

Climbing Out

13. Sucked In

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Object lesson

Grades: K-12

Group Size: 1 or more

Time: 5-10 minutes

Introduction: This activity demonstrates how peer pressure can lead us to get “sucked in” to choices we wouldn’t make otherwise.

Materials:

- 1 clean, medium to large bottle – labels removed – with an opening slightly larger than a hard-boiled egg (sports drink bottles like Vitamin Water with a larger opening or a glass fruit juice bottle like J.R. Knudsen work best)
- Matches or a lighter
- 1 teaspoon of isopropyl alcohol, dropped into the bottle prior to the activity OR 1 piece of notebook paper

Activity:

After putting the alcohol into the bottle, place the hard-boiled egg and the bottle or jar on a table in front of the class. You might have a few volunteers come up and try to force the egg into the bottle. (Have an extra egg handy if you do this.) Demonstrate that the egg can’t be forced into the bottle, just like we can’t be forced to make bad choices.

Option 1: Alcohol (works best with a glass bottle)

Light the match and drop it into the bottle. Immediately place the egg on the lip of the bottle and watch the egg drop in. Be sure that the narrow end of the egg is pointed into the jar.

Option 2: Notebook paper (works best with a plastic bottle)

Roll up the notebook paper and light it with the match or lighter, then insert it into the mouth of the bottle. Immediately place the egg on the lip of the bottle and watch the egg drop in. Be sure that the narrow end of the egg is pointed into the jar.

The eggs should be sucked into the bottle without suffering damage.

Don’t be alarmed if there is very little flame. Not much is needed to complete the demonstration.

Explain the science behind the activity. The flame consumed the air inside the bottle, creating a vacuum. The air pressure pushes down on the outside of the egg then forces it into the bottle.

Processing the Experience:

- Why do you think the egg went into the bottle when the flame was used?
- How is this activity like peer pressure? What is an example of a situation where it is difficult to say no? (Explain that the flame was like peer pressure and sucked the egg into the bottle, just like we sometimes get sucked in to making bad choices we would otherwise resist.)
- The egg was in the wrong place at the wrong time – i.e. at the neck of the bottle when a flame was burning.)
- Are we more susceptible to peer pressure by being in the wrong place at the wrong time? How?
- Is it harder to say no the longer you are in a situation? Why?
- What can you do to help yourself resist the pressure to do something that might be harmful to you?
- How do you get out of negative peer pressure?

Note: As a bonus, you can ask students how they think they could get the egg out of the bottle in one piece. The solution: tip the bottle upside down with the egg in the neck of the bottle and blow into the mouth. The egg will then drop out into your hand.