



GROW IN LOVA

Junior Infants/
Senior Infants

Primary 1/
Primary 2



A special lesson for teachers
to facilitate reflection on and
discussion of the Covid-19 crisis

Let's Look ...

CHATTING

ABOUT FEELINGS

- Begin by making some different facial expressions. Ask the children to guess how you are feeling based on your expression (e.g. *happy, sad, scared, excited*).
- Explain that sometimes we can tell how people are feeling by their facial expression, but sometimes we cannot. Make a 'blank' facial expression to demonstrate, and invite the children to guess how you are feeling. Pretend they guess incorrectly each time.
- Have a little game whereby a few children take turns to stand up and make a facial expression, and the other children have to guess what feeling they are trying to show.
- Finally, conduct a brainstorm of all the different feelings people can have. As the children call out the names of the different feelings, write them on the board and leave them there. (If the children need prompts, examples might include: *excited, confused, scared, confident, nervous, unsure, shy, calm*.)



Let's Learn ...

STORY

Explain to the children that different people might have different feelings about starting school or returning back to school after the summer break. Tell them that you are going to read a story about two children who have very different feelings about their first day back at school after the extra-long summer break that followed the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus.

Jack and Annie

Jack's mum pulled the blinds and allowed the morning light to stream into his room. 'UGH!' Jack responded, 'I'm not ready to get up yet!' He pulled the blankets over his head and turned around to face the wall. A worried feeling rose in his tummy. He remembered what day it was. Mum beat him to it, 'First day back at school!' she sang. 'Let's go!'

Clearly, Jack's mum was more excited about his return to school than he was. It wasn't that he didn't like school, it was just that he hadn't been there for so long, and he was actually enjoying being at home. He lived with his mum, dad and big brother on a farm in the countryside. School had closed months ago because of a new virus called Covid-19, which had made some people very, very sick. So, everyone was asked to stay at home in order to stop the virus from spreading. Jack had spent every day since school closed on the farm helping his family. His cousins lived nearby, and they had been allowed over to play, but he hadn't seen any of his school friends in months. He hadn't really missed them because he was happy enough at home on the farm.

'You know what, Mum?' he said, from under the covers, 'I actually think I'll just stay right here. I don't need to go back to school at all.' And he snuggled down a little further in his bed.

Meanwhile, not too far away, another mum came into a little girl's bedroom. But this mum didn't need to wake her daughter. 'Is it time to get up?' the girl squealed as her bedroom door opened.

'Annie!' shouted her mum, 'How long have you been awake?'

'Oh Mum!' Annie replied, jumping out of bed, 'I couldn't stay asleep any longer. I am way too excited about going back to school. Can I put my uniform on now? Did you pack my lunch?'

Annie and her mum had been together in their small apartment since school had



closed all those months ago. Annie missed her school, her teacher and her friends, and she couldn't wait to get back. She had been allowed to have a play date with a friend a couple of weeks before, but otherwise she had had very little contact with other people. 'This is the best day!' Annie shouted, running in circles around her room.

Back on the farm, Jack's mum had finally coaxed him out of bed, and convinced him to eat breakfast and get into his uniform. Now he was standing at the hall door, looking unhappy and saying, through his tears, that he didn't want to go. His mum reassured him. 'I know you're feeling nervous,' she said gently, 'it's difficult for everyone. Things will be different back at school, but you will feel better when you actually get there and see your friends.' Jack didn't really believe his mum, but he agreed to go to school anyway.

At the school gates, Annie turned to her mum. 'See you later!' she said, smiling from ear to ear. 'Don't you want me to stay with you?' her mum asked. 'No, I'm fine,' Annie replied. 'I want to make sure I'm first in the line.'

As Annie gave her mum a hug, she noticed a blue car pull in. 'Look!' she called out, 'it's Jack! We used to sit next to each other. JACK!' Annie waved at the car excitedly. Then she ran along the footpath and stood next to Jack's window.



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He seemed sad, she thought. He was looking down and his eyes looked red. Whatever could be wrong, she wondered. She knocked on the car window. 'JACK! It's me, Annie! Want to play?'

Jack looked up. His whole face changed. 'Annie!' he said, suddenly looking happy again.

'Jack,' said Annie, 'you can stand next to me in the line. Come on, slow coach! Let's go!'

Jack hopped out of the car, grabbed his bag, and looked up at his mum. He could tell she was worried about him. 'It's ok, Mum,' he said, 'I'm gonna be fine now.' And with that he was gone, chasing Annie into the school yard.

After you have read the story, check the children's understanding by asking some recall/lower-order questions such as:

- How did Jack feel when he woke up on the morning that he was to return to school?
- Where had he spent the summer months?
- How did Annie feel when she woke up that same morning?
- What did Jack's mum say to reassure him that everything would be alright?
- What did Annie do that made Jack feel better?

Then dig digger by asking these or similar questions:

- Jack was feeling nervous about going back to school. What do you think he was nervous about?
- Annie was excited about returning to school. What do you think she was looking forward to?
- Jack enjoyed being on the farm during the school closure. What did you enjoy doing this summer?
- Annie missed her school, her teacher and her friends. Did you miss anything in the past few months? Would you like to tell us about what you missed?

ART ACTIVITY

FEELING HAPPY AND FEELING SAD

Note: You will need a copy of the template on p. 6 for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the template, which has two parts.
- Invite them to draw under the smiley face something that they did during the summer months that made them happy – like Jack felt when he was on the farm.
- Under the sad face, invite them to draw something that they missed or that made them unhappy during the summer months – like

Annie felt when she missed her friends. Alternatively, some children may have had a family member or relative who got the virus, and perhaps they have a sad story about that which they would like to illustrate.



Let's Live ...



CHATTING

ABOUT MY FEELINGS

Recall the story of Jack and Annie. Then chat with the children using these or similar questions:

- Think back to how you felt when you woke up on the first morning that you were starting school/going back at school. Did you feel more like Jack, or more like Annie? Why?
- Did anyone feel somewhere in between sad and happy – a little bit nervous like Jack *and* a little bit excited like Annie?
- What is the best thing so far about starting

school/being back at school? Is it better or worse than you had expected?

- Is there anything you're feeling nervous about? Perhaps you would like to tell us about it!

Conclude by asking the children to show you a facial expression to describe how they're feeling right now about starting school/being back at school. Acknowledge all of the children's feelings and share your own.

PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

Teacher (*lighting candle*): Our candle reminds us that God is with us.

Teacher: Today we have been talking about starting school/being back at school again after such a long break. Let's say a prayer now, asking God to bless all the people in our school community. Let's pray together: 'God bless them.'

All: God bless them.

Teacher: We think of all the children in our school.

All: God bless them.

Teacher: We think of all the teachers in our school.

All: God bless them.

Teacher: We think of the secretaries, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners, bus escorts and other people who work in our school.

All: God bless them.

Teacher: We think of our families.

All: God bless them.

Teacher: Loving God,
you are with us all the time,
when we are excited and when we are nervous,
when we are happy and when we are sad.
Help us to settle (back) into school,
to have fun with our friends (to make new friends),
and to learn well together.

Bless all those who have been ill with Covid-19,
and all those who have cared for them.

May we care for one another this year.

All: Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Feeling Happy and Feeling Sad

