Jack in different circumstances/different time?*
 - *How much influence did Jack's friends have on him?*
 - *Did his friends persuade him to throw the stone?*
 - *Is it fair to blame Jack for what he did?*
 - *Does Jack now fit in with his friends?*
 - *What should Jack do now?*
 - *Does he need specialist help?*
 - *Who could help Jack?*
 - *What do you now understand about peer pressure?*
- Ask the pupils if they are aware of different organisations who give help, advice and support to young people when they are being bullied into doing something they don't want to do.

Such organisations are:

- Anti-bullying resources and support
www.ditchthelabel.org
- Bullying help and advice
www.youngminds.org.uk
- Bullying in schools
www.turn2me.org
- Prevention of bullying in schools
www.kidpower.org/schools
- SupportLine
www.supportline.org.uk/problems

Possible homework/extension task

Ask pupils to research briefly the work of paramedics, the police, social workers and youth workers for the next lesson.