SOFTWARE & TECH

Glad Monster Sad Monster Activities

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Exploring Feelings Through Play: Glad Monster Sad Monster Activities for Emotional Growth

Helping children understand and express their emotions is one of the most valuable gifts a parent or educator can give. Yet, teaching emotional intelligence to young children can feel like a daunting task. How do you explain sadness, anger, or fear in a way that a preschooler can truly grasp? The beloved children's book *Glad Monster Sad Monster* by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda offers a wonderfully approachable solution. With its bright, friendly monster characters and interactive mask format, this book opens the door to conversations about feelings in a safe, playful, and non-threatening way. But the learning does not have to stop when the last page is turned. By incorporating intentional **Glad Monster Sad Monster activities** into your daily routine, you can transform simple storytime into a rich, hands-on emotional learning experience. These activities help children name their feelings, recognize emotions in others, and develop healthy coping strategies—all while having a monstrously good time.

This guide explores a wide variety of engaging, educational, and fun activities inspired by the book. Whether you are a teacher planning a classroom lesson or a parent looking for meaningful playtime ideas, these activities are designed to support social-emotional development in children ages three to seven. From art projects and dramatic play to music and movement, you will find everything you need to help the little ones in your life become emotion experts.

What Is Glad Monster Sad Monster? A Brief Introduction

Before diving into the activities, it is helpful to understand what makes this book such a powerful tool for emotional learning. *Glad Monster Sad Monster* is a colorful and interactive picture book that introduces children to a range of emotions, including glad, sad, angry, scary, gentle, loving, and silly. Each emotion is represented by a unique monster in a bright, bold color. The simple, repetitive text asks children how they feel, and each monster responds with a reason for its feeling. For example, the red monster is angry because it is raining and it wants to play outside, while the happy green monster is glad because it loves to eat green ice cream.

One of the most distinctive features of the book is the cut-out mask on each page. Children can hold the book up to their face and become the monster, physically embodying the emotion. This interactive element makes the book a natural springboard for **Glad Monster Sad Monster activities** that go far beyond passive reading. It invites children to step into the shoes of each monster, fostering empathy and self-awareness in a way that feels like pure play.

Why Emotion-Based Activities Matter for Young Children

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a critical component of early childhood development. Research shows that children who can identify and regulate their emotions perform better academically, build stronger relationships,

and experience fewer behavioral challenges. Activities that revolve around emotions help children build a vocabulary for their feelings, which is the first step toward managing them. When a child can say, "I feel angry," instead of hitting or yelling, they have taken a huge step toward emotional maturity.

Using a theme like monsters is especially effective because it depersonalizes the emotion. It is easier for a young child to talk about why a sad blue monster feels lonely than to directly discuss their own sadness. This slight distance creates safety and allows for more open exploration. The hands-on nature of **Glad Monster Sad Monster activities**also caters to different learning styles—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile—ensuring that every child can engage in a way that resonates with them.

Creative Arts and Crafts Activities Based on Glad Monster Sad Monster

Arts and crafts are a natural extension of the book because monsters are inherently fun to draw, paint, and build. These activities allow children to externalize their emotions creatively and make abstract feelings tangible.

Create Your Own Emotion Monster Masks

Inspired directly by the masks in the book, this is perhaps the most iconic activity. Provide children with paper plates, craft sticks, paint, markers, yarn, googly eyes, and glue. Ask each child to choose one emotion and create a monster mask that represents that feeling. Encourage them to think about colors—maybe a red monster for anger or a blue monster for sadness. They can add features like furrowed brows for an angry monster or a big, open mouth for a silly one. Once the masks are dry, children can wear them and act out the emotion, explaining what makes their monster feel that way. This activity reinforces the connection between facial expressions and emotions while building fine motor skills.

Feelings Collage with Monster Faces

Provide old magazines, safety scissors, glue sticks, and large sheets of paper. Have children cut out pictures of faces showing different expressions—happy, sad, surprised, worried. Then, let them arrange these faces onto a monster body shape that you have pre-drawn or traced. They can give their monster multiple faces to show that people can have many feelings, sometimes all in one day. This activity helps children recognize that emotions are normal and ever-changing.

Monster Emotion Stones or Pebbles

For a durable and portable activity, collect smooth, flat stones or purchase a bag of river pebbles from a craft store. Using acrylic paint or paint markers, children can paint different monster faces on each stone to represent different emotions. These can be used for check-in activities throughout the day. A child can pick the stone that matches how they are feeling right now and place it in a special "feelings jar." This is a wonderful tool for non-verbal children or for moments when talking about feelings feels too hard.

Interactive Storytelling and Dramatic Play Activities

Dramatic play is how young children make sense of the world. By acting out scenarios from the book or creating their own monster stories, children practice perspective-taking and emotional regulation.

Monster Emotion Charades

Write different emotions on slips of paper and place them in a bowl. One child picks a slip and must act out the emotion using only their face and body—no words allowed. The other children guess which emotion is being portrayed. To tie it back to the book, you can have the children wear their handmade monster masks while playing. This game builds emotional vocabulary and non-verbal communication skills. It is also hilarious, which helps children associate emotional learning with positive experiences.

Story Retelling with Puppets

Create simple monster puppets using brown paper lunch bags or socks. Have children decorate each puppet to represent one of the monsters from the book. Then, as you read *Glad Monster Sad Monster*, the children can hold up the correct puppet when that monster appears. After you have read the story a few times, encourage children to retell the story in their own words using the puppets. You can also extend the activity by asking, "What happens next?" and letting children invent new adventures for their favorite monsters. This strengthens comprehension, sequencing skills, and narrative ability.

The Monster Feelings Parade

Put on some music—try "If You're Happy and You Know It" or a song about feelings—and have a monster parade. Children can wear their masks or carry their emotion stones. As they march, call out different emotions, and children must adjust their walk and expression to match. For example, a sad monster might walk slowly with droopy shoulders, while a silly monster might skip and wiggle. This activity combines gross motor movement with emotional expression and is perfect for burning off energy while learning.

Sensory and Movement-Based Learning Activities

Young children learn deeply through their senses. These activities incorporate touch, sight, sound, and movement to make emotional concepts concrete and memorable.

Emotion Sensory Bottles

Create calm-down jars or emotion sensory bottles that correspond to different feelings. For a "glad" bottle, use yellow water, glitter, and small happy-face beads. For an "angry" bottle, use red water and add items that swirl and move quickly when shaken, like red sequins and small plastic beads. When a child is feeling a strong emotion, they can shake the corresponding bottle and then watch as the contents settle, modeling how their own feelings can calm down. This is an excellent self-regulation tool to pair with your **Glad Monster Sad Monster activities**.

Monster Play Dough Mats

Print or draw large monster outlines on cardstock and laminate them. Provide different colors of play dough along with googly eyes, pipe cleaners, and small buttons. Children can use the play dough to build faces onto the monsters, creating different emotional expressions. Ask questions like, "Can you give your monster a worried face? What about a surprised face?" The tactile nature of play dough is calming and centering, making this a great activity for children who need help settling their bodies.

Feeling Hopscotch

Draw a hopscotch board on the pavement with sidewalk chalk, but instead of numbers, write or draw emotion faces in each square. As children hop through the board, they must name the emotion they land on and make a face to match it. You can adapt the difficulty based on age—younger children can simply name the feeling, while older children can say one thing that makes them feel that way. This activity gets children moving and thinking at the same time.

Social-Emotional Learning Through Monster Games

Structured games are excellent for teaching turn-taking, cooperation, and emotional vocabulary in a group setting.

The Monster Feelings Sorting Game

Create a set of monster cards, each showing a monster with a different facial expression. Also, create scenario cards that describe simple situations: "You get a new puppy," "Your ice cream falls on the ground," "A friend shares their toy with you." Children take turns picking a scenario card and then finding the monster card that best matches how they would feel in that situation. This game helps children connect external events to internal

emotional states, a critical skill for developing empathy and self-awareness.

Monster Bingo

Make bingo cards filled with different emotion monster faces instead of numbers. Call out emotion words or describe scenarios, and children cover the corresponding face on their card. The first to get five in a row wins. This is a low-pressure way to reinforce emotional vocabulary in a familiar game format.

Pass the Monster Mask

Children sit in a circle with one monster mask. Music plays, and the mask is passed around. When the music stops, the child holding the mask puts it on and must name one thing that makes them feel the emotion the mask represents. For example, if the mask is a sad monster, the child might say, "I feel sad when my mom goes to work." This activity encourages children to share personal experiences in a supported environment and helps them see that everyone has similar feelings.

Literacy and Language Development Activities

The rich language of *Glad Monster Sad Monster* makes it perfect for extending into literacy activities.

Monster Emotion Journals

Give each child a small blank notebook or stapled-together pages. At the end of each day, or after a significant event, children can draw a monster that represents how they felt. They can dictate a sentence to an adult or, if they are able, write their own simple sentence: "I felt glad today because I played with my friend." Over time, these journals become a beautiful record of a child's emotional journey and a tool for reflection.

Rhyming and Word Play with Monster Names

The book uses simple, rhythmic language. Encourage children to come up with rhyming monster names for feelings. For example, "Skittish Skittles" for a scared monster, "Giggly Gumbo" for a silly monster, or "Grumpy Gumdrop" for an angry monster. Write these names on a chart and read them together. This playful use of language builds phonological awareness, which is a key predictor of reading success.

Write a Class Monster Book

As a group project, create a new version of the book. Brainstorm emotions that were not in the original book, such as jealous, proud, or shy. Assign each child or small group one emotion to illustrate and write about. Bind the pages together into a class book and read it aloud. This gives children a sense of authorship and ownership over their emotional learning.

Tips for Parents and Educators Using Glad Monster Sad Monster Activities

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