

Whoever You Are

Mem Fox
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New York, Voyager Books

RESPECT

CONCEPTS

Respect
Love
Tolerance

SUMMARY

This beautiful book acknowledges our common humanity and celebrates the diversity of people all over the world. Written in the simplest terms, it tells children that whoever you are and wherever you live there are people just like you. They may live in different homes and go to different schools, but their hearts and their smiles are the same. This message is made clear through the artist's rich folk art paintings of different people in identical wood cut frames.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be aware of respect as accepting and appreciating differences and similarities among people all over the world.

Circle Time (in the Heartwood Circle)

Whoever You Are

PREVIEW

1. Introduce the book by asking children if they would like to take a pretend trip around the world and then come back. Ask children to imagine traveling with someone in their family on this pretend trip. Show the cover of the book, explaining that a storyteller is telling the story to the children, and taking the children with him on a make-believe visit to different countries.
2. Ask children to find RESPECT on the Heartwood attribute poster.
3. Display items inside the Prop Box, such as a globe, dolls from different cultures, a set of blocks or Legos, Heartwood Map Mat, and a copy of *Whoever You Are*.

READING

1. Read interactively, with children responding to the pictures and text.
2. Together "echo read" lines of the story. The teacher reads one sentence and the children repeat the line.
3. Have a choral reading of the story. Children may choose phrases such as "different from yours," "just like yours," and "the same" and read these lines with you.

After the Story

DISCUSSION

If you could visit one of the places in the story, which one would you choose? Why? How are the homes different from yours? How are they the same? What makes a house a home? What is the storyteller doing with the hearts? If you were the storyteller, what message would you give to children all over the world?

After the Story (cont.)

ACTIVITIES

Pair children for "We Are the Same and Different" activity. Allow a few minutes for children to talk with their partners about how they are alike and different in their choices, such as favorite foods and toys. Together share responses and record on a chart under the titles "Same" and "Different." Have children draw, color, and cut out pictures of their choices to tape to the charts.

WRAP-UP

In *My Heartwood Journal*, have children respond to the story with a drawing of the world and its children. Record children's thoughts about their drawings.

EXTENSION

Children complete the Home Connection Page and teachers record their responses. Send these pages home to families.

Expressive Arts

DRAMA/LANGUAGE

1. Prop Box: Use the items in the box for retelling and acting out the story or for creative play.
2. Mini-Manners Plays*: With finger puppets, model appreciating similarities and differences. For example:
Puppet 1: I like your blue eyes.
Puppet 2: Thank you! I like your brown eyes.
Puppet 1: Thank you!
3. Teach children to sign "smile" and "heart."

ART

1. Together make a classroom collage of children's faces from around the world. Have children cut out faces from multicultural catalogues or magazines such as *National Geographic*. Make a border out of paper hearts and post on a bulletin board.
2. Together make different kinds of homes similar to those shown in the book. Paint boxes of various sizes to make apartment buildings or houses. Use straw, clay, paint, markers, and glue. Display homes for everyone to see.
3. Make Storyteller Cloud Hats* for children to wear while telling a story. Copy hat patterns on blue paper, cut out, and have children color clouds with white crayons, chalk, or glue cotton balls.

MUSIC/MOVEMENT

1. Listen to *Globalullabies* by Freyda during rest time. Explain that the songs come from different countries around the world and that mothers sing to children everywhere.
2. Make and play musical instruments from other countries, such as maracas from Mexico or rain sticks from South America.

*Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Resources, Pre-K/K for additional vignettes, downloadables, hat patterns, and other activities.