

Secrets and Stories

Time: approximately 50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson:

All children will be able to discuss their feelings about secrets and friendship in a class group; know that some secrets are unhealthy and that it is OK to ask for help;

Most children will be able to think about how their behaviour affects others and how they can play a role in helping others even if this sometimes means telling a secret; understand that sometimes children are experiencing problems at home that they find difficult to share with others;

Some children will be able to understand that they can take responsibility and take a risk in order to try to improve the situation for someone else; understand that asking children to keep secrets is sometimes a way of bullying or controlling them.

Resources

- ✓ Room for warm up game;
- ✓ Copies of the first two parts of the stories (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) in separate envelopes (enough for three or six groups);
- ✓ Conclusions to the stories (Appendix 3).

A Warm up

Time: about 5 minutes

Fruit bowl

Ask the children to sit in a circle. Tell them you are going to ask a question and that they have to move to a different place in the circle if the answer is “yes”, stay put if “no”. Then ask a series of questions (e.g. Have you a pet? Should you always keep a secret? Are you wearing a black top?) Remind the children this is a non-contact game. Keep it pacy and fun.

B Main Activity

Time: about 40 minutes

1. Explain that this lesson is about secrets and what to do when you are worried about a secret.
2. Use the stories in Appendix 1. There are three distinct stories (Amarjeet, Alex and Jack) so the class could be in three large groups (or six smaller ones with two groups using each story). First, give out the envelopes containing part one of the stories, one story per group. Ask the children to read these and then allow five minutes to discuss what might have happened or be happening to the main character. Ask them to think about why the children in the stories are acting this way and why they are being so secretive. What might be happening to them? Do these seem like good secrets or not? Why?

3. After this discussion give the children the envelopes containing part two of their stories. When they have had time to read, again allow time for discussion within the groups. Ask the children to consider how they themselves might feel and act if these things were happening to them. Then ask them to think of as many possible solutions for the friends of the main characters as possible – what could they do to help? Should the secrets be kept? Who else might be able to help?

4. After five to ten minutes, when discussions are complete, share the first two parts of all three stories with the whole class so everyone has heard about Amarjeet, Alex and Jack. Then gather the ideas from each group about how the children's friends could help them, or what they could do to help themselves. Encourage all the children to think of as many ideas as possible. List the ideas on the white board.

5. Finally, read the conclusions of each story (in Appendix 3) to the whole class. Have a brief discussion about the ends of the stories – are they a surprise? Remind the children that some secrets should not be kept, even if you have been asked to keep them by a friend. It is OK to ask for help and to keep asking for help until you get some; there are many different people who can help. Emphasise how in these stories the children's strong actions helped solve the problems.

C End game

Time: about 5 minutes

Sit the children in a circle and ask them to say 'I am strong because...'. Encourage a range of answers, not just physical ('I am good at working things out...' 'I know where to get help', 'I have lots of friends' etc).

Suggested Extension Activities

- Make a list with the children of all the places they can think of where they could ask for help; perhaps also look on the internet and show them the websites for The Hideout, NSPCC, and ChildLine;
- Ask the children to use the internet to find out as much as they can about living in a refuge, for instance by looking at the online refuge in The Hideout;
- Ask them to produce a poster which could be displayed in the school showing what they have learnt about where to get help.

Learning outcomes	National Curriculum – PSHE and Citizenship	Links to SEAL	Every Child Matters
<p>All children will be able to discuss their feelings about secrets and friendship in a class group; know that some secrets are unhealthy and that it is OK to ask for help</p> <p>Most children will be able to think about how their behaviour affects others and how they can play a role in helping others even if this sometimes means telling a secret; understand that sometimes children are experiencing problems at home that they find difficult to share with others</p> <p>Some children will be able to understand that they can take responsibility and take a risk in order to try to improve the situation for someone else; understand that asking children to keep secrets is sometimes a way of bullying or controlling them even by people they know</p>	<p>Key Stage Two Children should be taught/given opportunities:</p> <p>2. (c) To realise the consequences of ... aggressive behaviours ... on individuals...</p> <p>3. (e) To recognise the different risks in different situations and then decide how to behave responsibly...</p> <p>3. (f) To recognise that pressure to behave in an unacceptable or risky way can come from a variety of sources, including people they know, and how to ask for help and use basic techniques for resisting pressure to do wrong</p> <p>4. (a) That their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to see things from their points of view</p> <p>4. (c) To be aware of different types of relationships, including marriage and those between friends and families, and to develop the skills to be effective in relationships</p> <p>4. (d) To realize the nature and consequences of ... bullying and aggressive behaviours, and how to respond to them and ask for help</p> <p>4. (g) Where individuals, families and groups can get help and support</p> <p>5. (a) To take responsibility</p> <p>5. (d) To make real choices and decisions</p> <p>5. (f) To develop relationships through work and play</p> <p>5. (g) To consider social and moral dilemmas that they come across in life</p> <p>5. (h) To find information and advice</p>	<p>Theme Five 'Good to be Me'</p> <p>(Green Set)</p> <p>Managing my feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can recognise when I am feeling worried • I know how to do something about my worry <p>Making Choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can make a judgement about whether to take a risk 	<p>Be healthy (physical, mental, emotional health)</p> <p>Stay safe (from neglect, violence, abuse)</p> <p>Enjoy and Achieve (personal and social development)</p> <p>Make a positive contribution (develop positive relationships)</p>

Year Five – Appendix 1

Stories Part One



1 Amarjeet is a new girl at school in year five. She always gets dropped off by car and often comes in late. The children in her new class want to be friendly but she doesn't talk much and she won't tell anyone where she lives. She says it's a secret. She goes to after school club and leaves after everyone else, so no one has met her mum or dad. Some of the children in Amarjeet's class want to make friends with her but don't know how to talk to her. Some of the others start to make jokes about her and call her names behind her back. Amarjeet is a bit moody and this makes it easy to wind her up and hard to be friendly with her.



2 Alex has been to this school since reception. He comes to school early every day. He is suddenly very neat and tidy and works extra hard, which is not how he was last year. He had lots of friends in year four, and would often invite them around to his house after school. But some of his friends and their parents are beginning to wonder why he has stopped inviting them back to his house since starting in year five. When they ask him what's going on he just says he can't tell them. His friends don't know what to do. They wonder if he doesn't like them any more.



3 Jack comes into school looking really tired. His eyes look sore like he might have been crying, which is really unlike him. He has a bruised arm but he asks his friends not to tell anyone. He won't say what has happened and at the end of the day he rushes away from school and walks home on his own. His friends are really worried about him and don't know what to do.

Year Five – Appendix 1

Stories Part Two



1 Amarjeet has had to move with her mother into a refuge because her father was violent to her mother. She has had to move school and leave most of her clothes and possessions behind because they had to leave in a hurry in case her dad came back and caught them. She can't tell the others in her class where she lives because she is scared her father might come and hurt her mother if he finds out where they are living now. Amarjeet wants to make new friends but she really misses her old ones and her own house. Before the trouble started with her dad, Amarjeet had lots of friends and was one of the most popular girls in her old school. Although the refuge is friendly and safe, it is all new and strange to her at the moment. She is angry with her dad for hurting her mum and at her mum for making her move.



2 In the summer holidays Alex's mum met a new boyfriend on holiday. At first everything seemed really good. The new boyfriend bought Alex lots of new stuff and wanted to move in with him and his mum. She was really happy and Alex thought it might be good for both of them to have a new man in the house. But when the new boyfriend moved in he started to get very angry if there was any noise or mess anywhere. He would shout and throw things if Alex left any of his things out in the hall or living room. He started to tell Alex's mum what to wear, what to cook, when she could go out. Gradually, both Alex and his mum have stopped seeing friends or family outside the house because the boyfriend says they should all be happy just the three of them. Alex is very worried that his mum is scared of her boyfriend now and he doesn't know what to do.



3 Jack loves his dad and he can be really good fun, playing football and computer games and having a laugh. Sometimes, though, he comes home late and shouts, or punches the walls, but afterwards he always says he's really sorry and that he loves everyone in the family and he won't do it again. Last night Jack's dad didn't get back until really late and Jack's mum shouted at him. He threatened to hit her. Jack ran out of his room and tried to stop him but he was pushed aside. In the end a neighbour rang the police and they came and arrested Jack's dad. Jack is very upset but he says he doesn't want any of his friends to tell anyone else about what has happened.

Year Five – Appendix 1

Stories Part Three



1 Amarjeet is seen crying one day by her teacher, who knows that she is living at the refuge. Her teacher decides she needs some friends and sets up a small group of girls to be friends with her. Amarjeet talks to her mum about how she feels and the children's worker at the refuge helps too. When her mum realises how lonely Amarjeet is feeling she says she can tell her new group of friends about the refuge (but not where it is) so they understand why she can't bring them home. With help from the refuge, Amarjeet's mum starts to look for a flat for the two of them near the school and she promises that when they find a place of their own Amarjeet can choose a pet. Amarjeet's friends all bicker so much about what would be the best pet that at last Amarjeet laughs. She starts to feel better. Perhaps life in this new town will be OK after all.



2 Alex thinks for ages about what to do. In the end he phones ChildLine one day when his mum is cooking tea and the boyfriend is at work. He whispers on the phone so no one can hear. The person on the end of the phone takes the situation very seriously, listens carefully to Alex and suggests that he talk to someone in his family. He decides to tell his grandmother. Although she lives a long way away, as soon as she hears what is going on she gets in the car and drives down to see his mum. After lots of talk Alex's mum realises just how much the new boyfriend is upsetting Alex and controlling her life. She gathers her brother, sisters and her mother and together they ask the boyfriend to leave. Alex's grandma says she will come and visit more often. Alex's mum is much happier, like her old self. Alex is so glad he talked to someone and so is she.



3 Jack's best friend Yinka stays awake all night worrying about Jack. In the morning his mum asks him what's upsetting him and he tells her about Jack's problems. She tells him not to worry and she goes round to talk to Jack's mum when the children have gone to school. When Yinka sees Jack the next day he looks much happier. He says his mum has asked his dad to move out. He will still see Jack at weekends in the day. Jack isn't sure how it will all end but he's glad Yinka got his mum involved because she knew how to get his mum to find some help.