



Cybercitizen Challenge

Masks and Avatars

Guiding level: Sparks / Brownies

Topic: Privacy and ethics on the Internet

This activity does not require a computer.

This activity helps girls understand how although having an online identity is fun, they still need to treat online friends with kindness and courtesy.

Preparation:

1. For the mask-making activity you will need to provide construction paper, paint, markers, string, scissors etc.
2. Photocopy the sheet of [Club Penguin avatars](#) to show to the girls.

At your meeting

Ask the girls:

- Does anyone know the meaning of the word “avatar”? Explain that sometimes, when people go on the Internet, they use avatars to represent themselves – their online identity. This could be a furry animal, an imaginary creature or a cartoon person. For example, if you go to Club Penguin, you get to choose a cute penguin to represent you while you’re there. (Show girls the Club Penguin avatars.)
- Have any of you used avatars when you are playing online?
- What kinds of avatars do you use?

Mask making

Tell the girls, “Today we are going to make masks to represent your online identity. Think about online avatars that you use or invent one that you would like to use.”

Have the girls make their masks. Once their masks are completed, have them think of a name for their avatar. Then ask them to write down (or, with Sparks, imagine) their avatar’s likes, dislikes and personality traits.

Role-playing

Wearing their masks, have the girls mingle and introduce themselves to one another in character as their avatar. Once they have done this, instruct girls to return to their seats and initiate the following discussion:



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- Let's talk about your avatar. Is its personality similar or different to yours?
- How did you feel when you were going around the room as your avatar? Did you behave differently than you would have if you had just been going around the room as yourself?
- For those of you who have used avatars on the Internet, is your avatar like you or different?
- What kinds of things does your avatar do that are like you?
- What kinds of things does it do that are different?

Explain that avatars are lots of fun, but always remember that even when someone is using an avatar, or “mask” online, there is still a real person, with real feelings behind that mask or avatar.

To close this activity, lead the girls through this poem, verse by verse:

Real Friends & Cyber Friends

In the real world,
When I meet my friends at school,
I treat them all quite nicely,
Because I know that's cool.

(Have the girls act out how they might meet their friends at school.)

So when I'm on the Internet,
In favourite online places,
I treat pals like my friends at school,
Though I can't see their faces.

(Have the girls put on their masks and act out how they might interact nicely – in character – with friends they meet online.)

For I know if I'm nice to you,
No matter where we play,
Then you will treat me nice right back,
'Cause that's the friendly way!

And if someone is acting mean –
Well, I don't have to stay.
I'll go and tell my mom or dad,
And find somewhere else to play.



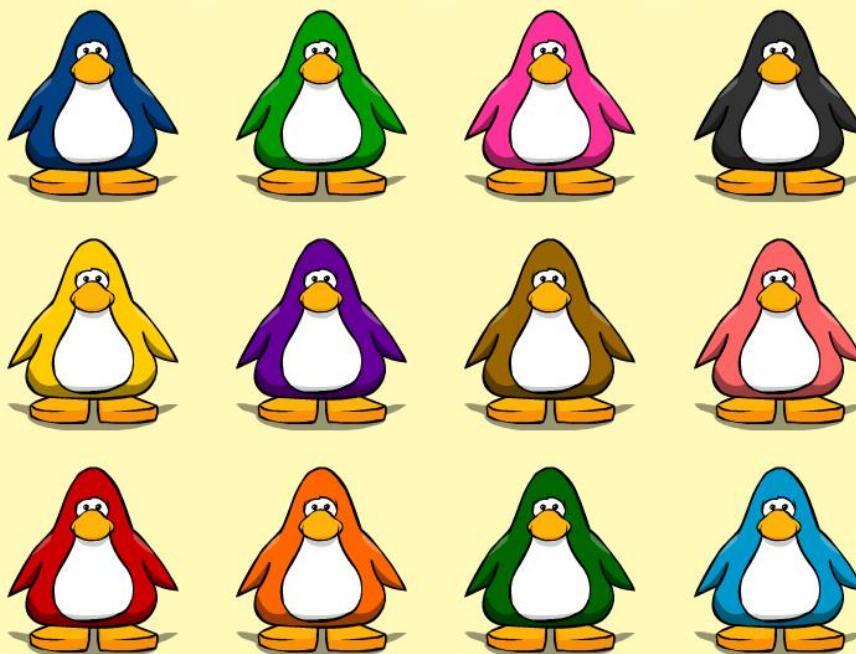
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