

# Light Force and Dark Force Picture Worksheets



Many children with autism spectrum disorders are quite fond of fantasy characters. Social skill teaching interventions which employ fantasy characters can tap into these predilections, increase insight and sustain interest in the social skills teaching work.

Here is a series of structured drawing worksheets to help children in the process of identifying problems and beginning to work on solutions. You will find the downloads for these worksheets below. (The worksheets shown above are examples I created using kid art I found on the internet.)

## Why bother to incorporate imagination and art into social skills work with kids on the autism spectrum?

### 1. Children with ASD lose stamina in social skills work if we don't lighten it up a little.

Think about it. Many are in for years of listening to people like us scrutinize and edify them.

### 2. Children with ASD often do much better identifying problems if we employ a strategic, indirect approach.

If you ask a child on the spectrum, "Do you have any problems with changes or dealing with new schedules and routines?", the child might answer "No, not really." but if you show the same child a picture of Rock Brain or Glass Man (from Social Thinking) and ask, "Do these characters ever cause any problems for you?", you will very often get a completely different and very substantial answer.

Drawing worksheets, designed to help children to identify their own unique problems and possible solutions, can really move your social skills teaching forward.

## Here is some sample language you can use to introduce this activity:

*"No one is perfect. Almost everyone has lots of problems. There is a very important kind of smartness called "insight." That means, you are able to look inside yourself to see what things you are good at and also what things are hard for you. People who have lots of "insight" are especially good at noticing what problems they have. I wonder which of you kids is going to be good at knowing what your problems are?"*

*To find out, we are going to do a fun and challenging drawing activity.*

*First, think about a problem with your feelings or your behavior that you are working on. Now, imagine that that problem is a creature with a name. What is the imaginary creature name of your problem? We will call this your Dark Force. On the Dark Force sheet, write down the Dark Force name and then draw a picture of what you think this creature looks like. Then, fill in the blank on that page to describe how that Dark Force affects you.*

*Next, think about a Light Force – an imaginary creature that fights against the Dark Force problem. On the Light Force sheet, write down that creature's name, and draw its picture. Then, write down how that Light Force helps you."*

The worksheets are designed to be completed in pairs, with a “Light Force” opposing a “Dark Force”

You can suggest these possible categories below before the kids start inventing and drawing.

1. Dealing with anger
2. Dealing with worries
3. Dealing with sadness
4. Calming down your body. This could cover hyperactivity, or else finding appropriate places and times to stim.
5. Getting along with others. This could cover cooperation, conflict avoidance, concern for others, friendship skills.
6. Spending too much time alone
7. Trouble being organized
8. Talking too loud or too soft
9. Talking too much about what YOU like

You may find this group of methods is a useful to promote problem self-awareness and to advance your work on communication, relationships and emotions.

I wish you well in your work.

Joel Shaul, LCSW



# Invent your own "Dark Force"

The name of this Dark Force:

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How this Dark Force gives me problems:

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My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Invent your own "Light Force"

The name of this Light Force:

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How this Light Force helps me:

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My Name: \_\_\_\_\_