

BACK DRAWING



BENEFITS

Calms and relaxes. Develops trust and ability to give and take. A great group exercise and a good reward.

TIME

10 to 15 minutes

ACTIVITY

- Stand in a close circle, turn to the right, and sit in a cross-legged position. (This can also be done in chairs.)
- Place hands on the back of the person in front of you.
- Begin by making rain on the person's back—gently tapping the back.
- Now, make it rain all the way down the back—fingers sliding gently down the back.
- Then, make very light thunder—gently tapping the back.
- Then, lightning—draw lightning strikes.
- Now, draw big, puffy rain clouds.
- Brush those clouds away—gently sweeping hands across the back.
- Now the sun comes out—draw a big sun with a happy face and sunglasses!
- Place palms on the back in front of you. Close eyes and feel the warm hands of the person behind you. Imagine yourself in a beautiful or favorite place with the sun warming your back.
- When the sun comes out, the flowers begin to grow—draw a beautiful flower for your friend.
- Now draw either a gift or a secret message on the other person's back. Whisper into the person's ear what the gift or secret message is.

VARIATIONS & INTEGRATION

- Create imagery on the back that relates to a specific time of year, current event, or academic theme such as holidays, snow, a parade, or a nature scene.
- Have students share what gifts they gave and received, or the messages they sent to one another.
- After drawing the gift or message on the back, have each student draw the image on paper or write down the message so they can remember it.
- For students who are sensitive to touch, try “short-stroking,” an occupational therapy technique that uses alternating palm pressure down the spine with one hand starting before the first stops.
- Other options for students sensitive to touch are to use firmer pressure or let them sit and watch the group.

NOTES

This activity works well for virtually all students and is a great family activity. Children request this activity all the time!

For older students, a group shoulder massage in a circle is a special treat before or after a test—or for a relaxation break. With teenage students, it works best if boys and girls form their own circles. Also, you can use more sophisticated imagery.

