

Outside Pressure Makes Me a Little Crazy

Goal: + To introduce the positive action of recognizing how various outside pressures affect telling yourself the truth and your identity.

Objectives: + To discuss negative peer pressure and to provide positive ways of dealing with it.
+ To discuss positive and negative peer pressure.

Materials Needed None

Materials Provided 30 PALS Radio Script Booklets—Script 17; 30 *Positive Action Journals*

Procedure

Say What, exactly, is peer pressure?

Teacher *Wait for responses: Peer pressure is feeling like you should do something you wouldn't otherwise do, just to please your friends or a group of people your own age.*

Say When we experience peer pressure, we are often more concerned with the impression we're making or the image we're presenting than we are with our own integrity and identity. This is a big problem for everybody. Why is it a big challenge for us to deal with peer pressure?

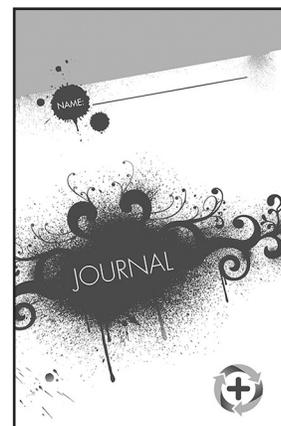
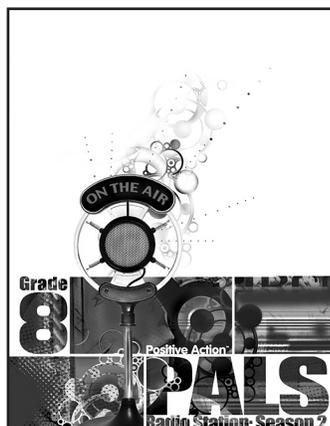
Teacher *Wait for responses: You are learning to be independent, seeking to belong with people your own age.*

Say What do their peers pressure teens to do, and is it good or bad?

Teacher *Wait for responses: Friends can pressure you to conform to do things that are risky or wild. Sometimes this is a good thing, if the values are positive, such as keeping up grades or learning a sport. Sometimes peer pressure is a bad thing, if the values are negative, such as breaking rules or laws or doing harmful things to yourself or others.*

Say Let's see what's up by tuning in to PALS Radio.

Teacher *Assign eleven students to read the roles of Michael and Michaela, the Narrator, David, Marcos, Lily, Ana, Alley Voices 1, 2, 3, and 4. Distribute radio script booklets to the readers and other students who wish to follow along. Direct the remaining students to listen closely and have their journals and pens ready for taking notes. Then, read the Radio Broadcast PALS, Script 17.*



RADIO BROADCAST PALS, SCRIPT 17

Positive Actions Lead to Success

Radio Talk Show:

Teens for a Positive World

- Michael** Hey, you wonderful PALS listeners! Glad you're here today for one of the most important discussions we can have: on peer pressure!
- Michaela** Peer pressure. It's a hot topic. Why do you think it's so controversial, Michael?
- Michael** Well, peer pressure isn't limited to teenagers. People of any age, everywhere, get pressured by their peers to conform. They get pressure to obey laws, to keep their lawns mowed, and to pay their bills. They can also get pressured to do things that violate their integrity, such as drinking when they don't want to, or making their houses look like all the other houses on the street, or that are harmful, like spending more money than they should by trying to buy all the things their friends or neighbors have—they call that "keeping up with the Joneses."
- Michaela** So everyone's challenge is how to stay true to their real, positive self, and still get along with their peers. Is that it, Michael?
- Michael** Yes. But it's extra-challenging for teens, as we said. Teens often look to each other for fun and opportunities to do something interesting, and for a sense of belonging that they once got mostly from their family. Now, they're growing up and stretching their wings, and they're looking for new ways to belong, in a complicated world. When I was in eighth grade I remember trying to fit in with the snowboard crowd—even though I didn't know how to snowboard! My life got a whole lot easier when I decided to hang around with kids who were interested in communication and journalism, who wanted to work on the school newspaper, and who liked to tinker with electronic and high-tech gear.
- Michaela** Well, I really stepped into a group that didn't work for me. The friends I made in my new eighth grade class didn't like to be physically active. They were way into playing chess and sudoku—and I just couldn't keep up. It took awhile for me to figure out why were laughing at me behind my back. And I was always judging them—calling them "slugs"—because they weren't going out for a run.
- Michael** Okay. That's enough about us. Let's tune into our play and find out how peer pressure is influencing our four friends.

RADIO PLAY: WE'RE ON OUR WAY

Act III, Episode 6: "Pressure Cooker"

Characters: Narrator, David, Marcos, Lily, Ana, Alley Voices 1, 2, 3, and 4

- Narrator** As our teens expand their interests, they're finding new expectations from their peers. In David's art classes he has met some older boys who are deep into the art scene. They have some really interesting ideas about what they should be doing with their artwork. The subject comes up on a Saturday when Marcos is coordinating the volunteer program—his brainchild. The teens have gathered at the local park, where they're scouring graffiti from an old stone wall.
- David** You should meet some of these guys, Marcos. They are so cool!

- Marcos** Yeah? Well, scrub while you talk, Mr. Artist. We've got to get this graffiti off like we promised.
- David** Well, that's the thing. I'm not sure we should be scrubbing it off. Some of these guys say that graffiti is art. Street art, they call it. Or urban art.
- Marcos** Graffiti isn't art. It's vandalism, David. You know that. People defacing private or public property. It's not cool. It's against the law.
- David** Well, after class these guys go out with their spray cans and they do some really great stuff. They paint train cars and dingy old buildings. They make the city more... beautiful.
- Marcos** I've got nothing against urban art. I love that building downtown that shows a diver doing a swan dive into the lake. But the owner of the building agreed to that. And the mural in the park? That's cool, too. All those fourth- and fifth-grade classes painted parts of the mural, the art teacher pulled it all together, and it's really something. But that's not the same as deciding what somebody else's property should look like.
- David** But if it's public property...
- Marcos** Public property belongs to all of us, and a recreational designer decides what it should look like. We pay for that. It isn't okay for a bunch of art students to decide they know better than everybody else.
- David** Gosh, I'm confused. I get where my artist friends are coming from. And I hear what you're saying. I don't know what to do.
- Marcos** You promised you'd help clean up the park today.
- David** Yeah, I did. I just think...I'd rather pick up litter than scour away somebody's attempt at art.
- Lily** Next thing we know, you'll be tagging bridges for gangs, David.
- David** What're you talking about?
- Lily** If you think it's okay for your artist friends to spray-paint railroad cars and buildings, it's only a matter of time before it's okay to paint swear words on park benches.
- David** Lily, you just don't get it!
- Ana** Come on, David. Let's get some garbage bags. I'll help you pick up trash.
- Narrator** As David and Ana move away, Marcos reflects. He's got his own problems with peer pressure.
- Marcos** I know how he feels, though. You get in with a group and they talk you into doing stuff you know is wrong...but you somehow convince yourself it's okay because your friends are doing it.
- Lily** What are you talking about, Marcos? You aren't talking about us are you?
- Marcos** Remember during football this year? Some of the guys started taking some pills. I knew it was wrong, but I took some, too. I didn't know what they were, which was way stupid on my part. They made me really nervous. And I couldn't tell if they were making me stronger or not. I just know that I acted too weird, and you guys

were looking at me funny. And then I heard all these horror stories about guys who got started on steroids and couldn't stop using. It made them violent and mean and...changed them to monsters. So I quit.

Lily You on steroids? Marcos! I'd never have guessed.

Marcos I guess that's why we need to be careful what kind of company we keep.

Lily Yeah. A group of girls in my dance class want me to quit ballet and focus on hip-hop. That would break my mom's heart. I don't know what to do.

Marcos Do what you want to do.

Lily That's the problem. With so many people pushing and pulling every which way, I don't know what I want to do.

Narrator After the park project is complete, the four friends drift in different directions, each of them supposedly headed for home. But Ana is alarmed to see that all three of her friends have gathered at the mouth of the alley, and they are listening as the air swirls and the voices whisper with mad excitement.

Ana Marcos! David! Lily! What are you doing here? I thought you were headed home!

Narrator The three friends act hypnotized. They don't turn to her or greet her. Ana goes up and stands beside them.

Alley Voice 1 The friends that you make.
Break rules as they go.
The more rules you break.
The farther you'll go.

Alley Voice 2 The drugs make you strong.
And their game's your game.
To the strong you'll belong.
They'll remember your name.

Alley Voice 3 Do the dance that is fast.
Do the dance that is crazy.
Your mother can't last.
She's too old and she's hazy.

Alley Voice 4 Oh shy little girl,
So sad and so poor,
Too scared to speak,
Too ashamed to explore.

All Alley Voices Give up on yourself.
You can't hold to the good.
You're doomed to conform.
When you live in the 'hood.'

Ana They're talking to us! Trying to pull us in! We've got to get out of here now! Come on!

Marcos Shut up, Ana. I'm trying to hear.

Ana Marcos, no! We just pulled you out of there! Don't you remember?

Marcos Lily, your friend is bugging me.

- Lily** Ana? Can't you see it's too late. If we want them to like us, we have to change for them.
- Ana** No! Lily, remember our promise. On the first day of school. We said we'd hang in there for each other. Make sure nothing takes us down. You can't give in!
- Lily** What's the big deal? Ballet or hip-hop? It's all the same.
- Ana** It isn't the same. You've got to choose for yourself—don't let someone else choose for you! Look what's happening to David and Marcos! We could lose them forever!
- Lily** Um...David and drugs. David and graffiti. His artist friends want him to do all that.
- Ana** And that could be so bad. He could end up in jail or prison. He could drop out of school. And what about Marcos?
- Lily** Marcos. Marcos! You get back here right now. I'm not going in that alley after you! Once is enough!
- Narrator** As if she's awakened from a dream, Lily is suddenly fully present and furious with her friends. She and Ana yank Marcos and David back from the alley.
- Lily** It's all for one and one for all—right?
- Ana** Right!
- Lily** So no one—not one of us—goes back in that alley! Do you hear me?
- Ana** Do you hear her?
- David, Marcos** We hear you.
- Ana** And we've got to be honest with ourselves.
- Lily** And true to each other.
- Ana** That's our peer pressure. Right Lily?
- Lily** Right! Got it, boys?
- David, Marcos** We got it.
- Narrator** As the friends put their hands together in the center, they shout out their new motto: "All for one and one for all!" They've provided some "positive peer pressure" to be true to themselves and loyal to each other. As they say their slogan again, the alley voices fall silent and the teens enjoy the wonderful peace and good will that honesty with self and others bestows.

RADIO TALK SHOW: CONTINUED

Teens for a Positive World

- Michaela** I love this. I would love to be part of this group of friends. Wouldn't you, Michael?
- Michael** Well, they're a little young for us, but they sure are a great group of kids.
- Michaela** I like the way they use peer pressure to call forth the best in each other.
- Michael** Me, too. I used to think peer pressure was all about the bad stuff—being pressured

to do things that aren't good. But peer pressure can be about being positive, too.

Michaela Yes. But the best pressure comes from inside ourselves, when we ask ourselves to be true to our best self. When we listen to that truth, no group can sway us from our true path.

Michael That way, we stay on track with ourselves. And nothing is more important than that.

Michaela Keep your light of truth shining, teens.

Michael We'll see you next time!

END BROADCAST

Say Well! What did you learn about peer pressure?

Teacher *Wait for responses: Peer pressure can be negative or positive. But the best pressure is the internal pressure to be honest with yourself. Self-honesty keeps you from caving in to peer pressure and helps you make good decisions.*

Say Peer pressure can be either positive or negative—although, unfortunately, negative peer pressure is much more common. The best thing you can do is to think for yourself, to measure the negative peer pressure against your Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle. The great question to ask yourself is: “If I do this, am I going to feel great about myself...or not so great?” Pause just long enough to think through that, and you'll have your very own answer.