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## Lesson Plan for Grade K-8 (with upper grade level extensions)

### *Summer Lesson Plan #1*

## **“Who am I?”**

“Who am I?” is a question we all ask at some time in our lives. As we search for answers, we begin to define ourselves.

- How is our identity formed?
- To what extent are we defined by our talents and interests?
  - by our membership in a particular ethnic group?
  - by our social and economic class?
  - by our religion by the nation in which we live?
- How do we label ourselves and how are we labeled by others?
- How are our identities influenced by how we think others see us?
- How do our identities inform our values, ideas, and actions?
- In what ways might we assume different identities in different contexts?
- How do we manage multiple identities?

Answers to these questions help us understand history, each other, and ourselves.

Have students examine and share their own identities to build relationships in your class. Classes/camp groups begin, often with unfamiliar classmates and teachers, it is particularly important for them to have the opportunity to get to know their new “community” and to become known by others. The activities suggested in this lesson begin this process of relationship building.

### **Learning Goals**

Students will be able to define the word identity

Students will be able to identify various factors that shape their identity

### **Materials:**

Index Cards

Identity Charts

Copy of the Newark Public Library’s Great Migration exhibit panel, Zaundria Mapson oral history.

### **Activity #1**

“How well do we know each other?”

1. Distribute an index card to each student. Ask students to write one little-known fact about themselves on this card.
  - i. Favorite color
  - ii. Favorite food
  - iii. Sport they like to play
  - iv. Street they live on

It should be something that people could not know just by looking at them. Their names should not appear on the cards. Then collect the cards.

2. Read a card and ask the class to “Guess who?” the fact describes. Through this activity, students will learn that they may have something in common with a classmate or they may learn something interesting about someone.
3. Ask students to define, “identity.”
  - a. Ask for volunteers to share their thoughts on what it means.
  - b. Identity is the answer to the question, “Who am I?” The fact students wrote on their index cards represents one part of students’ answer to this question.

### **Activity #2**

1. Distribute copies of Newark Public Library Great Migration Panel about Zaundria Mapson. In her oral history she reveals information about her identity—how she perceives herself, what she values, where her family is from, and so on. Ask student volunteers to read an excerpt from the panel to the class. As the text is read aloud, students can underline any words or phrases that give them information about how Zaundria would answer the question, “Who am I?”
2. In small groups, have students create an identity chart for Zaundria. The diagram on the next page is an example of an identity chart. Students can begin with the words or phrases they underlined in the passage that represent how Zaundria defines her identity.
  - a. You can also provide groups with some questions to guide them:
    1. Who is in Zaundria’s family?
    2. Where is her family from?
    3. What languages does she speak?
  - b. Alternatively, you can create Zaundria’s identity chart as a whole class activity.

(The purpose of looking at Zaundria Mapson oral history is to help students think about the various factors that shape our identities. However, the text also introduces other interesting themes such as the concepts of stereotypes and prejudice. Students will have the opportunity to address questions such as, “How do we perceive and judge others?” and “How does it feel to be labeled?” For now, you can frame questions about the way Zaundria describes minorities in terms of what this says about her own beliefs and experiences.)

### **Activity #3**

1. Students can create identity charts for themselves. Before beginning this activity, ask students to brainstorm a list of categories people use to help define themselves such as:
  - a. Gender
  - b. Age
  - c. physical characteristics
  - d. hobbies
  - e. religion
  - f. ethnic group
  - g. neighborhood
2. Students will be sharing their identity charts with the class so they should be cautious about including information that they want to remain private. In the next few lessons, students will have the opportunity to think more deeply about their own identities. As they gain a deeper understanding of identity, they will add to their identity charts. Their identity charts will also serve as useful prewriting tools for future assignments.

*In preparation for this class, you may want to create your own identity chart. Not only will this model the assignment for students but it also provides a way for students to get to know you. Throughout this unit there are opportunities for you to work alongside the students to reinforce the idea that you are a member of their classroom Newark community.*

### **Lesson Extensions:**

1. You could also ask students to write a brief journal entry about their identity charts. Here is a prompt to help structure students’ reflections:
  - Look over your identity chart. What aspects of your identity are most important to you?
  - Select one characteristic from your identity chart and write about why it is an important part of defining who you are.
2. Following Zaundria’s example, students could record their own oral history about their name. Students could share their recordings in class the next day as a way to begin to introduce themselves to each other.

