

Identity Circle

Grades K-4

Big Ideas of Sustainability: Place, Community, Diversity

Communities are built upon a combination of common community values, such as justice, fairness, and equality and respect for individual differences. This community-building activity recognizes that each student has special qualities that make him or her different. Cherishing this diversity helps to build healthy and enduring communities.

Activity: In this activity students will explore identity through a nonverbal activity.

Essential Questions:

- Why is diversity important?
- How does the world around me contribute to whom I am?

You will need:

Chart paper, white board or smartboard

Time and Place:

20-30 minutes

In or outside the classroom

Before the Activity:

- Ask your students: *Think of two things about yourself that describe what makes you unique (or an individual).* If your students need examples of character traits, interests, or qualities to get started, here are a few suggestions:
 - an interest the student has, like guitar playing, hiking, reading or swimming.
 - A characteristic, like being playful, determined or funny or a quality like being honest, responsible or brave.

Activity Instructions:

- 1) Arrange your students in a circle
- 2) Without using words students should pantomime a quality, characteristic, interest or anything else that is part of their identity
- 3) Go around the circle twice

Debrief and Reflection Questions:

- Ask the students to name 2 things a student demonstrated about his or her identity. (Record on board or smartboard.)
- As a class, come up with a group definition of personal identity.

- What are the various factors that shape identity?

Variations and Extensions:

Education for Sustainability (EfS) finds the interconnections between past, present and future to show the significance of the past on the present and future. EfS is process driven, empowering, and continuous.

- Interview elders with whom you identify: grandparents or grandfriends for example, to learn about their interests and what makes them special.
- Assign reading or read aloud stories in which identity is the central theme.
- Discuss issues of identity like changing the *Washington Redskins* mascot. A California law states that schools with a Redskin mascot must change the name. Here is a link to the Newsela article, [California Law](#)

Bibliography:

Teaching Global Sustainability in the Primary Grades, Seattle, WA, 2007.