

## Lesson 3

### *Each of Us Is Unique*

#### TEACHER PREPARATION

##### KEY CONCEPTS

Every student is a unique person with different abilities and talents.

##### OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. identify things about themselves that make them unique.
2. understand the uniqueness of the students in their class.

##### KEY TERMS

**Unique:** existing as the only one or sole example.

##### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This lesson provides an opportunity for the students to focus on characteristics making them unique and special — like no one else. Our ultimate value does not come from without, but from within, intrinsically. It is important for you as the teacher to continue to provide a classroom environment where students can explore and share ideas and feelings in comfort and safety.

##### MATERIALS/PREPARATION

1. In **Exploring the Lesson**, you will need to write the seven questions on the board or large piece of paper. The students may also need their journals and pencils.
2. In **Discovering the Lesson**, you will need paper, crayons, markers or colored pencils. For the **older elementary student** activity, write the descriptive phrases on the board or large paper.
3. In **Applying the Lesson**, you will need paper, pencils, and if available, an ink pad and magnifying glass. If an ink pad is not available, pencils and transparent tape could be used for the fingerprint activity.

## LESSON

### BEGINNING THE LESSON

*[Say to the students:]* Our story left Trish, Dugan and Hector wondering which aisle in the Library to walk down. Would they choose the one that would take them where they wanted to go? We are learning that making right choices will lead to a successful and happy life. Let's find out which path they choose.

### READINESS (5 minutes)

*[Read to the students:]* **Chapter 3 — Now What?**

*"I can't believe we just wandered around this library without a plan or strategy," said Hector.*

*"Why not?" asked Trish. "That is pretty much what we do all the time, isn't it?"*

*"Do you think we've been going in circles?" said Dugan.*

*"How would we know?" added Trish. "All of these bookshelves look the same."*

*"Ever read the story of Hansel and Gretel?" asked Hector. "These two kids get lost in a forest and leave bread crumbs to mark their trail so they can find their way out."*

*"Did it work?" asked Dugan.*

*"I don't think so," answered Hector. "I seem to remember some birds in the forest ate the bread crumbs. But it was the beginning of a good idea, even if it didn't work."*

*"I don't see any bread around here," observed Trish.*

*"No, but I see a lot of books!" stated Hector. "Let's start pulling out some books and stacking them on the floor. That way, if we come across a stack of our books, we'll know we've been here before." Dugan tried to pull a book off of the shelf in front of him. But it would not budge. He tried again with some books on other shelves and came up with the same results.*

*"Hector, there may be a problem with your plan," said Dugan. "The books seem to be glued into place. I can't pull any of them off the shelves." Hector tried to remove a book and had no more success than Dugan.*

*"That's just plain silly!" said Trish. "Why have all these books if you can't open any of them?" She scanned the titles of the books near her and*

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rested her finger on the spine of a thick book with gold lettering. “Women Who Changed Their World,” she read. “That sounds like something I’d like to read.” No sooner had she said those words than the book practically fell into her hands. “Hello!” smiled Trish. “Guess you need a woman’s touch.”

“Put it back and let me try,” said Hector.

Trish returned the book and Hector tried to pull it free. “It’s stuck again,” he said. Trish reached back up and easily pulled the book from its place.

“That’s not right,” complained Hector. “Things like this aren’t supposed to work like that.”

Dugan wandered further down the aisle, glancing at titles. “Here we go!” he exclaimed. “The title is An In-depth Look at the Techniques of Boxing. Let’s see you pull this one out.”

Trish stepped over and tried to pull it free but couldn’t budge it. “Who’d want to read such a dumb book in the first place?” she announced in a haughty voice. It didn’t take long for them to discover the only books Trish could remove were ones she thought she might like to read.

“All these books are about women and other topics I might be interested in,” said Trish. “I bet if we could find a section of books about things that interest each of you, they would make themselves available to you as well.”

“Let’s find out,” suggested Dugan.

### **EXPLORE** (15 minutes)

[Say to the students:] **In our story, Trish, Hector and Dugan found books they would like to read or did the books find them? Just like the books recognized their individual differences, each of you have differences that make you unique. We are going to spend some time discovering things that make you special and different from anyone else.**

[Lead the class in a discussion of the following questions. It might be helpful to write the questions on the board or a large piece of paper. With **older elementary students**, you may want to divide them into groups for discussion. It is important for you as a teacher to create an environment where it is safe for students to share their thoughts. Most students will give one word or very short answers. Model asking follow-up questions to help

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*students develop more complete answers. Take their initial answers and probe a little deeper.*

*For example, if you ask a student to share what kind of book they might pull off the shelf to suggest their interest, one of the boys might say a book about cars. You could follow up with some questions like: Tell us what kind of car you like. Do you know someone who has that kind of a car? Would you like to learn how to work on a car? What would you do if you had a car? Some students may volunteer to answer and some may need to be encouraged to share. The key to this discussion is to help your students realize all of us will respond in different ways because we are unique, and that is a good thing.*

- 1. What books would you be able to pull off of the shelves?**
- 2. Describe a time in your life when you were happy. What happened? Who was with you?**
- 3. Tell about a time you had with your family that was fun or adventurous or special.**
- 4. What do you like to do with your friends?**
- 5. Think of a time when you were sad. Describe what happened.**
- 6. What makes you angry? When you get angry, what do you do?**
- 7. What is your favorite activity? Why?**

**DISCOVER** (15 minutes)

These **Discover** activities allow students to consider their own uniqueness.

**For Younger Elementary Students**

*[Say to the students:] Make a picture of you! Use markers, crayons, paint or other medium. Then write five words or draw five pictures around your drawing that describe you. [Help students if they need assistance writing their descriptive words.]*

**For Older Elementary Students**

*[Say to the students:] Create an “All About Me” poster by drawing a picture of yourself in the center. Around the edges of the poster, write these things:*

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- Things that make my heart happy.
- Things that make me sad.
- What I would like for you to know about me is ...
- When I grow up I want to ...
- My favorite book(s) ...
- My favorite song(s) ...
- Things I like to play.

*[Optional: Hang the pictures around the classroom and see if students can identify who each student is by looking at the picture and the descriptive words. It is important you save these pictures to use later in Lesson 32.]*

**APPLY** (20 minutes)

*[Say to the students:]* **A fingerprint is unique to each person. No two fingerprints are the same. A fingerprint can be a means of identification. Isn't that amazing?!**

*[Have the students look at their fingertip under a bright light. If you have access to a magnifying glass, you might want to have your students use it to observe their fingertip. Be sure they notice the lines and swirls.]*

*Have each student “color” their fingertip with a pencil or a piece of charcoal, press a piece of transparent tape onto their fingertip and then press the tape onto a piece of paper and gently pull off the tape. It will put their fingerprint on the paper. If you have access to an ink pad, you might want to have students press their finger lightly onto the ink pad, then press their prints on a piece of paper. The fingerprint will be clearer if you use an ink pad, but students should be able to see how their fingerprints are different with either method.*

*There are three main classifications of fingerprints: loops, arches and whorls. The students could examine their fingerprints and determine which classification their fingerprints belong to. Loops start and end on the same side; arches go from one side to the other; whorls are circular.]*



Loop

Whorl

Arch

*Students could make a picture using their prints. It could be made into an animal, person or a part of nature. You could extend the lesson by having students research fingerprints -- how they are unique and how they are used for identification purposes.*

#### **SHARE (10 minutes)**

*[After making a fingerprint, the students will compare their fingerprint with other students' fingerprints and be able to see that all prints are unique. Some may be similar, but no two prints are the same! Fingerprints and pictures made from fingerprints can be posted around the room for further observation. You could arrange for another class to visit your room to show the results of the activities.]*

#### **ENDING THE LESSON**

*[During this lesson, students discovered many ways in which they are unique individuals. Remind your students each of them have talents and abilities, which make them special and unique. As teachers, we need to continue to help them identify their wonderful personhood and encourage it to grow.]*

#### **GOING DEEPER (optional)**

**[Say to the students:] In our lesson today, we learned about many ways each of us is unique and special, including that we all have unique fingerprints. But I have a question for you about fingerprints.**

**First, let me ask if anyone can explain what an “identical twin” is? [If you have twins in your class, you may want to let one or both of them answer. Most elementary students will simply say, “Two people who look exactly**

*alike!" You may want to simply accept that definition. Here is a more detailed definition: one of a pair of **twins** who develop from a single fertilized ovum and, therefore, have the same genotype, are of the same sex, and usually resemble each other closely.]*

Source: [www.dictionary.com/browse/identical-twin](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/identical-twin)

**Here is my second question: Do identical twins have identical fingerprints? Let's have a vote: How many of you would guess identical twins have identical fingerprints? Please raise your hands. Now, how many of you think the fingerprints of an identical twin are not the same as the fingerprints of the other twin? Please raise your hands.**

**The second group is right! Identical twins often have the same eye color, the same hair color and may even look so similar their own parents have trouble telling them apart. But they are not exact copies of each other. Each one is a unique, special individual. Each twin's fingerprints are unique.** Source: <http://multiples.about.com/cs/funfacts/a/twinfingerprint.htm>

*[Create a contest using one or more of the following facts about the average human body. For example, you could have each student write down on a piece of paper approximately how many hairs they would guess they have on their head. Then give a prize to the student whose guess is the closest, such as a piece of candy or a privilege or the honor of helping you do something in class.]*

*[Here are some possible facts to use in your contest:]*

- **The human head has approximately 100,000 hairs.**
- **The body has 100 trillion cells, 206 bones, 600 muscles and 22 internal organs.**
- **Every hour about 1 billion cells must be replaced.**
- **The circulatory system of arteries, veins and capillaries is about 60,000 miles (approximately 96,000 km) long.**
- **The heart beats more than 100,000 times a day.**
- **We have 90,000 taste buds on the surface of the tongue, in the throat and on the roof of the mouth.**
- **The human heart creates enough pressure when it pumps to squirt blood 30 feet (approximately 9 meters).** Source: The Human Body, kidsconnect

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*With older students, you could take this lesson a step further:*

- *You could plan a lesson explaining how DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid which is used in the body to store genetic information) is unique to each person. Those 100 trillion cells have jobs to do in our bodies. A special molecule called DNA tells each cell its job. Everyone’s DNA is unique to their body. Your students could research DNA and the role it plays in our bodies.*
- *A science lesson could be created about snowflakes. Just like our fingerprints, no two snowflakes are alike. They always have six sides and are formed during freezing temperatures when water drops freeze on ice crystals in the clouds. As they fall through the clouds, they bump into each other, melt and refreeze and all of that contributes to the creation of their six sides.*
- *There are many unique animals and unique traits of animals you could explore with your class to extend the learning in this area.*
- *Use a stethoscope and allow students to hear each other’s heartbeat.*
- *Share a poster of the human circulatory system and/or the skeletal system with students.*

**[Say to the students:] You are unique in so many amazing ways! As we continue in this course, you are going to learn why you are unique and special. Is it just luck or random chance? Or is there some secret that made you special? In our future lessons, we will solve this mystery.**



### **PARENT-TEACHER CONNECTION**

This week's lesson provided an opportunity for students to focus on characteristics that make them unique and special – like no one else. Our ultimate value does not come from without, but from within.

#### **Questions you might ask your child:**

1. Can you tell me the story your teacher read? (The friends discovered they could only open books each of them uniquely wanted to read.)
2. What are some things you discovered were unique to you and no one else? (The class discussed fingerprints. Ask your child to share with you what he or she learned about fingerprints.)
3. What are some other ways you are unique? (Share with your child some of the ways you think he or she is unique. Tell your child why they are special to you.)
4. Ask your child to share why each parent or grandparent is special. (Give your child an opportunity to describe how each of their parents and grandparents are unique and special.)

Parents, share with your child something about yourself that makes you unique and special.



