



# Understanding People: Behind the Masks

## Plan



### **Introduction**

This makes a good introduction to a series on emotional literacy or relationships.

### **Overall Aims**

- To help them to understand themselves and others better.
- To help them develop emotional self-awareness
- To show that there are ways in which we are the same inside.
- To show that underneath the surface most people struggle with the same problems. The people whom they find difficult might be struggling with the same issues that they do.
- To start to think about positive/Biblical ways of dealing with these problems.

### **Main Aim**

What sort of masks do we hide behind and why?

### **Key Bible verse**

So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour. Give all your worries to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:6 -7 or select from list below

### **Resources** select

If using starter 1 - Sweets such as smarties

If using starter 2 - Materials for making a mask

If using starter 3 - DVD clip from Labyrinth - the masked ball or Scooby Doo Monsters unleashed

Visual aids for masks - see extra document

Some appropriate music – optional

### **Starter 1**

**Sweets** – look different on the outside but taste the same. Choose something like Smarties, which are different colours on the outside, but the same inside.

### **Starter 2**

Let everyone make a face mask.

Paper plates with elastic and pens works well.

Or provide face paints.

- How do they feel when they are wearing a mask or costume of some kind?
- Have they ever worn an outfit/costume that makes them feel very different?

**Starter 3:** DVD clip from Labyrinth - the masked ball; or Scooby Doo Monsters unleashed, 10-12 minutes. Velma is so nervous about a date that she changes her whole image and personality. Not surprisingly, the date does not go well.

**Discussion on masks:**

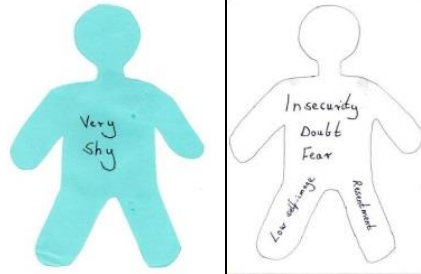
Why do people wear masks?

Let's look at a few masks worn by the sort of people you might meet.

Look at your visual aids on masks

1. The clown, joker, over-confident (monkey mask)
2. The bully, hard image (bulldog mask)
3. The know-it-all / never wrong / goodie-goodie, (cat mask)
4. The blame-shifter, it wasn't my fault (rabbit mask)
5. Very shy, (butterfly mask)

My original visual aids – very simple. There are some better ones on 'Masks Visual Aids'. Or make your own! 😊

**Tip: Visual aids – Masks**

Now I can't draw! Pre-internet, I used a set of simple cardboard body shapes drawn onto A4 size card with a paper overlay of 'clothes' to cover up the writing, as shown to the left.

Later I found some cheap foam animal masks which gave my masked characters an added touch. The elastic fitted over the A4 card or the kids can wear them. Use whatever you can to illustrate your point/s.

Look at each one in turn

- What is this person like?
- What do you think they may be hiding underneath?

Uncover the masks to find:

- Fear, insecurity, low self-esteem, rejection, guilt, anger and resentment.  
These are problems which most people experience sometimes.
- Some people are more confident than others but even the most confident get fearful at times. Select a public figure and ask - How about X?
- Some people also have more negative feelings than others for various reasons.
- Certain groups of people are particularly vulnerable due to the stage of life they are experiencing. When might that be?
- Is it always wrong to wear a mask to hide our feelings?
- Can you think of other masks that people wear?

**Application**

Discuss

➤ How can this help us in our relationships with others?

- The next time you find someone difficult; think about what might be going on under the surface that you just can't see. It helps!

➤ When and how do we take our masks down?

- As you seek to be increasingly filled with the Holy Spirit of God so it will become easier to take down the masks.
- It's about developing the courage to be ourselves. Maybe some people will make fun of us but others will love us more.
- We can be confident in the person God made us to be, even if we are still a work in progress.

The problems raise in this session are all big issues in their own right and need their own sessions if they are to be dealt with in a satisfactory way. This is an introductory summary.

**Reflection passages - select**

Psalm 139	Self-acceptance:	God knows us inside and out. Especially <b>v.14</b>
Romans 8:31-39	Self-worth:	Nothing can separate us from God's love
Psalm 121	Security:	God watches over us
2 Timothy 1:7	Fear:	God's Spirit brings love not fear (1 John 4:18)
Matthew 18:21-35	Resentment:	Parable of the unforgiving servant. Ask for help to forgive.
Romans 8:1	Guilt:	There is no condemnation for those who belong to Jesus
Luke 6:37-42:	Relating to others:	Don't accuse others; forgive, and you will be forgiven.
Romans 12:9-20	Relating to others:	General good advice suitable for unchurched groups also
1 Peter 5:6-7	Humble yourselves &	God will help you. Give him your fears.
Proverbs 3:34	God ... gives grace to the humble.	

- Think of people who have struggled with the above whom God has helped.
- Focusing on Jesus rather than ourselves helps us to be less self-conscious.
- The more you know yourself to be loved, the less fearful you become.

**Music options include:**

Turn your eyes upon Jesus (Newsboys have a lovely version)

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=newsboys+turn+your+eyes+upon+jesus](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=newsboys+turn+your+eyes+upon+jesus)

Jesus loves me this I know (for young children usually but very affirming)

Choose one about God's unfailing love.

Writer: Brenda Lord; last updated 29-Apr-19

Image: Microsoft clip art