

Treating each other with respect

Language of the heart / giraffe language

Introduction

This small lesson unit can be used in groups of young children (from the age of 5) in order to get to know the giraffe language. This includes several small units between 30 and 45 minutes during which the language of the heart will be introduced to the children.

1. Unit: "The heart"

This first unit is about the heart, not in the biological sense, but instead with regard to emotions. At the beginning, a heart made of stone is placed in the middle as a silent input. Firstly, the children can voice their own ideas. Secondly, the children are presented with questions such as:

- Where is your heart? What does your heart do? What does your heart look like?
- What does it mean when someone says: "A person has a big heart" or "I give you my heart"?

After that, they do a hands-on exercise: Everyone forms a heart with their hands and moves through the room while looking through this heart and while listening to nice music:

- Task: Look through the heart that you are forming with your hands and look at the other children and your group.

Reflection: I will tell you what I have seen with my heart... Who would like to tell me what they have seen with their heart?



2. Unit: “Meeting the giraffe”

The second unit is about the giraffe. The giraffe was selected as the animal that represents nonviolent communication because it has a very big heart and is seen as a peace-loving animal. At the beginning, the children are shown a wooden giraffe or a plushy giraffe. They are asked what they already know about giraffes. They are then given more facts about the animal:

Which land animal has the biggest heart?

- Explaining: long way from legs to head
- Peaceful animal: coexists peacefully with other animals
- Does not take food from other animals, can eat from trees
- Has a good overview of everything, calm and considerate

The children then get to know Rosi, the giraffe (a plush toy).

This is followed by a hands-on exercise: **Feeling your heart**

The children listen to music and are asked to lie down comfortably, close their eyes and place their hands on their heart:

- Task: Feel your heart. Do you feel it beating? Listen to your big heart! Who has a place in your heart? Who do you want to keep in your heart?

After this, the children cut out a heart from red paper and draw/write who has a place in their heart.

Reflection: The children present their hearts.



3. Unit: “The heart – the feelings”

The third unit is about feelings.

At the beginning, Rosi the giraffe greets each child individually. Rosi is asked: How have you been? And where she can live in the classroom. The children are asked again:

- What is special about a giraffe?

The children then do an exercise about feelings: They move around the room while music is playing. They imagine that they are a giraffe: becoming tall, stretching, relaxing their neck...

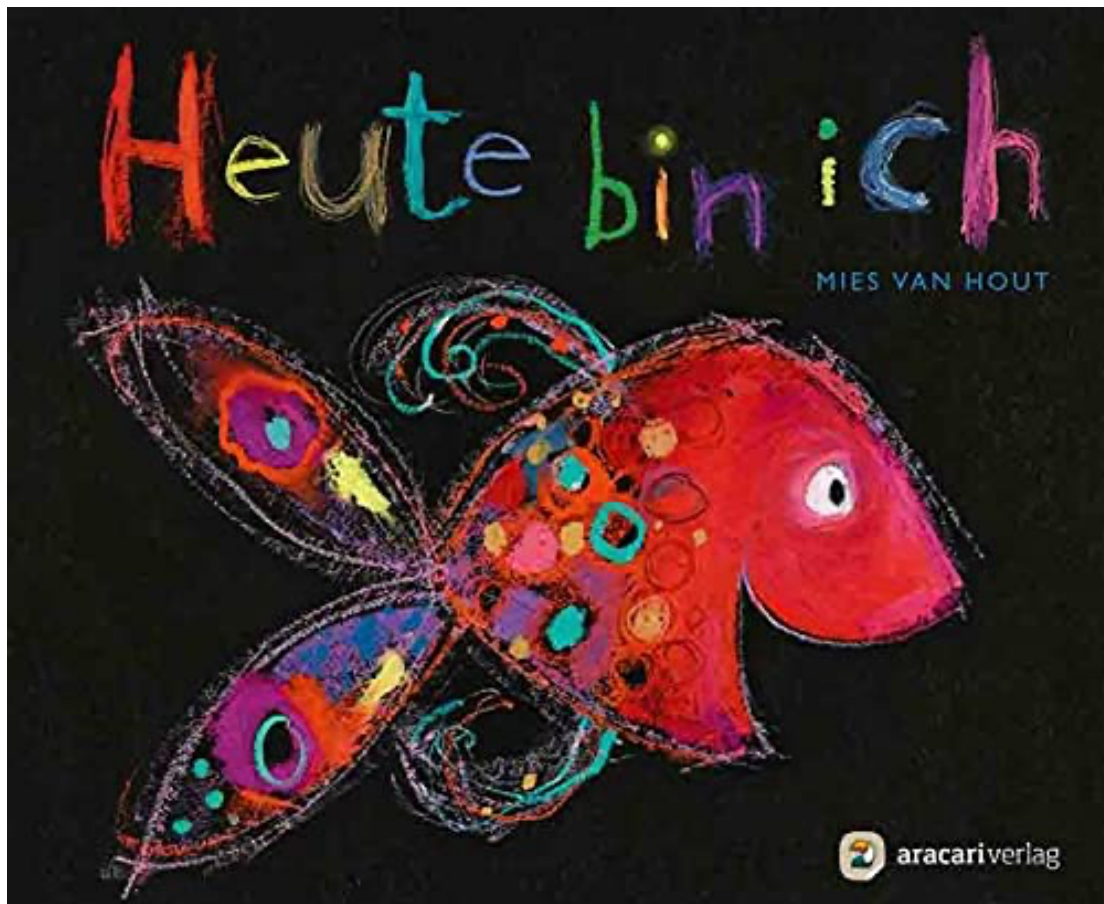
The children get to know the feelings cards, which are placed in the middle of the floor. How do these feelings feel (good / not so good / sometimes good, sometimes not so good)?

The children talk about situations in which they had a good or a bad feeling.

4. Unit: “Fish of feelings”

Together, the children look at the book „Today I am“ by Mies van Hout and guess what the fish are feeling right now. After that they can create their own fish of feelings on black paper using vibrant way crayons.

To conclude the unit, the children present the first few fish.

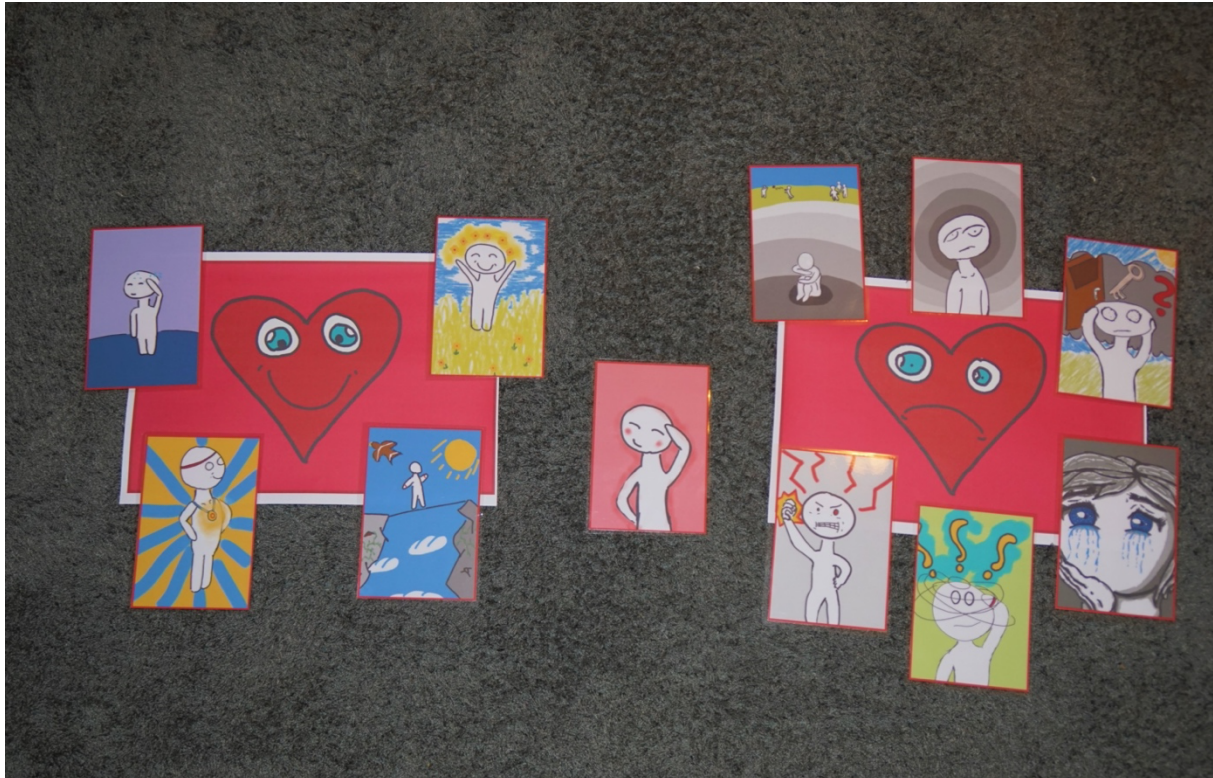


5. Unit: Naming feelings / Feeling yourself

At the start, everyone looks at each other's fish of feelings and the children guess how each fish might be feeling. After that, they use the feelings cards:

Image/word – Which belong together? Do you know this feeling? Is this a good or a bad feeling for me? Or maybe both?

They then read a yoga story in which they can participate: "Rosi the giraffe is looking for a friend and meets the sun, a butterfly, a dog, a cow, a cat, a tree, a mouse, a second giraffe ..." The children can present each yoga pose related to each figure.



6. Unit: Recognising your needs

The children learn about the needs cards which are placed on the floor. Which need could be depicted here? The group talks about different cards:

The children then talk about their needs:

When do you need **togetherness/friendship**?

When do you need to **be alone**?

The children are asked to draw a picture about these prompts or to write a little story.



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With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The creation of these resources has been (partially) funded by the ERASMUS+ grant program of the European Union under grant no. 2019-1-DE01-KA203-005003.

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