**A Lesson in Identity**

**Instructor(s):** Alyssa Piccarreto, Irene Wasnik, Alicia Gosnell, Jaclyn Brown

**Age Level and Group Size**: 5th Grade, Whole Group

**Time Estimate:** 30 minutes

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Students will learn to respect the differences among cultures and people.
* Students will be able to share about their own cultural identities.
* Students will be able to compare and contrast their own culture with that of someone else.

**Rationale:**

Students will increase their awareness and respect of cultural and personal identities.

**Common Core Standards:**

* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/5/1/) Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/2/) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/7/) Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/5/3/) Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/5/4/) Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

**Materials:**

* Tea with Milk by Allen Say
* Chart paper
* Markers
* Method of recording the interview (pencil, paper, technology)
* Venn Diagram for compare/contrast activity

**Pre-reading:**

*“Students, today we are going to talk about personal and cultural identities. Think for a moment, what is your cultural identity? Does anyone have more than one? What do you and your family do that is different than other families? Does anyone have any special traditions they would like to share about? Thanks for sharing, I loved hearing about your cultures. Everyone was so respectful and interested in learning about new cultures. I think this is going to lead into a great experience for us with this lesson! There are a lot of people out there who have experiences that have shaped their identities and would love to share them with others. Unfortunately, they don’t always get the chance. In a few days, we are going to take a field trip to the senior citizen home to learn about the senior citizens’ life experiences and cultures. You are going to be able to show them the same respect that you showed one another today. We are going to come up with interview questions to help guide your interview with the senior citizen you will be paired with. Now we are going to read Tea with Milk by Allen Say. It is about a girl who is raised in two cultures. At first she has a difficult time accepting both of them. When we are reading, I am going to stop throughout the book so we can brainstorm different questions you have about her cultures and how they have affected her. We will use this list to come up with further questions for your interviews.*

**During reading:**

Stop at the following pages and ask for interview questions that would help the reader get to know Masako/May.

* Page 8 (When Masako goes to school in Japan)
* Page 14 (When Masako learns more about Japanese culture and is resistant to it)
* Page 26 (When Masako meets Joseph)
* Page 32 (When the two cultures merge)

**Post-reading:**

* Discuss the questions that the class came up with during the reading of the book. Categorize them together for ease of access for students and eliminate, revise and add questions as necessary for the interview.
* Field trip to the senior citizen home. Students will be paired with adult having a different culture than their own and interview them.

**Extensions to other subject areas:**

* Social Studies class: talk to family about culture and research about students’ cultures. Create a poster about the culture to share diversity awareness and respect.
* English Language Arts: compare and contrast activity with their culture versus the culture of the senior citizen they interviewed.
* English Language Arts: presenting the information learned through the compare and contrast activity.
* English Language Arts: pen pal letters back and forth to the senior citizen they are paired with.