

A stylized illustration of a fingerprint with yellow flowers and a purple circle. The fingerprint is rendered in dark brown lines on a light purple background. Yellow flowers are scattered across the fingerprint. A large purple circle is overlaid on the fingerprint, and a smaller orange circle with the number 2 is positioned to the right of the purple circle.

wheel of emotions

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Introduction of the activity

The purpose of this activity is to explore emotions with children, and especially to learn to identify and name their emotions in relation to climate change, i.e. their climate emotions.

Time required

This first activity presents the subject of climate change and presents climate emotions. It will last a total of one hour.

- 5 minutes to talk about emotions in the broad sense.
- 10 minutes to talk about climate change and read the comic strip.
- 10 minutes to present the wheel of climate emotions.
- 20 minutes to introduce the drawing activity and give students time to complete it.
- 15 minutes to share drawings with the class and discuss the activity.

Materials required

-  Sheet of white recycled paper 8.5 × 11 in.
-  Colored pencils (choice of felt pens, crayons, etc.)

Group organization

-  Individual creation at table or desk.
-  Group discussions, with everyone in his or her place.

Procedure and instructions

We begin the discussion by first establishing what an emotion is. Children usually respond with something very relevant, but, if necessary, here's a definition to guide you. We let the children answer the questions first and then you can summarize by explaining that: "Emotions are reactions to our environment that inform us about how a situation makes us feel and guide our actions. We can identify our emotions through our physical sensations, for example, when we feel sad, we may have a knot in our throat or stomach, sometimes cry."

- What is an emotion?
- What are they for?
- How do we feel them? Where do we feel them? Is it the same for all emotions and all people?

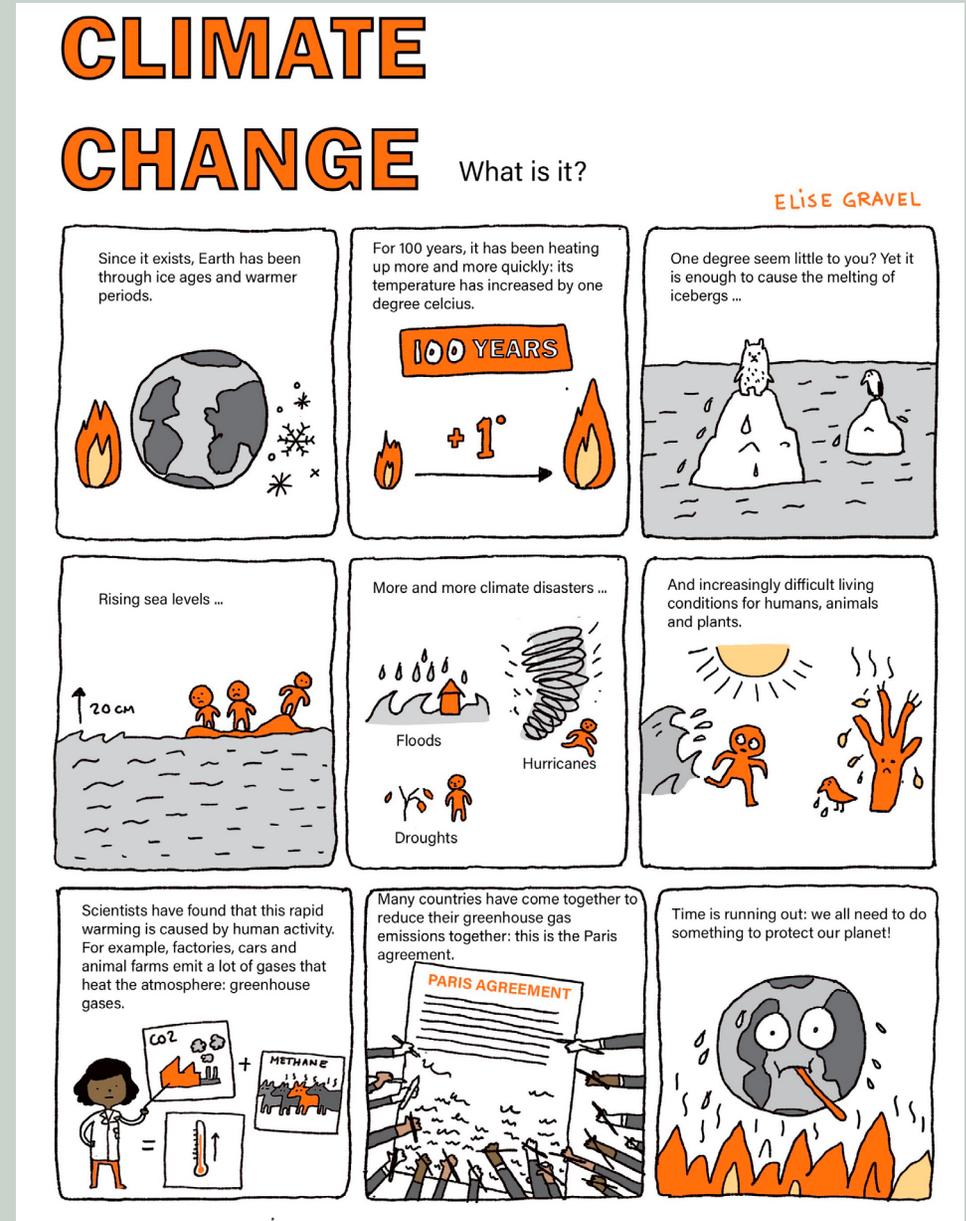
Next, we move on to the topic of climate change:

- Have you ever heard of climate change? Pollution? Environmental destruction? Species extinction?
 - If so, can anyone explain what that is?
 - What are the causes and consequences of climate change?
 - Where did you hear about it?

Procedure and instructions (continued)

Children may have misconceptions about climate change, perhaps they believe that the sun is moving closer to the Earth and causing warming, or that the Earth will explode in the next few years. We suggest welcoming this information by saying that there's a lot of information out there about climate change from many sources that may or may not be telling the truth before reframing these beliefs. You can let them know that it's a very complex subject, even for adults, so it's normal not to understand everything. Here's a short comic strip by Élise Gravel that explains what it's all about.

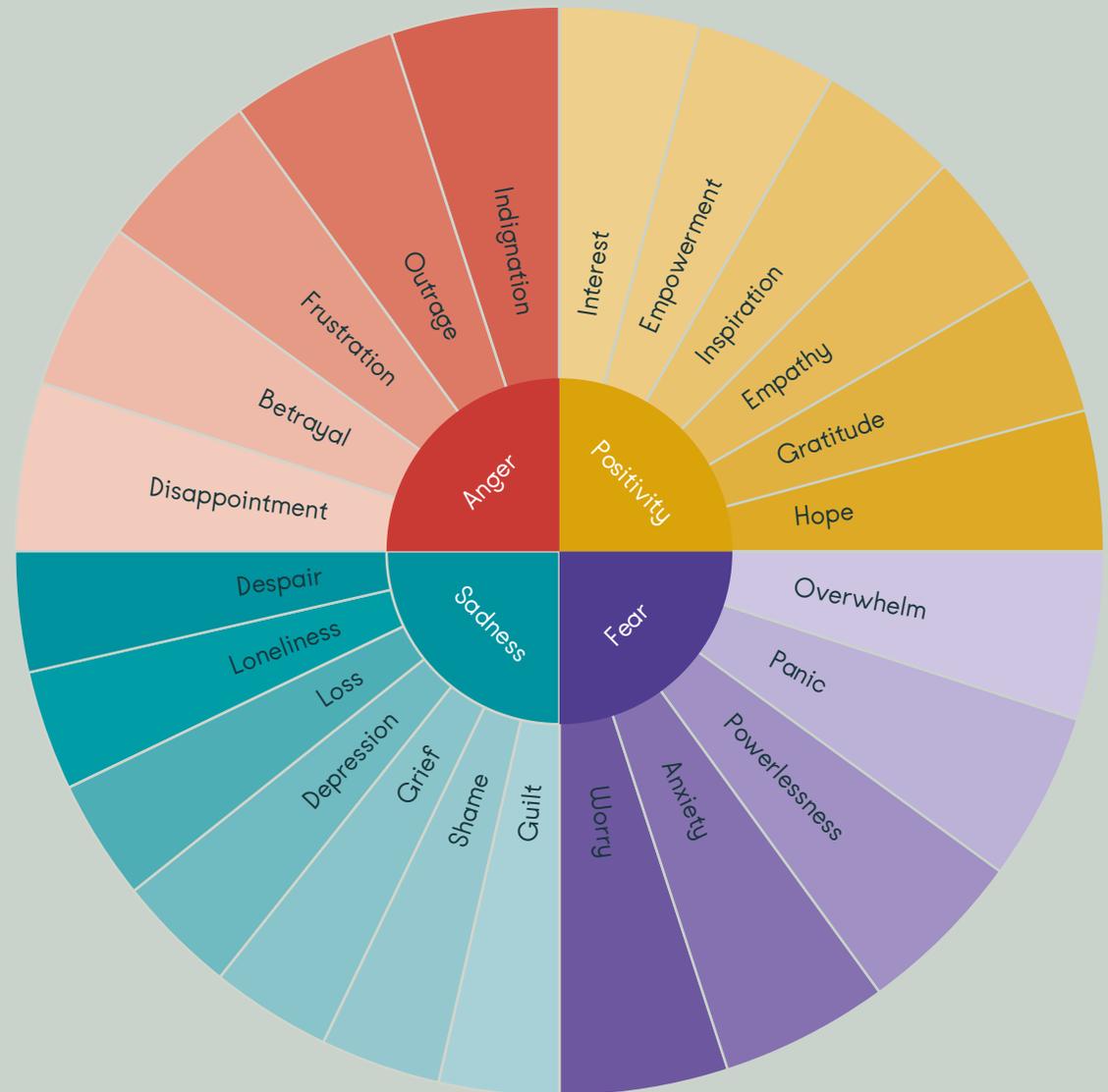
[Invite one child to read a box, then another read another box...]



Procedure and instructions (continued)

Tell your students: As we read this comic, we may learn or be reminded of some of the negative elements of climate change, which may cause us to experience emotions. In fact, researchers have studied the emotions of many people, both adults and children, and have found that there are many common emotions that people experience when thinking of climate change. So, they created this Climate Emotions Wheel to help people name their emotions. In the center, we have basic emotions, and around them we have related emotions.

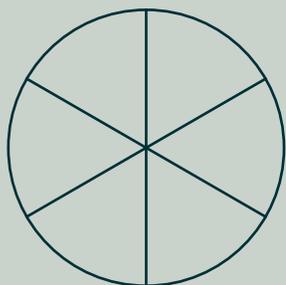
[Go around the wheel, starting with anger and the secondary emotions and explain them, then sadness and fear, ending with optimism, and say that we can also experience more positive emotions linked to optimism and the secondary emotions attached (explain them). For some secondary emotions, the class will know how to explain them, so we always invite the children to try to describe the emotions first and then help them to define them. You can also take the time to think about what makes them experience these emotions, so ask why we might experience anger in the context of climate change, for example].



Procedure and instructions (continued)

Draw your own climate change emotion wheel

- Now it's your turn to draw your emotions wheel.
- Instead of having emotions at the center, you'll make a circle and divide it into 6 parts like this (it doesn't have to be perfect!)



- Now, take a moment to think about the comic strip we just read, about what you know about climate change, and identify how it makes you feel, what emotions it makes you experience. Identify the physical sensations, the reasons why you have these emotions.

- And then, rather than simply writing down the name of the emotion, we give you the challenge of drawing them, thinking about their shapes, their colors. They can be emotions you see on the wheel on the screen, or other climate emotions you're experiencing. The colors of the emotions may be different from those on the wheel on the screen - it's a very individual and personal exercise.
- Think about the colors and patterns that might represent each of these emotions.
- Contrast: How do the emotions compare with each other, are they placed opposite or next to each other? How does this contrast show up in colors, patterns, etc.?
- Intensity: Are there emotions you feel more intensely than others? How can you represent this in your wheel? Are there less intense emotions that are difficult to identify

Discussion of the wheel of emotions

- Those who want can present/share their wheel.
- Do we see similarities with others?
- Was it difficult to draw the emotions?
- How is it different to express emotions with words than with art?
- How might this wheel be useful to you?
- Can you identify the moments when you feel these emotions?
- What do you do when you feel these emotions?

Conclusion

You can keep your emotion wheel and perhaps add new emotions throughout the weeks we will be discussing climate change.

Examples of artwork

