The Leader in e-Safety Education

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LESSON PLAN—Creating A Positive Online Identity

Recommended Target Grade: 3

Lesson Guide

This lesson introduces the concept of identity to the students. Students discuss their offline identity and how it is formed and then talk about how an online identity can be formed. Students consider what they want their online identity to be and why it is important to form a positive identity.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Understand the term identity
- Compare how an identity is formed offline to how it is formed online
- Discuss why a positive online identity is important

Materials

- a copy of the PARENT PAGE for each student
- materials for drawing and coloring

Procedures

Discussion

1. As a class, compose a definition of the term "identity."

   ***Identity: all of the things that make us who we are and make us unique.**

2. Explain that just as a person has an identity in the physical world, they also have one if they go on the Internet. An Internet identity is called an online identity, and it can be different than the one people see in the physical world.

Activity – Play a Game

1. Explain that you are going to play a game.
2. Have everyone close their eyes.
3. Begin by describing a "pretend person's" online identity to the students. For example:
   a. I like to play on the Lego site.
   b. My screen name is Skywalker123.
   c. I like to e-mail my grandfather in California.
   d. My mom makes me play educational games when I'm online.
4. Ask students to open their eyes and tell you about the identity of the person you just shared with them.
   a. Ask: Do we know what this person looks like? Why or why not?
   b. Do we know some of the things this person likes?

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c. What does this person do online?

d. Why might this person's online identity be different than this person's offline identity? How might it be the same?

****Reinforce and emphasize the concept that sometimes our online identity is different than our offline identity because we only share certain things online. However, some things may be the same.

5. An online identity is just as important as an offline identity.

Group Brainstorm

1. Have students come up with examples of how a person's identity is shown online. Even if all students don't know about a given concept, the answers need to include:
   a. e-mail address
   b. screen name
   c. photo of oneself
   d. filling out forms to sign up for Web sites (such as game sites)
   e. how one acts or communicates online
2. Talk about ways in which personal information is shared online:
   a. Most Web sites for games ask the player to sign up with personal information about themselves – to "reveal" their identity with information such as name, e-mail address, real address, etc.
   b. Reinforce: For this age group it is important that students always have a trusted adult's help when signing up for anything online.
3. Expand upon the example of how one acts or communicates online:
   a. Make the statement: How a person behaves or communicates with others online has a lot to do with how much others know about a person's Internet identity. Use e-mail usage as an example: If a person sends a mean e-mail to another person, it shows that they are treating someone unkindly. Their identity is shown as a person who is not very nice.
4. Have students brainstorm a list of personal information AND qualities that a person **would want** others to know about them online; information and qualities that would help build a GOOD identity online. For example:
   b. be nice to others
   c. be polite
   d. log off if anything is bad or ask an adult for help

Concluding Activity

Direct students to create a bulletin board that shares ways of building a positive identity online.

Example: Have students draw pictures of children online and list qualities that were brainstormed in the previous activity.

Have students take the Parent Page home.

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PARENT PAGE—Online Identity

Your child has been learning about how their identity is formed offline and how an identity is formed online. S/he is learning why having a positive online identity is important.

To make this a successful learning experience, it is important for parents to become involved by reinforcing these concepts at home.

Home Activities

Activity 1

Your child has discussed how a person's identity is shown online, such as:

- e-mail address
- screen name
- photo of oneself
- filling out forms to sign up for Web sites (such as game sites)
- how one acts or communicates online

1. If you go online, take some time to show your child what e-mail address and/or screen name you use. Discuss how these kinds of labels differ from the name you use in the offline world.
2. Involve your child in writing an e-mail to a friend or relative. Plan out what you want to say in the e-mail and how you want to say it.
   - Start by thinking of a subject line – does it make the reader want to open the e-mail?
   - Discuss the tone of your message. Will it be: Happy? Friendly? Sad? Mean?
   - Do you need to ask the person any questions? How will you ask the reader to answer? (In a nice way? In a rude way?)
   - Reinforce that e-mail should never be used to say mean things or to say something that the reader will not understand.

Activity 2

It has been reinforced to your child that children of his or her age need to have a trusted adult's help when filling out online forms (information about their identity).

1. If you go online, visit a Web site where you have a saved profile or a Web site that you have helped your child sign up to play a game.
   - Access the profile and read aloud to your child the sections that have been filled out. Examples: Name, e-mail address, physical address, etc.
   - If your profile has a picture added to it, explain why you have chosen this picture to show your identity.
   - Reinforce that as a parent, you need to help your child decide what should be said about their identity online.

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