

Lesson 5: Marvelous Me!

“I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect.” —Maya Angelou

Social Justice Standard: Diversity 6

Summary

Healthy self-esteem depends on our ability to love and celebrate ourselves for who we are. We need to appreciate all our uniqueness and also see reflections of ourselves in the world around us.

This helps to signal to us that we, too, have many possibilities available. Not all of us have the same opportunity to see our multiple identities reflected in mainstream media and books or in leadership roles. And yet, even those of us who are used to seeing ourselves represented still must contend with continuous messages of conformity and superiority. We can work against this with authentic celebrations and truthful depictions of us: flaws, triumphs, pains, and possibilities.

In the following lesson, you will find opportunities to celebrate one’s unique self and the uniqueness of people different from you.

Booklist

- *I Like Myself* by Karen Beaumont, illustrated by David Catrow
- *Marisol McDonald Doesn’t Match* by Monica Brown, illustrated by Sara Palacios
- *The Best Part of Me* by Wendy Ewald
- *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles, illustrated by Bryan Collier

Consider This

- How comfortable are you with the idea of standing out?
- Which ideals do you measure yourself against?
- What parts of you don’t fit into those ideals?
- What messages did you receive as children about who was “like us” or “not like us?”
- What does it mean to cut off parts of ourselves because they don’t “fit in?”
- What does it feel like to bring your full self forward?
- What becomes possible when we live and act with integrity?

Talk Together

- What is unique about me?
- How do I show love for those parts of myself?
- What parts of me need a little more celebrating?
- What parts of me feel unaccepted? Where are those traits celebrated as strengths?

Engage

- Explore Crayola “Colors of the World” crayons. Notice the different skin tones and create a self portrait using them.
- Create family or class affirmations! These are short, positive statements to say out loud to yourself and to each other. Consider looking in a mirror while you do your affirmations. Examples: “ I am a hard worker.” “I love ___ about myself!”

Explore More

- Embrace Race’s “I Love Me! Positive Self Identity in Young BIPOC Children”
- Sesame Workshop’s Identity Matters Study