

IDENTITY WORK

WHO AM I? NAMES

We suggest starting with some work on Names as these are very important to us as a part of our identity. You can choose whether to do some or all of the following, but it is important to do something about this before moving onto further discussions about identity.

1. Open a discussion to ensure that there is some understanding of the following:

- Why we need names
- Why our names are special to us
- Why we usually have a first name and a surname

2. To develop this further, for homework, ask the children to find out who gave them their name, why it was chosen and what it means. (They may already know but if they don't it gives them a chance to find out.) If there are children for whom you know this will be upsetting because they do not live with the person who gave them their name, be sensitive and think of other ways to find out, e.g. looking up meanings of names together.

3. Following the homework, ask children to work in pairs or small groups to interview each other about their names. You could give them the following questions:

- Who gave you your name?
- Does your name have a meaning?
- Do you like/dislike your name?
- Have you ever chosen to be called something different?
- Have other people ever called you something different?

Discuss different naming traditions from around the world

- Traditions where names are symbolic of people's qualities

4. Discuss the following

- What it feels like to be called names we don't like
- Why we should not make fun of people's names
- The sorts of things people get called names about
- What we can do to stop name-calling

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Develop the discussion to ensure some understanding of the following:

- People can feel very sensitive about their name(s)
- People sometimes choose to change their names (you may want to link this to famous people you have learned about, e.g. pen names)

Reflecting

5. Give everyone a sheet of paper/journal and give them time to complete these statements:

- What I feel about my name is.....
- Other names I like being called are.....
- When people call me bad names I feel.....

WHO AM I?

To follow this you will need to carry out further identity work using the different aspects to guide children's thinking. The aspects could include; our physical appearance (eye colour, hair, glasses, etc), facts about ourselves and what we are like on the inside (Religion, age, hobbies, personality, etc), our experiences (in terms of people and places) and our hopes and fears. When carrying out activities on identity it is effective if you participate while you facilitate. If you are willing to share your own experiences, the children are more likely to feel open and willing to share their own.

Throughout your work on identity discuss labelling and stereotyping with the children. Could someone else do any of the activities, for them without asking them? Would they like someone else to label them/choose their identity? Is it ok to label other people? What kind of effect could this have?

IDENTITY CIRCLES

Children could draw a large circle in the middle and five outer circles. They then draw a picture of themselves in the centre circle and write about the different aspects of their identity in each of the outer circles, starting with information about their name.

PIECES OF A PUZZLE

Children could make a jigsaw puzzle of themselves, by drawing a self portrait and cutting it up into five or six pieces. On the back of each piece they could write about an aspect of their identity. This activity is a good way to open a discussion about how complex identity can be, due to the many factors shaping it, a bit like pieces of a puzzle.

I AM – ORANGE MOBILE TV ADVERT

Show the class the orange mobile TV advert – I am... as a stimulus for identity work, discuss what the person in the advert means by I am... (Insert a statement from the advert). Discuss how the person in the advert can be all those different things. Ask the children, if they were the person in the advert, what would they want people to know about them? What aspects do they feel make up their identity? Who do they feel has played a part in shaping their identity so far in their lives? What events in their life do they feel have shaped their identity? Children could make their own adverts about themselves, or you could record a whole class one (who are we – as a class), with each child contributing the one aspect they feel is most important to their identity.

COATS OF ARMS

www.yourroots.co.uk

This website has information about the origins of Coat of Arms and a search engine to find examples of Coat of Arms

Show examples of Coats of Arms and discuss what they were used for in the past. Use the, your-roots website to find out if any members of the class had a Coat of Arms related to their surname. Search the Bradford Coat of Arms using this website by typing Bradford in the search

Make explicit the link between Coat of Arms and identity. Children then design their own Coat of Arms. This activity could also be used for work on Who are we? – Children could design a group Coat of Arms.

STORYTELLING

Deepening an understanding of who am I? Who are we?

“The more you refuse to hear my voice the louder I will sing!” Labi Siffre

Sharing stories is a powerful tool, to enable children to develop a deeper understanding of their own identity and heritage, making them feel valued and giving them a voice. It also opens an opportunity for them, to begin to understand the diversity, within their own class, through hearing the stories of others. Give the children opportunities to share stories, about themselves with their class, e.g, a story about a time they felt proud/achieved something, a story that reminds them of a family time, a story about a journey they have taken. Ask the children to find out stories from their parents, grandparents or other family members to share in class. Ask the children where possible to bring in objects or photos to support their storytelling. Make a class display with their stories, objects and photos.

WHO ARE WE? WHAT COMMUNITIES DO WE BELONG TO?

Once the children have had the opportunity to explore the theme - Who am I? They are ready to begin to explore the idea of community – Who are we? This work can begin with a focus on the groups and communities the children feel they belong to (school, home, their street, class etc).

Ask them - How and where do you feel *you* belong within this *local* community? (e.g. your school and where you live) Imagine the triangle in the box represents you. Give them stickers to write the names of the communities and groups they belong to, and ask them to stick them inside or outside the box, to show how strongly they feel they belong to that particular community. Explain the closer they stick the stickers to the triangle the stronger their sense of belonging. E.g. school, street, family, clubs, place of worship, friends etc

WHO ARE WE AS A CLASS?

Once the children have thought about the communities they belong to, explain that their class is a community and you will be looking at what you hold in common as a community and also the diversity within.

Follow one of the above Who am I? Activities, by putting children into groups and asking them to share information about their identity (remind them only to share what they feel comfortable with). The aim of this activity is to find out what they have in common with their group and form a shared identity. They must also find something about themselves, which they feel is unique from the group and shows their individuality. Come back together as a class and share what the children have found out e.g. "I am a Hindu and Sarah is a Christian". "My mum was born in Bradford and so was Harpreet's".

CROSS THE LINE

You will need a large space for this activity. Line the children up in a long line across the space and ask the children to walk across to the other side if a statement applies to them.

e.g.

“Cross the line if you...”...go to an after school club...go to a place of worship...have been to a different country...fast during Ramadan

Children will begin to notice they hold different aspects of their identity in common with many children in the class. If you notice any times when everyone walks, discuss the idea that this could form part of a class identity.

IDENTITY CAPSULE

Create a whole class identity capsule discussing what to include to represent the whole class e.g. a class photo, a picture of the class room, the school logo, objects representing things the whole class is interested in/likes etc. This can then be delivered to your link class for them to share.