

# Inclusiveness

In the first week of the Inclusiveness unit, students take time to think about their personal identities and consider how knowing ourselves improves our ability to be inclusive of others. The lessons also encourage students to evaluate what influences their identities and to identify what makes them all unique and still part of a greater whole.

Begin the unit with the whole class lesson and then aim to complete at least two of the mini lessons with your students throughout the week. Each mini lesson is designed to present elements of the main lesson in new and engaging ways.

## Main Lesson

### Whole Class Lesson

30 minutes



### Identity Circles

In this primary lesson, students will brainstorm the things that make up their personal identities. Students will create a bubble map of identity characteristics and then discuss how knowing their own identities can help them be more inclusive of others. (See page 3 for lesson details.)

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## Mini Lessons

### For Small Groups

15 minutes



### Identity Round Robin

To expand on the primary lesson about identity, this game allows students to share things about themselves and learn new things about others. Divide the class into two groups of equal numbers. Have them form two circles: an inner circle and an outer circle, students facing one another. You will read off questions, and students in the inner circle will answer the question first (give them about 30 seconds to do this). Then say, “Switch!” and students in the outer circle will give their answer to the same question, back to the student they are facing. Next say, “Rotate!” and the outer circle moves to the right one student, so everyone has a new person they are facing. Ask the next question and repeat the sequence. Remind students to use eye contact if possible and culturally appropriate, maintaining an active listening posture. At the end of the activity, ask students to share some identity similarities they discovered about their peers.

Here are some questions you can ask, though feel free to write your own.

- Name your favorite food and explain why.
- Name your favorite sports team and explain why.
- Name your favorite band and explain why.
- Describe a time when you felt proud of something you did.
- Describe a custom or tradition that is important to you.
- What are some responsibilities you have to your family or friends?
- Describe how your family has influenced your identity or who you are.
- What is something kind someone has said about you?
- Describe another person or people who have influenced your identity.

**For Partners**  
15 minutes



### **What Makes Us Unique?**

With partners, write down all of the qualities that make your class unique. When you look around the room, what strengths do you see? What similarities? What unique differences? How can you use what you observe in your classroom to help you find commonality with others, especially if you are with a group of people (a new class, a new team, at camp, etc.) you don't know very well? How does knowing what makes us all unique help us be more inclusive?

**For Individuals**  
15 minutes



### **I Am Poem**

We have talked about different parts of our identity. Today you are going to work on creating a poem that describes who you are based on unique family or cultural traditions you have. Hand each student an "I Am... Poem Planning Guide" and go through it with them. Then let students fill it out. After they are done brainstorming their ideas, have them pick the ideas they like best and draft a poem. Each line should begin with, "I am," and be five lines long. Students can also decorate or illustrate their poems.

See separate "I Am... Poem Planning Guide".

**Technology-Focused**  
15 minutes



### **How the Media Shapes Identity**

Large group discussion: How does the media shape our identity? What kinds of messages do we get on the internet, on billboards, in print ads, and in commercials that tell us who or what we should be or value? In what ways does this help us "find" our identities and in what ways does it prevent our true identities from shining? (Hint: Think back to what we learned about media bias in the Respect Unit and how much we can trust how the media tries to "help" shape us!) Finally, how does knowing our own identity help us be more inclusive of others?

# Identity Circles

In this primary lesson, students will brainstorm the things that make up their personal identities. Students will create a bubble map of identity characteristics and then discuss how knowing their own identities can help them be more inclusive of others.

## Lesson Timeframe

30 minutes

## Required Materials

- Drawing paper
- Pens/pencils

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, International Society for Technology in Education Standards, when applicable, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify unique qualities that comprise identity
- Understand how knowing identity can inspire inclusiveness

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Welcome to the Inclusiveness Unit! This is a great unit for kids at this age because they are starting to form their identities, explore new activities and friendship circles, and navigate new thoughts and emotions. These things combined can make students feel either lost or cling too tightly to what is familiar. In so doing, they may become exclusive of others and not even know it. As you help students navigate the concept of inclusiveness, think about how inclusive your classroom and school are. Do you welcome new students and give them adequate support to be as successful as the students who have been there since Pre-K? Are there clubs or teams for a variety of student interests? Do you see students leaving others out? Do you see teachers leaving other teachers out? Do you practice inclusiveness or do you, too, gravitate toward the same group of people? There is nothing wrong with having friends or establishing familiar routines, but are there opportunities to invite those who seem left out? Are there ways to assert your own ideas or work a bit more independently? How can you model inclusiveness to your students, especially if you notice them being somewhat exclusive? Start today by simply observing your routines and relationships. What are some healthy patterns and where could you practice greater inclusiveness?



## Share

5-7 minutes

Welcome to the Inclusiveness unit! We are going to start this unit by first looking at our own identities and who we are in relation to other people. It can sometimes be difficult to be inclusive if we don't even know ourselves. The idea of "knowing yourself" may sound silly. But as you get older, you learn more, and life changes, you will come to know and appreciate yourself in new ways, which will help you know and appreciate and include others in new ways, too.



## Inspire

15 minutes

Let's brainstorm some of the ways that we typically identify ourselves. Write this example on the board:

- Where you are from

What are some other things we use to help us shape our identity? Invite student response and write the ideas on the board. The following might be included or you could add:

- How you look
- People you know
- What you believe and value
- Groups/Teams you belong to
- Your hobbies/activities
- Your views and opinions
- Your traditions/cultural heritage



## Empower

15 minutes

We are going to do an activity where you identify different parts of who you are. On a piece of paper, draw a large circle in the middle of a piece of paper and write your name in it.

*Draw a model on the board and fill in the circles with your own identity as you talk so that the students have an example to follow. Have students share or post their identity circles.*

Then draw smaller circles around the larger circle; in each of the smaller circles write a word that describes your identity. If something is more important to your identity, you may make that circle a bit bigger; if it has a smaller impact, you may make that circle a bit smaller. For example, if your heritage is very important to you, then write that in a larger circle. Or maybe it is being a great soccer player or jazz saxophonist, being a sister or a brother, a friend, or a grandchild. If wearing mismatched socks is part of your identity, maybe you want to write that in a smaller circle. You choose!

When we are done, we will share our identity circles.



## Reflect

5-7 minutes

After volunteers share their identity circles, discuss how knowing our own identities can help us be more inclusive of others. Here are some suggestions:

- Knowing who we are helps us identify or empathize with others, making it easier to open up and include them.
- Knowing ourselves helps us appreciate differences in others. When we embrace rather than fear differences, we can be more inclusive.
- Knowing what we like helps us find others who like the same things, giving us common ground and a source of shared identity.

# “I Am...” Poem Planning Worksheet

This exercise is a way for you to share who you are and your culture with others. Under each section write examples of whatever is being asked in parentheses. From this information, you will write a 5-line poem including the ideas that you feel best represents your identity.

I AM... (think of familiar sights, smells, or sounds you experience as part of your daily life)

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I AM... (think of familiar foods you like or those associated with holidays you celebrate)

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I AM...(think of your favorite activities or things you enjoy doing)

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I AM... (think of familiar expressions you use with your family or those with whom you live)

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I AM... (think of your ancestors, your relatives, your adopted family, or the people you live with)

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