

I Am Special Book

Inclusiveness can be a difficult topic with students in this age group because they are focused on finding friends that are exactly like themselves. This first lesson introduces the concept of unique qualities, focusing on how each person in the class is special. If we are to include everyone, we must first break down barriers and stereotypes, even at this age. As a class, you will create an “I am Special” book that will highlight the unique qualities of everyone in the class.

Caring Sub-Concepts

Kindness

Lesson Timeframe

45 minutes

Required Materials

- “I Am Special” booklets (for each student and one completed by teacher)
- Basic art supplies
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Small envelope
- Gluesticks

Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



DESIGNATED BY CASEL
AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.
See last page for details.

Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Identify ways that make them special both physically and emotionally.
- Explain the importance of valuing others for what they bring to the classroom.
- Demonstrate ways to include others that are different from themselves.

Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Identify three people this week to include in some capacity. Lunch time, recess conversations, bus duty. Branch out from your typical social circles at work and try getting to know new people.

Tips for Diverse Learners

- Work with English Language Learners and low-literate students by reading the prompts and writing in their answers.
- Use total physical response when explaining each page to the class to increase comprehension.



Share

5 minutes

Explain that many of us have heard the word, “SPECIAL”. Maybe someone has told you that you are special because of your kind words, warm hugs, joy of reading, or even silly jokes! Every person is special in his or her own way.

Ask:

- Have you ever been told that you are special?
- How did it feel when you heard those kind words?

The word special means different from the usual, but in a good way! Sometimes we feel that being different is bad, but you can't be SPECIAL by being the same as everyone else.

In our class, being different will be celebrated! No one needs to feel left out because they are different.

We can make everyone feel special by **including** them - which means *inviting them in and welcoming them with open arms*.



Inspire

How are we Special?

5-7 minutes

Explain that every single person in our class is special in many, many ways. As a group, take some time to brainstorm ways that people have felt special. Use these questions to get the conversation started:

- What are you really good at? (legos, art, math, etc.)
- What do you like to learn? (you will get a lot of random answers here that increases the specialness!)
- What do you want to be when you grow up? (doctor, mom/dad, dancer, truck driver...lots of fun answers)
- What makes you different from other people? (hair, skin, glasses, helmet, etc. It's ok to bring this up now; you can focus on how this makes them special. Find ways to make these differences a positive instead of a negative in your class.)
- What do you like best about yourself? (hair, eyes, etc.)



Empower

5 minutes

To highlight what makes each person special, students will create personalized “I Am Special” pages that will go in your class’s “We Are Special” book.

You can choose to use any or all of the pages included in this lesson:

- All About Me Overview - handprint & age
- Favorite color, favorite food
- Eye color, hair style
- Favorite game to play, family make-up
- Favorite outfit
- Self-portrait
- Favorite video to watch, pet

Or, you can make up your own pages for students to complete.

Once everyone’s page(s) are finished, put the pages into a single “We Are Special” book.



Reflect

5 minutes

Explain that you will save the book and read it aloud during that student’s “Student of the Week” time throughout the year (if you have such a time; if not, you can highlight different students at different points - perhaps during morning meeting or closing time each day).

Remind students that the class is full of individuals who are special in their own way. It is our job to make each person feel special and included.

Ask the following questions to judge understanding of this concept:

- How can we include new students when they join our class?
- What is one thing someone in our class can do that you would like to learn more about? (drawing, math, games, etc.)

Every person in our class is special! We are all different and that is a good thing. We all have talents that can help others and it is important to be kind and care for them when we can. Sometimes meeting someone that is different than what we are used to can seem scary. Just remember, different is special! So look around and find somebody new to include this week.



Extension Ideas

At Home: After presenting the book during the “Student of the Week” time, send the book home and invite the family to celebrate the specialness of their child in some capacity. Some ideas might be to make a special meal or share special music.



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>

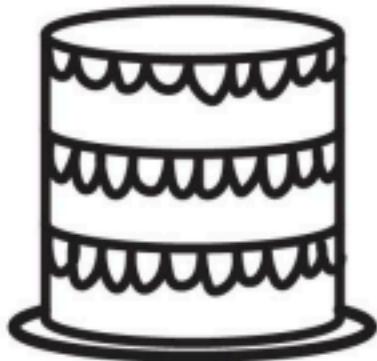
All About Me!

My name is:

This is my handprint

I am

years old



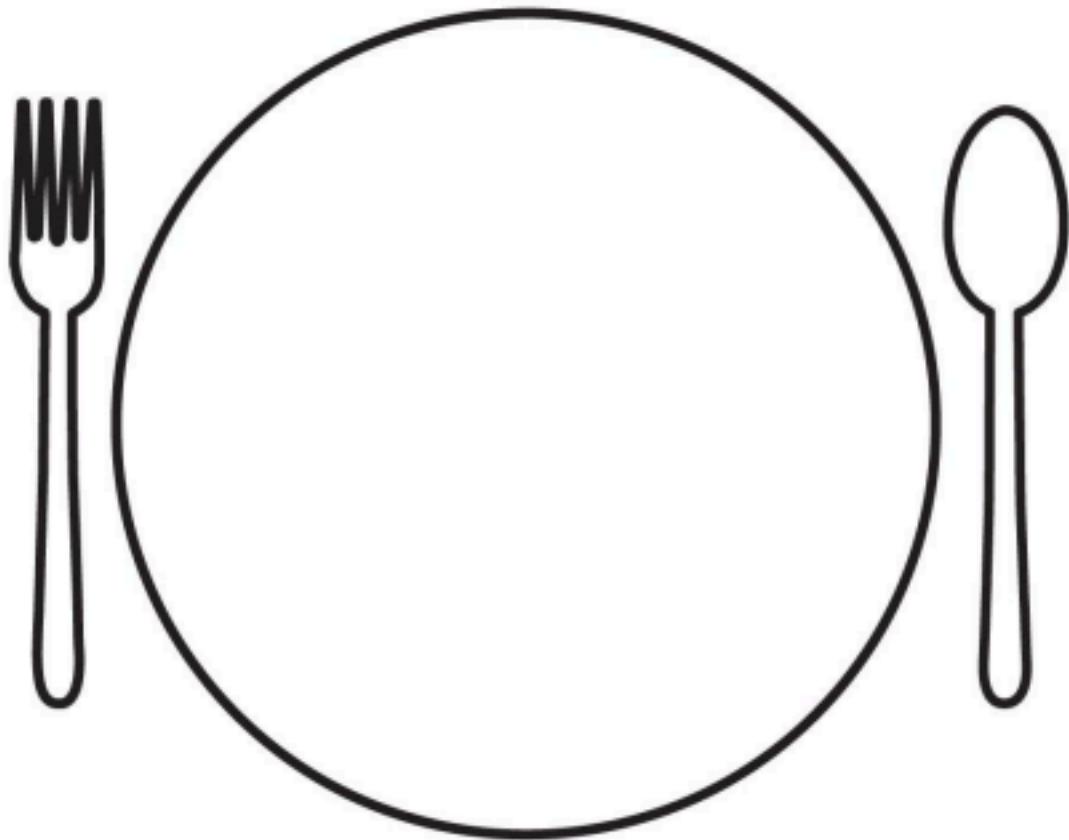
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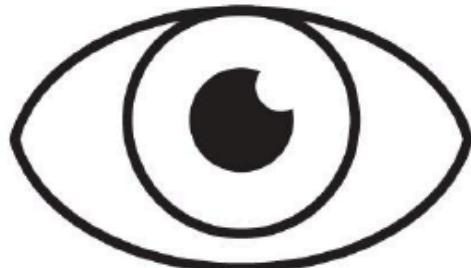
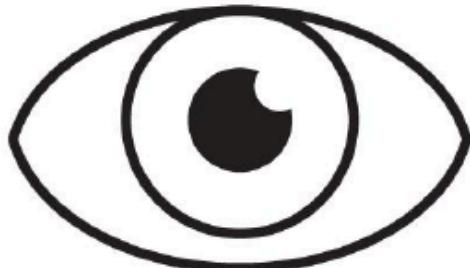
My favorite color is



My favorite food is



My eye color is



This is what my hair looks like

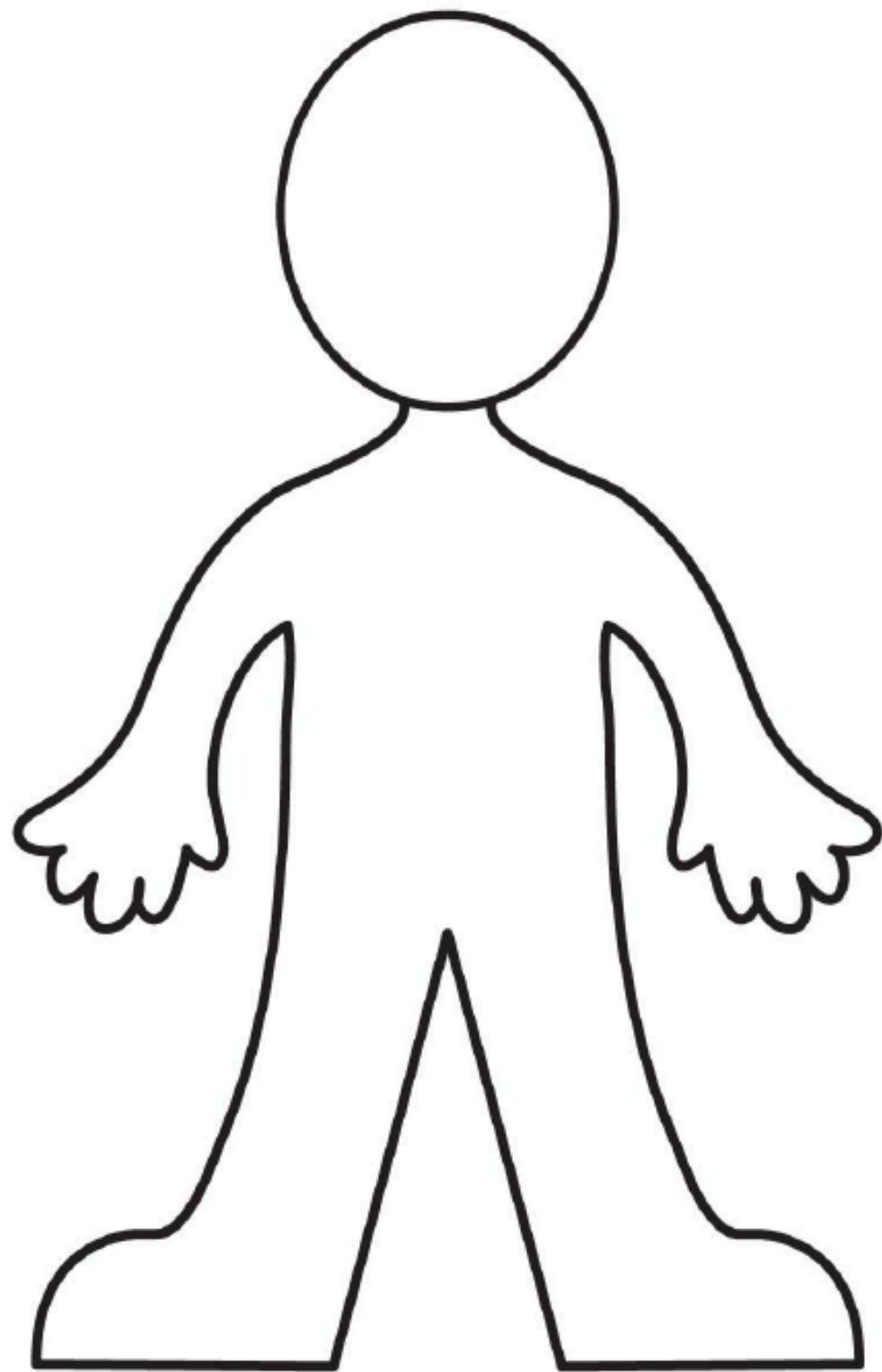
My favorite game to play



This is my family

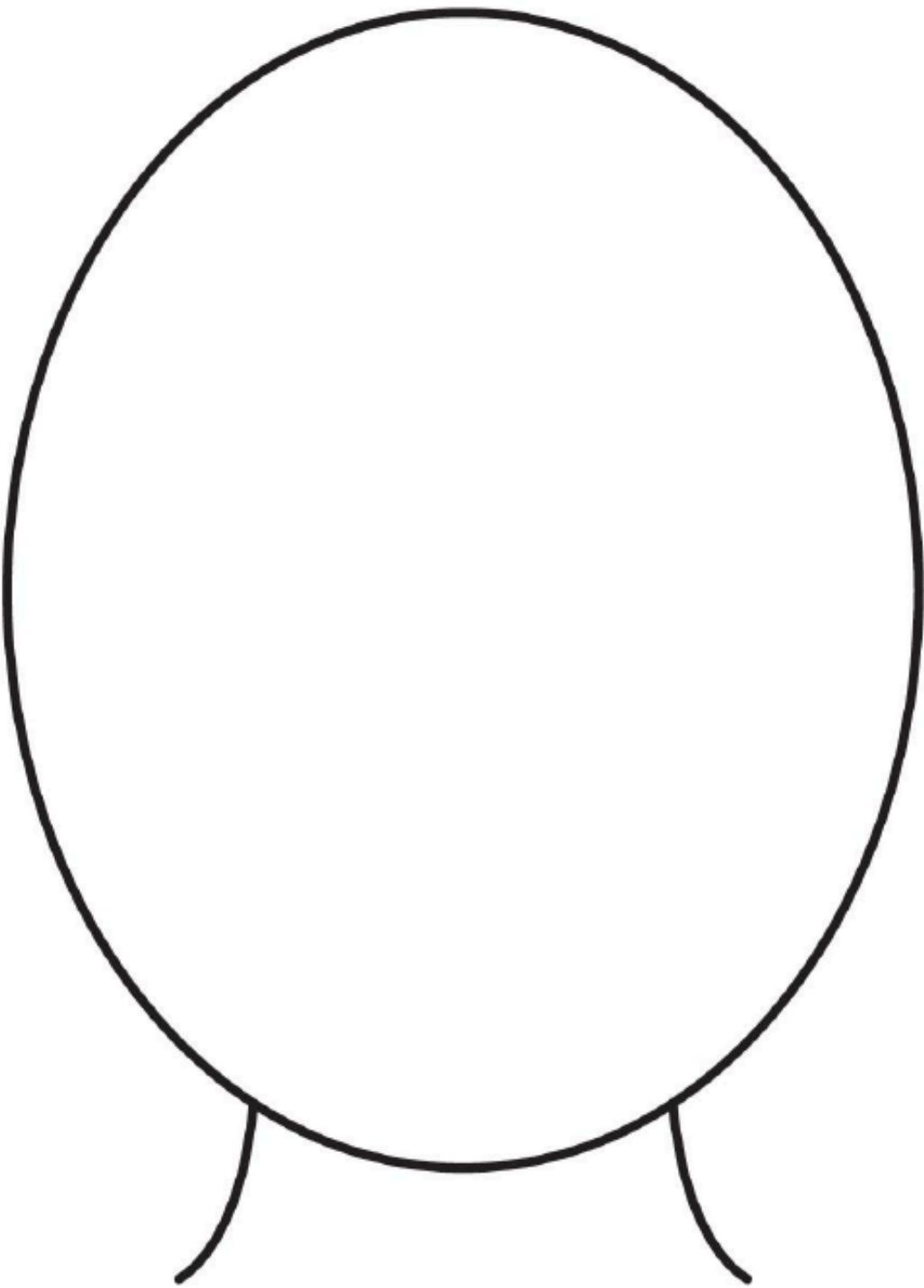


My favorite outfit



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My self-portrait



My favorite video to watch



This is my pet

