

Creative Adventures with Literature

#9: *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Leslie Staub

Introduction

The *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months* focuses on three components of the **Domain: Creativity and Aesthetics**. The components are: **Music and Movement, Visual Arts, and Drama**. In the book, *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Leslie Staub, there are activities that focus on **Music and Movement** and **Visual Arts**. Some of the activities also support the **Domains: Social and Emotional Development** and **Social Studies**.

Through the words and illustrations in the book, *Whoever You Are*, children are introduced to the idea that, despite the differences between people all over the world, there are many similarities that join us together.

Connection to Curriculum

Consider using this curriculum guide as a supplement to the **Adventures in Learning** Topic of Study: I Am a Unique Person.

Story Preparation

- Read and become familiar with the book.
- Create a chart sheet as follows:
Draw a vertical line down the middle of the column so there are two equal columns.
Write the word **Different** at the top of the left column and the word **Alike** at the top of the right column.

Story Presentation

Learning Goals:

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self as unique individual (*characteristics of self and others*)

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge, print knowledge*)

Book: *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox, illustrated by Leslie Staub

First Reading of *Whoever You Are*

- Be familiar with the book, *Whoever You Are*.
- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the words and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures.)
- Invite children to look at the cover and describe who and what they see.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by showing the pages that show differences and likenesses and invite children to recall the likenesses and differences. Prompt them as needed.

Second Reading of *Whoever You Are*

- Have the prepared chart sheet and a marker in the story reading area.
- Show the cover, give title, author and illustrator.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by inviting children to help you complete the chart.
- Show and read the word **Different** and the word **Alike** and explain that they will help you decide what to write under each word.
- Begin reading the book; pausing before reading the pages that describe differences and likeness.
- Show the page that focuses on differences in skin and homes and invite children to recall how children in the book may be different from them.
- Prompt them as needed. For example, point to the different types of homes.
- Say and write the words skin and homes under the column labeled **Different**, run your hands under each word, and invite children to read the words with you
- Repeat this with the differences in schools and words, pointing out and explaining that some people write differently than we do.
- Explain to children that they will now help you decide what to write for **Alike**.
- Show the appropriate pages and guide children to name the ways in which the people in the story are like they are: hearts, smiles, laugh, hurts, joys, love, pain, and blood.
- Record the words in the **Alike** column.
- Run your hands under each word and invite children to read the word with you.
- Write a summary story about the chart as follows:
Involve the children in counting the ways we are different (four ways) and the ways we are alike (eight) and write the following:

Different	Alike

We are different in four ways. We are alike in eight ways.
We are alike in more ways than we are different.

Involve children in reading the story.

- Thank children for helping you complete the chart and the story.

Third Reading of *Whoever You Are*

- Show the cover and invite children to recall the title of the book.
- Give the author and illustrator and ask children if they remember what each does. Give them prompts if necessary.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Follow up by showing the third page; the page that shows nine children “all over the world.”
- Invite children to look at the picture and decide if they look like any of the children in the picture.
- Accept children’s responses.
- Invite children to discuss how the children are alike and how they are different. Possible answers: different color skin and hair, some are girls and some are boys; all have two eyes, arms and legs; they all look about the same age.
- Ask children to look around at the children in their group and discuss ways in which they are different and ways in which they are alike.
- Accept and acknowledge children’s responses. For example, “Yes, some of you are boys and some of you are girls.” “Yes, some of you have blue eyes, some have brown eyes and Jackson has green eyes.”
- Be sensitive to children who may have a disability and acknowledge that “Yes, Jason does have a brace on his leg to help him walk better” or “Yes, Jessica wears glasses to help her see better.”
- Conclude by recalling how we are alike: hearts, smiles, laugh, cry, joy, love, pain and blood.

Creative Art Extensions

Learning Goals:

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self and others (*characteristics of self and others*)

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*writing and drawing tools*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Activity: Crayons in Skin-tone Shades

Materials: crayons in skin-tone shades, paper, book: *Whoever You Are*

Directions:

- Join children in the art center, taking the skin-tone crayons and the book, *Whoever You Are*.
- Show the children the two-page spread in the book that shows four children with different colors of skin and read the first two lines: "Their skin may be different from yours."
- Invite children to look at their own skin, your skin and the skin of other children in the group and discuss differences.
- Show the children the crayons and explain that these crayons are called "skin tone crayons" because some of them match the color of our skin.
- Find a crayon that is near to your skin tone and say to children, "If I were drawing a picture of myself, I would use this crayon because it is close to the color of my skin."
- Leave the book and the crayons in the art center.
- Allow children to use the crayons as they choose.

Teacher Notes:

- *Have crayons in regular colors in the art center. Add sheets or scraps of construction paper that represent different skin tones.*
- *Washable people colors liquid tempera paint and washable multicultural markers are also available from school supply catalogs.*

Learning Goals:

PH2.1 Demonstrates fine-motor strength, control, and coordination (*hand-eye coordination*)

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*scissors*)

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*family and cultural identity*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art*)

Activity: Framing Pictures

Materials: materials such as craft sticks, 1 to 1 ½ inch wide strips of constructor paper or poster board, strips of corrugated cardboard, pre-cut frames (9 x 11 ½"), stick-on dots in several colors or small pre-cut construction paper circles, family pictures in different types of frames, washable glue, scissors, the book, *Whoever You Are*

Directions:

- Invite families to bring to you framed family pictures or bring framed pictures of your own family.
- Join children in the art center, taking the framed pictures, the framing materials in a container, and the book.
- Show children pictures in the book and call their attention to the frame around each one, especially the pictures of families.
- Show children the framed family pictures and invite them to discuss the pictures and to talk about their own family pictures or share with them the framed pictures of your family members.
- Show the framing materials and explain to children that they might want to use some of the materials for framing their pictures. Invite them to examine the materials and discuss what they are and how they might use them to decorate their frames. .
- Allow children to use the materials as they choose.

Teacher Note: *Take and keep possession of the framed pictures, especially if they are covered in glass.*

Extension Activity: Create an Art Gallery

Materials: children's framed drawings, display area such as poster board, paper from roll, tri-fold display, or bulletin board at children's eye level

Directions:

- Use one of the display area ideas listed or your own idea to create a gallery for display of children's art. Label it: **Art Gallery**



- Explain to children that pictures by artists are often displayed in an art gallery.
- Show children pictures in an art book, on posters or in postcards of work by famous artists and explain that these pictures are found in art galleries all over the world.
- Show children the display area on which they can display their framed pictures.
- Involve children in deciding where to place the art gallery; in the Art Center, Dramatic Play Center, or Library Center, for example.
- Allow children to select one of their framed pictures for display and help them attach the picture to the display board.
- Suggest that children invite their families to look at the pictures in the art gallery.

Additional Learning Goal:

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*art appreciation and expression*)

Creative Drama and Dramatic Play Extensions

Learning Goals:

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self as unique individual (*characteristics of self and others*)

MT2.1 Uses classification and patterning skills (*classification*)

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Activity: What Color Are My Eyes?

Materials: full-length shatterproof acrylic mirror securely attached to wall in dramatic play area or hand-held mirror large enough for children to see entire face, eye color chart, name cards/strips for each child, markers

Directions:

- Prepare an eye color chart that includes all of the colors of eyes of children in your classroom
- Join children who are in the dramatic play center, taking eye color chart and name cards/strips or markers.
- Explain to children that you are the “eye color doctor” and that you need their help in completing the eye color chart.
- Review the eye color chart with children and invite them to look in the mirror to see the color of their eyes.
- Assist them in finding their name card and ask them to place the card in the correct column on the chart.
- Involve all children in this activity.
- Review the chart with the children, and then post on the wall in the Dramatic Play Center.

Teacher Note:

- *If your children can write their own names, allow them to use markers to write their names in the correct column on the chart or have photos of each child to place in the correct column.*
- *If your children can do this activity without your assistance, leave the area and allow them to do so.*

Eye Color Chart

7				
6				
5	Jonathan			
4	James		Miguel	
3	Kennedi	Trude	Juan	
2	Sam	Maria	Sarah	
1	Ashley	Elizabeth	Jackson	
	Brown Eyes	Green Eyes	Blue Eyes	

Teacher Note: *You may want to draw eye shapes and color the color of your children’s eyes to label each column.*

Creative Music Experiences

Learning Goals:

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self as unique individual (*characteristics of self and others*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in language experiences*)

SS1.1 Demonstrates positive connection to family and community (*learning community, family and cultural identity*)

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Activity: Singing Songs from Around the World

Materials: Multicultural Children's Songs by Ella Jenkins or Wee Sing Around the World CD, CD player, book, *Whoever You Are*

Directions:

- Show children the book, *Whoever You Are*, and recall with them some of the ways children all over the world may be different from them: skin, schools and words, for example.
- State that they may not speak the same language we do and that they will now listen to and sing some songs in different languages.
- Begin to play the CD, Multicultural Children's Songs by Ella Jenkins.
- Begin with the first three songs, including Ella's Introduction to song 3, Greetings in Many Languages.
- Involve children in singing the songs along with Ella.

Extension Activities: More Songs from Around the World

- Involve children in singing along with Ella Jenkins the song #23, Thank You in Many Languages.
- Involve children in song #7, Counting in Swahili.
- Make numeral cards to correspond with numbers in song #7, Counting in Swahili, and hold up the appropriate card as children and Ella are saying that number.

Teacher Notes:

- *If you use the Wee Sing Children Around the World CD, adapt the activity to go along with the songs you select.*

- *Be familiar with the songs before you introduce them to children.*

Additional Books

Families by Ann Morris, photo illustrated by Ken Heyman

Houses and Homes by Ann Morris, photo illustrated by Ken Heyman

What a Wonderful World by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele, illustrated by Ashley Bryan

Additional "Whoever You Are" Ideas

- Collect authentic pictures of people from other cultures and countries; pictures that depict children and their families and people at work and play, for example.
- Laminate or cover the pictures in clear self-adhesive.
- Post the pictures on the classroom walls at child's eye level.