

***Fish is Fish* - Self-Acceptance**

EXPLANATION:

Fish is Fish by Leo Lionni is a story of acceptance; a fish and a frog discover their differences and similarities, celebrate their friendship, and appreciate their individual uniqueness. This activity provides the opportunity for students to explore, understand, and appreciate their own individuality.

GRADE LEVELS: 1–3

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group and individual writing activity

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 minutes

CASEL CORE COMPETENCY: *SELF-AWARENESS*

- Integrating personal and social identities
- Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
- You can learn more about the CASEL framework [here](#)

SCOPE OF TASK:

1. Explore and activate the students' basic understanding of the idea that each person is an individual by asking these simple, initial questions:
 - Does everyone look the same?
 - What does it mean to be an individual—"you being you"?
2. Introduce the book *Fish is Fish*. Look at the cover of the book, and ask the students to predict what the book might be about.
3. Read aloud *Fish is Fish*, or click to read the narrated version of the story:



4. Ask students to share their understandings of the story, focusing on the characters' similarities and differences:
 - How can you describe frogs?
 - How can you describe fish?
 - How were the fish and the frog alike at the beginning of the story?
 - In what ways did they become different from each other as they grew?
 - How did the fish feel when he heard about the many things the frog had seen?
 - What happened to the fish when he jumped out of the water? What did he learn from this?
 - What was the fish's problem?
 - At the end of the story, how did the fish feel?
 - What did the frog think about the fish?

5. Ask the students to identify characteristics that make the frog and the fish individuals. Write these on the board—a table format can be used. Discuss the differences and similarities between the frog and the fish. Examples might include: tail/no tail, in/out of water.

Fish	Frog

6. Use questions to elicit the students’ understanding of the story. Some examples of questions include:

- Do people have differences in how they look and behave? Ask the students to share some differences that they are aware of (e.g., hair color, eye color, family structures, favorite foods, favorite sports, etc.).
- Is it OK that people are different?
- Why is it important that we accept and celebrate our differences?

7. Tell the students that they are going to write a list of characteristics, likes, interests, and traits that make them special and individual. Early writers can be assisted with word cards, a word wall, or picture cues to help them write their lists.

Encourage students to reflect on their own traits and to be proud and accepting of their uniqueness. Students can share their lists with their class members at the completion of the activity.

***Fish is Fish* also aligns with the themes of perspective and gratitude.
Life cycles can also be explored through the science curriculum.**

RESOURCES:

Lionni, L. (1974). *Fish is Fish*. Dragonfly Books.

Online story: “The Kindness Curriculum- Fish is Fish, Read my Moises Henriques,” sourced from <https://youtu.be/IPZmpsKbHRI>

