



## Instructor Guide

### Unit 1 - Lesson 1: Who Am I? Identity Development

Background Information for Facilitator:

#### Objectives:

- The child will be able to describe their personal identity using a variety of traits.
- The child will identify personality traits they appreciate and respect in themselves, as well as some parts they are less accepting of and would like to improve.

**Time Needed:** It is flexible. This is a very detailed guide that offers deep conversation opportunities along with many related activity options. You can choose to do everything in the guide, or you might select just a few parts to do with the kids. If your time is short, you can hold the initial discussions one day and have the kids do additional activity items (such as create their own character charts) the next time you meet.

#### Materials (depending on which activities you decide to do):

- One per child of the following activity sheets:
  - *1-1 Supergirl Character Identity Chart* (or a blank *1-1 Character Identity Chart* that the leader has filled out based on another character of interest)
  - *1-1 My Character Chart*
  - *1-1 Self-Regard and Self-Tolerance Activity Sheet*. If your kids are not able to read, you can talk through these activities out loud as a group.
- Pencil/pens, markers or colored pencils.
- Facilitators' copy of *1-1 Sharing Circle Script on Identity*
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
  - [It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr](#)
  - [The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson](#)
  - [Bunnybear by Andrea Loney](#)
- Optional: Have children bring a photo of themselves to use on the character chart they'll create based on themselves.
- Optional: sheet of blank paper or cardstock for children who would rather not use the pre-formatted *My Character Chart* handout to create their personal character profile.

**Fundamental Skill(s) or Competencies:** Self-awareness, Recognizing strengths, Accurate self-perception, Tolerance

#### Key Concepts:

Identity is based on multiple parts of who you are: physical appearance, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity and culture, personality traits, skills and talents, social roles, and more. Understanding our identity means becoming aware of who we are, and then becoming comfortable with ourselves – both our strengths and weaknesses.



## Part One: Watch Video for Kids About Identity

Start by watching the *Who Am I: Identity Video for Kids*. After watching the video, you can move into Part Two below.

## Part Two: Discussions about Identity

### Essential Questions:

What defines who we are?

What parts of our identity do we like or accept? What might we want to change about ourselves?

- Introduce the concept of identity and character traits:

Leader: *“As we learned from the video, today we are going to talk about the idea of your identity. We’re going to look at different parts of you that make you who you are – your characteristics, qualities, traits, and more. But before we look at ourselves, we’re going to take a step back and examine the things that go into making up the identities of some of our favorite fictional characters.”*

- Lead a discussion about students’ favorite characters. Ask students to name and describe characters from favorite movies, TV shows, comics, and book series.

Here are some sample questions to get the conversation started:

- How would you describe Miles Morales from Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse?
- What kind of person is Princess Shuri from Black Panther?
- How would you describe Mulan?
- What qualities stand out about Elsa from Frozen?
- How would you describe Captain American from The Avengers?

**Key Teaching Concepts:** Guide the conversation to include some of the ideas highlighted below. These themes - related to self-identity and identity development - will be explored throughout the Heroic Journey curriculum.

### Teaching Concept 1: Inner qualities can’t be known from outside appearance alone.

- Start with describing how someone looks, and then think about qualities that we can’t see, such as who they are inside.
- For example, Miles Morales is Afro-Puerto Rican; he’s skinny, and has brown eyes. He is also loyal, dependable, brave, loving, and empathetic, all inner qualities that we cannot know from his outside appearance.
- Mulan is a young Chinese woman; she is small and has shiny black hair. She is also determined, courageous, devoted to her family, and fiercely strong, all qualities that we cannot know from her outside appearance.

### Teaching Concept 2: All characters and people are imperfect. We make mistakes.

- No one has a “perfect” character. For example, Maui, the demigod from the movie Moana, acts like he can do everything, but he is secretly insecure and afraid of failing.

### **Teaching Concept 3: We can change some parts of our identity, but other parts are permanent.**

- Even if we can change what we look like on the outside, does that change who we are inside? When Aladdin turns into Prince Ali, is he a different person?
- You can introduce this discussion point by asking kids to contrast what a character was like at the beginning of a story to what they were like at the end and discuss how the character has changed.
- Ask kids to think about some other changelings and shape-shifters, such as Maleficent, the Genie from Aladdin, and Miss Martian from DC Comics' Young Justice. When these characters change their appearances, what parts about them stay the same?

### **Teaching Concept 4: We should work to respect and be proud of our own identities (known as having good self-regard), and we can notice parts of ourselves that we would like to improve.**

- Ask kids: "Can you think of a character who is aware of a shortcoming they have and is working to improve?"
- For example, Princess Merida (from the movie Brave) realizes that she was too impatient with her mother and that it's her fault that her mother was turned into a bear. Merida works to understand her mother's point of view so she can repair her bond with her mother and turn her mother human again.
- King T'Challa realizes that, like his father, he has always focused only on helping the people of Wakanda. At the end of Black Panther, T'Challa decides to use Wakanda's resources to help people in other countries around the world. This makes him different from his father.

### **Teaching Concept Five: How fixed, or permanent, is our whole identity? We may achieve a strong sense of 'self-knowing', but the journey toward self-identity never quite ends.**

- Even adults have to work to improve who they are, especially as they face new challenges, such as coping with life during a pandemic. As Yoda states, "If no mistake you have made, losing you are. A different game you should play." What do you think that means?

## **Part Three: Activity Options**

\*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see 1-1 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Identity

### **Activity Option 1: Introduce the idea of a character page by studying a fictional character.**

*(This is an optional written activity for readers. For nonreaders, you can talk through the identity qualities of Supergirl -- or another character you choose -- as a group).*

- Hand out one copy of *1-1 Supergirl Character Identity Chart* provided as a model for how to create an identity chart. (The details included are based on the live action TV series, *Supergirl*.)
- The adult leader may opt to use this model or select *another* character that would appeal to your kids and fill out the blank *1-1 Character Identity Chart* for that character.
- Character profiles are available on popular sites like the Disney Wiki, Star Wars Wiki, DC Comics Wiki, or a similar fandom database. (See the "Helpful Links" section below.) Wikipedia also offers some succinct character pages.
- Ask kids to study the headings in the Biography section of the Character Identity Chart. Point out that these are "character dimensions" or parts of a character's life that contribute to their identity and sense of self.

### **Activity Option 2: Have students make a Character Identity Page about themselves.**

- Explain that each child will now create a character profile based on themselves. They can fill in the *1-1 My Character Chart* handout or use a piece of blank cardstock or art paper to capture the information.
- Explain to kids that each chart can include:
  - Picture: Select/draw a picture of themselves (a drawing, sketch, or doodle drawn by the student, or a printed photo)
  - Character Summary: Write (if possible) a 1-2 sentence summary about themselves. E.g., “*I am a 9-year-old guitar player who likes video games.*” Or “*I am a friendly, fourth grade girl who speaks Spanish at home.*” If students feel stuck, prompt them by instructing them to “*describe yourself in two sentences to someone you just met.*”
  - Background: (3-6 sentences) Students may add information about where they were born, where they have lived, who they lived with/ who raised them, siblings, etc. To the extent they are comfortable, students can include difficult life events and transitions.
    - Remember to be sensitive and offer support to kids who have a history of trauma, such as kids that have experienced homelessness, loss of a family member or friend, divorce of parents, foster care, adoption, etc.
  - Trivia: Kids should include a list of a few interesting and “fun facts” that not everyone knows about them. Examples include languages they speak, number and type of pets they own, skills or talents they have, etc.
  - “My Biography” information: In the right column, kids can fill in quick facts that will help them tell their story.

### **Activity Option 3: Have kids share their character pages in small groups**

- Divide children into groups of 2-4 people.
  - To encourage students to do some further self-reflection, ask them to answer the following questions:
    - *What parts of your page are you proud of and appreciate?*
    - *What parts of you make you feel dissatisfied? Are those parts changeable?*
- Note: Kids may elect to bring home their character sheets to continue working on them. They can show their sheets to their families.

### **Activity Option 4: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss identity**

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled 1-1 Identity Sharing Circle Script. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

### **Activity Option 5: Read aloud and discuss a picture book about identity**

- Here are the recommended picture books that accompany this lesson:
  - *It’s Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr
  - *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson
  - *Bunnybear* by Andrea Loney

### **Activity Option 6: Have kids create a skit around the concept of identity.**

- Invite kids to create and perform a skit around sharing personal identity.
- For example, a skit idea might be: “A character wants to share something important that other people don’t know about who they are. Brainstorm and perform a story for your peers.”
- Kids can perform skits for the group as a whole.

### **Activity Option 7: Visual Art activity**

- Tell the kids, “Imagine that someone who has never met you is supposed to find you in a crowd. Make a self-portrait that would help that person know how to identify you.”
- Kids can use any available medium. They can draw a picture of themselves; make a clay sculpture, paint a self-portrait, etc. This could be a one-day project or an ongoing project. Kids might even choose to bring in a photo of themselves and attach it to construction paper and make a frame.

### **Activity Option 8: Physical activity:**

- Ask kids to create a personal exercise routine with four different types of movements that they would use to train as a superhero, based on whatever activities feel right for them. Then ask them to practice their routine! For example, here are three examples of what a personal routine might include:
  1. Do 30 jumping jacks, 5 cartwheels, 10 pushups, and 1 minute of jogging in place
  2. Touch toes for 10 seconds, clap hands vigorously 100 times, take 5 deep breaths, and do 20 big arm circles
  3. Sprint back and forth 10 times, strike 5 ninja poses, walk like a crab for 5 minutes, and jump up and down as high as you can 10 times.

### **Activity Option 9: Have students complete the Self-Regard and Self-Tolerance Activity.**

*(Optional written activity for readers. For non-readers, you can simply talk through these questions as a group.)*

- Pass out this activity sheet and have each student fill it out.
- Ask students to consider which aspects listed in the activity they can change and which they believe are fixed. If they like, they can jot any thoughts they have about the items in the margins to reference in future activities.
- Note: Kids can opt to include some information from this activity in the character profiles they will create based on themselves.

## Part Four: Assessment

Check to make sure each child has completed at least two activities from the activity options.

### Accommodations/Modifications:

Some students may do these activities as a verbal exercise instead of a written one. Students with social anxiety or shyness may prefer not to share their finished *My Character Chart* with peers.

### Differentiation for Enrichment:

Allow students to extend the project and create their own new fictional hero based on the student's own character traits. Students may choose to sing or rap about their character sheet.

### Differentiation for Intervention:

Have students chart their character traits in pairs or small groups based on ability level (heterogeneous or homogenous grouping).

### Supplemental/Extended Readings for More Advanced Readers (Middle School Levels):

1. Justice League #7 (New 52 Justice League #7) – Character focus: Billy Batson/Shazam
2. Invincible Iron Man Vol. 2 #7 – Character focus: RiRi Williams/Iron Heart
3. Miles Morales: Spider-Man #1 (2018) – Character focus: Miles Morales
4. Ms. Marvel #1-5 (2014) – Character focus: Kamala Khan

### Helpful Links:

Sites to use for character profiles

Marvel Fandom Wiki [http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Marvel\\_Database](http://marvel.wikia.com/wiki/Marvel_Database)

DC Comics Fandom Wiki [http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/DC\\_Comics\\_Database](http://dc.wikia.com/wiki/DC_Comics_Database)

### Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.