

FENDI FOX AND THE FEELING THAT WOULDN'T STAY HIDDEN

Fendi Fox was the Sonshine Squad's best hider. He could vanish behind a tree trunk, crouch beneath a fern, or tuck his bright, bushy tail around himself so carefully that his friends could walk right past him.

One morning, Fendi was playing with his friends when something happened that hurt his feelings.

"Are you okay?" CJ Star asked.

"I'm fine," Fendi answered—but he wasn't.

Fendi tried to hide his feelings. He laughed when his friends laughed, played when they played, and whenever his friends asked how he was feeling, he said, "I'm fine."

The longer Fendi hid his feelings, the bigger they grew. Finally, he slipped away to his favorite hiding place beneath a tall oak tree. He wrapped his tail around himself and sighed. Then he remembered something he had heard at church the week before: ***Tell the truth.*** (Zechariah 8:16 TLB)

Suddenly, Fendi realized that telling the truth meant more than telling his friends what had hurt him. It also meant being honest about how he felt. Fendi closed his eyes and whispered, "Jesus, I'm not fine. My feelings are hurt, and I'm sad."

For the first time all day, Fendi didn't pretend. A few minutes later, CJ found him beneath the oak tree. "Do you want to tell me what happened?" CJ asked. This time, Fendi told the truth. CJ listened quietly.

Fendi learned something important that day: **hiding is fun when you're playing a game, but hiding your feelings can keep others from helping you.**

Most of all, Fendi learned that he never needed to hide his heart from Jesus, who already knew what was hidden. God loved Fendi, and He wanted to hear everything Fendi had hidden in his heart.

LET'S PRAY

Jesus, thank You for knowing everything in my heart. Help me speak the truth about my feelings rather than hiding them. Give me the courage to talk to You and to those I trust. Help me make kind choices even when my feelings are big. Amen.



FENDI FOX'S FEELINGS MASKS

Let's make some ***Feelings Masks*** to help us practice recognizing, naming, and talking about our emotions.

YOU'LL NEED: paper plates or cardboard, crayons or markers, scissors, craft sticks, and tape or glue.

1. **CHOOSE A FEELING:** happy, sad, angry, worried, excited, scared, lonely, or surprised.
2. **DRAW THE FACE.** Draw eyes, eyebrows, a nose, and a mouth that show each feeling. What does an angry mouth look like? What happens to your eyebrows when you are worried or scared?
3. **ADD SOME FENDI FLARE!** Give your mask fox ears, whiskers, or even some fluffy orange fur.
4. **CUT IT OUT.** Ask a grown-up to help you cut around your mask and make eye holes so you can wear it.
5. **ADD A HANDLE.** Tape a craft stick to the back so you can hold it in front of your face.
6. **TELL THE TRUTH.** Hold up your mask and finish this sentence: "**Sometimes I feel _____.**"
7. **TALK TO JESUS.** Tell Jesus about a time you felt that way. Remember, no feeling is too big, too small, or too mixed up.



HIDE, SEEK & SPEAK!

Hide your ***Feelings Masks*** around the room. Then get ready to hide, seek, guess, and speak!

1. **HIDE!** One person hides the Feelings Masks while everyone else closes their eyes. No peeking!
2. **SEEK!** Everyone searches for a mask. Once each player has found one, gather in a circle and hold your masks in front of your faces.
3. **GUESS!** Take turns looking at each mask. What feeling do you think the face is showing? What clues helped you figure it out?
4. **SPEAK!** Finish the sentence: "**I sometimes feel _____.**" Can you remember a time when you felt that way? What happened? Did you hide your feelings or tell someone you trusted? What could you do the next time you feel that way?
5. **LISTEN!** Give everyone a chance to share. Remember, the same thing can make each person feel differently—and that's okay! God made each of us wonderfully unique.
6. **SEEK AGAIN!** Gather the masks, find new hiding spots, and play another round. Can you find a different feeling this time?

SHINE IT OUT!

As you play, remember what Fendi learned: **Feelings can hide during a game, but we never have to hide our hearts from God.**