



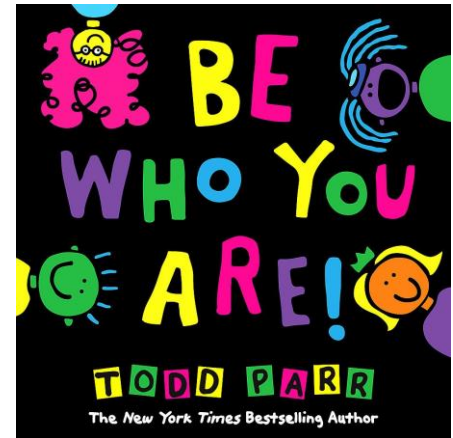
BE WHO YOU ARE: WITH THE BOOK BY TODD PARR

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: K – 2

LENGTH OF TIME: 2 sessions of 40 minutes

GOALS

- To help students share and explore their identities through discussion of literature and art.
- To provide students with an opportunity to share some of their identities with classmates and teachers.
- To explore the concept of personal expression with students and to embrace differences in the classroom community.
- To explore the concept of gender expression with students.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will listen to a book read aloud and discuss its meaning.
- Students will create a drawing that celebrates who they are.
- Students will share their drawings and discuss what is unique about themselves.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. (Also SL.1.1 and 2.1)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.2: Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood. (Also SL.1.2 and 2.2)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts and feelings. (Also SL.1.5 and 2.5)
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity — Examine the factors that influence an individual's personal identity, development and actions including family, peers, culture and institutional influences.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

It is natural for young children to notice differences. This lesson offers an opportunity to build classroom community by giving students a chance to share and learn about each other's differences. Each student will create a detailed drawing of themselves after reading the book *Be Who You Are* by Todd Parr as a class. This book provides a wonderful opportunity to

discuss identity and gender expression with young children. One of the learning objectives of this lesson is to teach children to accept and embrace the many ways students may choose to express who they are through clothing and hairstyles, free of gender norms.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- *Be Who You Are* by Todd Parr
- Pencils, black permanent markers, colored pencils, crayons or markers (make sure to have lots of good choices for skin tones and hair tones)
- Optional video: [Todd Parr Reads *Be Who You Are*](#)
- Optional video: [I Love My Hair](#) by Sesame Street

READ AND DISCUSS THE BOOK

Be old. Be young. Be a different color.

- Pause on this page and have students talk about how we all have different skin colors.
- Ask them if people are really purple, green and yellow? (This is a great teachable moment opportunity — students will often mention toys such as Legos minifigures being yellow, and you can point out that it would be very inclusive if more toymakers made all of their people/minifigures in skin tones that look like real people.)
- Let students know that when they draw themselves, you will be providing many beautiful shades of brown for skin tones and that students can also decide if they want to draw like Todd Parr and make their skin tone or hair tone a rainbow color.
- Ask students if anything else is missing in the image. (Students usually notice that Todd Parr does not draw noses on people, but he does draw noses on animals,) You may want to encourage your students to draw noses in their self portraits.
- Talk to students about how we all have different colors and textures of hair and that this is one of the many things that makes us beautiful and different. This bilingual Sesame Street video is wonderful for K-1 students: [I Love My Hair](#).

Wear everything you need to be you.

- Let them know that at (_____) school, everyone gets to wear what makes them feel happy and comfortable without being teased. ([Jacob's New Dress](#) is a great book to further explore this concept).
- Tell students this can be called gender expression.
- Remind students that we cannot assume someone's gender identity (she, he, neither or both) based upon how they look. There are lots of ways to be a girl, boy, both or neither.

Speak your language.

- Ask your students how many of them are multilingual.
- Emphasize that this is a beautiful example of being who you are and that it is a gift to know many languages.

Try new things.

- Have a few students share something new that they have tried recently.

“BE WHO YOU ARE” SELF-PORTRAIT PROJECT

- Have students write at the top of a piece of paper “Be Who You Are” with their name written just below. Students who are multilingual can write it in many languages. You may want to pre-print a paper that says “Be Who You Are” at the top.
- Have students draw a picture of their full body selves with a pencil.
- Encourage them to add lots of details that are special to them —hairstyles, clothing styles, etc. Let students know that if they have always wanted to wear a bow tie with rainbow suspenders, for example, they can draw themselves this way.
- Students can also change their hair to a style that represents their true selves — maybe a student has always wanted short hair or has wanted to dye their hair pink.
- After they have drawn themselves in pencil with lots of details, have students trace over the pencil lines with a black permanent marker.
- Once students are done outlining, they can color in their drawing of themselves with crayons, colored pencils or markers.

SHARING THEIR PORTRAITS

- Give students an opportunity to share their work with each other and talk about things that are different and special about them.

EXTENSIONS

- Put all of the students’ artwork up in your classroom or in the hallway with the title “Be Who You Are.”
- Do this lesson prior to an open house or back to school night for families so that the images will be on display that night.
- Have students create digital drawings of themselves in the style of Todd Parr.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Offer an opportunity for students to share their artwork with each other in pairs. Direct students to share one thing they like about their picture with a classmate. Next, ask students to give an appreciation to their partner about their picture.
- While the students are sharing their work with each other, are they using vocabulary and showing comprehension of the concept of gender expression?
- Assessment for this lesson will be mostly informal. You should observe your students’ reactions during class and small-group discussions. By paying attention to their conversations and individual responses, you can assess their comprehension of diversity and their ability to apply this comprehension by exploring their own differences with respect.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Chocolate Me! Taye Diggs.

The Colors Of Us. Karen Katz.

I Am Enough. Grace Byers.

I Like Myself. Karen Beaumont.

It's OK to Be Different. Todd Parr.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match. Monica Brown.

Mixed Me! Taye Diggs.

Skin Again. bell hooks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM WELCOMING SCHOOLS

[Lessons to Understand Gender](#)

[Books that Look at Gender and Support Transgender and Non-Binary Students](#)

[Resources for Gender Inclusive Schools](#)

[Be Prepared For Questions and Put-Downs Around Gender](#)

[Defining LGBTQ Words for Elementary School Students](#)

[Professional Development Training](#)

Credit: Developed by Michele Hatchell, Madison, WI.