

Secondary School Peer Pressure Assembly plan and script (June 2015)

Game-

Before we begin today's assembly I thought we would start off with a game- the crisps game- I need two volunteers and a teacher, you will need to wear these lovely blindfold glasses and what you will need to do is taste two different crisps and decide which is the cheap cheese and onion and which is the walkers cheese and onion.

Put blindfolds on.

Get the teacher to play without a blindfold, and give the students cheese and onion walkers and salt and vinegar walkers to eat one by one, get the teacher to play along and say it is cheese and onion when it is salt and vinegar.

(Will they be brave enough to disagree with the teacher and say its salt and vinegar?)

*if they didn't say it was S&V - ask "did you notice or why you didn't say? were you afraid to stand out?
if they did say it was S&V not cheese and onion say- "well done for spotting the fake and not being afraid to stand out, well done for saying what was true and not just joining in. "*

Round of applause for volunteers.

Intro-

The game was just a bit of fun to get us thinking about our assembly theme today which is peer pressure. Sometimes we all do things or behave certain ways just to fit in.

Peer pressure is something every single person faces. We all want to be accepted, to be liked and to be seen as cool. Sometimes in order to be seen as cool we make decisions and choices we wouldn't normally make. It could be Smoking, drinking, taking drugs, treating people a certain way, or just generally making bad choices that don't reflect the values that we believe.

How easy do you find it to stick to what you know is right when those around you are doing what you know is wrong?

We all strive to be accepted and be cool, but what makes someone cool? Are you cool? Am I cool? Can you buy coolness, or win it, or earn it? Does the car you drive make you cool? Or is it something that just 'is'? Are some people cool and others not?

Story- 'The origin of cool'

Cool hasn't always been cool, by the way. Around a hundred years ago, the word 'cool' meant 'cautious' or 'reserved'. In others words, if you were the person who always wanted to play safe, if you were quiet or even shy, if you were nervous about doing anything daring, you were cool. In 1924 Calvin Coolidge, famous for hardly ever talking, became the 30th President of the United States with the slogan 'Keep Cool with Coolidge'. (Here's his ad campaign)

So, to put it another way, cool wasn't always cool. Back then, it was uncool.

Then, about 50 years ago, the word 'cool' changed. It was partly because of a famous jazz musician Charlie Parker, who called his music 'Cool Blues'. The music became so popular that people started using the word cool to mean stylish, fashionable or generally something pretty good. If you wore the right clothes or maybe just some very stylish sunglasses, you were cool.

So the word cool changed it's meaning completely, but something else changed too.

Can you work out what?

Being cool changed from something you could decide - like how talkative you were - to something other people decided - like what sunglasses are in fashion.

These days, you don't get to decide if you're cool, everyone else does instead.

Talk-

The TV show Top gear has this wall called the cool wall, you might have seen it. the presenters of the show use it to determine whether a certain make or model of car is cool or not.

What would happen if everyone in this school had to be voted into one of the Cool Wall categories:

Seriously Un Cool, Un Cool, Cool or Sub Zero? Not cars this time, but all of you as students. Which category would you get put in? How would people decide who was in each category?

Would it be about what clothes you wear,

or what music you listen to,

if you had swag or not,

what people you hang out with?

if you do what everyone else is doing?

How you behave?

How you treat other people?

How would feel If you were voted 'Sub Zero', would you want to spend break hanging out with someone who'd been voted 'Seriously Un Cool'? And if you were the person who was 'Un Cool', how would that make you feel inside?

We may not use the 'Top Gear' categories, but we judge others all the time, deciding if they're cool or not and we are wary ourselves of what behaviours are considered cool and what are not.

Sometimes we'd rather go along with the crowd because we don't want to be seen as uncool.

A survey a few years ago for Radio 1 found that the thing we want most as teenagers is to be popular with other people. To be thought of as cool. And the reason most teenagers give for being depressed is that they're not popular. Being cool matters to a lot of us.

I'm a Christian and there is this saying in the Bible that says- "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Cor 15:33. It's true if we hang out with people who always make bad choices then we will find it hard to make good ones. Do we need to choose our friends more wisely so that we don't compromise our values and what we believe is right.

Yolo is another one of those phrases that some people use as an excuse to make bad choices and do what they like. Its true we will only live once but use it as a reason to make good choices, to not compromise on who you are and to not waste time trying to be someone else.

There is a lot of value to be gained if we judged other people less and accepted people for who they are.

Challenge-

So here's my final question, if you had a choice, which would you rather be? Someone seen as cool because they do what other people want them to, or someone who doesn't care about being cool at all but who would rather stick to their own values? Which kind of person would you admire more, someone who treated other people badly because they thought themselves more important or someone who put others first, treating others with kindness and respect? Which ones are the coolest?

slide- "Being cool is being your own self, not doing something somebody is telling you to do."

I hope you are brave enough to make the right choices and to stand out from the crowd, be the person who doesn't cave in to peer pressure. Don't change who you are to fit in with the crowd.

Be cool for the right reasons not negative reasons, be cool for not judging others but treating other people with kindness and respect and not compromising your values.

If you want music playing as students leave, try 'Being Cool' by Kimya Dawson.
or "I wish that I could be like the cool kids"