

# 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.

