

Identity: Developing a Positive Identity - *Crocodile, You're Beautiful!*



TOPIC

Listening and Speaking
SEL (self-awareness)

GRADE LEVEL

K-2

DURATION

30-45 minutes

SUBJECT AREA

English Language Arts
Social Emotional Learning
(SEL-Identity)

DESCRIPTION OF THE LESSON

This is the first lesson of two for the recorded reading of the book, *Crocodile, You're Beautiful! Embracing our Strengths and Ourselves*, written by Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer. The book focuses on the key themes of empathy, respect, self-confidence and helping others. It provides students with interactive activities that give them an opportunity to stretch, draw and dance as they read and learn.

In this activity, students will deepen their understanding of the concept of identity and will become more familiar with themselves and their classmates. They will analyze testimony from Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer and will co-create an identity map using details from her story. By the end of this activity, students will create their own identity chart using pictures and/or words and will draw connections between themselves and their classmates. The interactive recorded reading is available at <https://iwitnessbeta.usc.edu/sites/ruth>.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Speaking/Listening

CCSS.ELA LITERACY.CCRAS.SL.1 & 2

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CASEL'S Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework

Self-Awareness – Core Competency Area

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes the capacity to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose such as integrating personal and social identities.

MATERIALS

- Clip of testimony: Dr. Ruth Westheimer (2:20 min)
- Dr. Ruth Westheimer's recording of the children's book, *Crocodile, You're Beautiful! Embracing our Strengths and Ourselves* (<https://iwitnessbeta.usc.edu/sites/ruth>)
- Personal Identity Chart-Student Handout
- Optional: Paper, pencils and markers

LEARNING AIMS

As a result of this lesson, students will...

- Distinguish the unique traits that make up their identity
- Analyze primary source testimony and cite key details from the text
- Design a personal identity chart and discover the commonalities and differences between themselves and their classmates

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Consider

Introduction: Begin this lesson by introducing a listening game called “Stand Up Sit Down.” Explain that this game is a fun way for students to learn more about themselves and their classmates and to identify the ways in which they are the same and different. Tell them that this is a silent activity and there will be time to talk and discuss the activity at the end.

Stand Up Sit Down Game-Instructions:

- Gather students and have them sit side by side, or if space permits, in a large circle. (If you wish to modify this lesson for online learning, have students meet all together on the same online platform.)
- Tell students that you are going to read a series of statements using different categories. Explain that they will need to listen carefully after each statement is read aloud and respond by standing up if the statement applies to them—their individual traits, experiences, likes and dislikes. (For online learning, you can have students use the “raised hand” feature instead of standing.)
- Categories for each statement should include a mixture of internal and external traits. You may want to use the sample statements provided below or make up some of your own statements based on the knowledge of your students.

Examples:

Internal Traits	External Traits
Stand up if you are... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendly • funny • unusually happy • kind • quiet 	Stand up if you... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a brother or a sister • are an only child • if you like sausage on your pizza • if you ever played soccer • if you play a musical instrument

- In between each statement that is read, pause and tell students to silently look around and notice who is standing and who is sitting after each statement. Those standing should sit back down between each statement.
- To close the game, read a final statement that includes everyone (*e.g., Stand up if you are an awesome 2nd grade student in Mr. Smith's class!*) and ask students to applaud themselves for their participation.

Whole Group Discussion:

Ask students to briefly share their observations from the game, prompting them with questions such as:

- *What was something new you learned about your classmates?*
- *Were the groups that stood up together always the same students? Why or why not?*
- *What were some things you noticed that you have in common with your classmates?*

To conclude this discussion, tell students that our *identity* is who we are and how we describe ourselves. Even though we are alike in many ways, none of us are the exact same as someone else. Our differences are what make us unique, and these traits make up our identity.

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Collect

Now, display the image of the cover illustration for the recorded reading of *Crocodile, You're Beautiful! Embracing our Strengths and Ourselves*, written by Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer (see resources in this teacher guide). Dr. Ruth is a well-known television and radio personality who as a young girl survived great challenges. Tell students that they will watch and listen to Dr. Ruth reading the book aloud, but first they will watch a clip of testimony from Dr. Ruth to learn about her child experiences as an only child in an Orthodox Jewish family in Germany (Note: If you would like to share more information about Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer with your students, see her biography provided in this teacher guide).

Analyzing Testimony: Students will now watch the clip of testimony twice. To prepare students for this analysis, write the question “*Who is Dr. Ruth?*” on the board (or digital whiteboard) and draw a circle around this question. You are preparing an Identity Chart and modeling this skill for students.

- **First Viewing:** Play the clip and have students pay close attention to how Dr. Ruth describes herself (identity) and her experiences as a young girl. Have them focus on the question “Who is Dr. Ruth?”
 - After this first viewing, ask student volunteers to describe “Who is Dr. Ruth?”. As students share their responses, draw arrows pointing out from the center of the chart and record a few of their ideas. Student responses may include e.g., only child, wears glasses, is older, speaks with an accent, born in Germany, spoiled, not wealthy, not poor.
- **Second Viewing:** Play the clip again and ask students to listen for more details to add to Dr. Ruth’s identity map. Student response may include e.g., moved to Frankfurt, Germany, lived with her parents and grandmother, had 13 dolls, roller skates, orthodox Jewish family, visited the place she was born every summer for vacation.

Whole Group Discussion: Now, have students review Dr. Ruth’s Identity Chart and ask them if they noticed any similarities between themselves and Dr. Ruth. (Optional: Consider saving this identity chart to build on or to refer to for part 2 of this activity, see [Confidence: Embracing Our Strengths and Ourselves](#))

Construct

Student Identity Charts: Tell students that they will now create an identity chart about themselves, similar to the one you have made with them for Dr. Ruth.

Instructions:

- Provide students with the Personal Identity Chart-Student Handout to create their own identity chart reminding them that they can refer to Dr. Ruth’s Identity Chart as a model. Optional: Depending on the age group of students have them use words, picture cutouts, or both to describe themselves.

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- › Tell them that they can think about their identity by using the following guiding questions:
 - *What role do you play in your family? (e.g., daughter, sister, brother, youngest child, etc...)*
 - *Do you own any family pets? (e.g., dog, cat, bird, snake, etc...)*
 - *What are your hobbies and interests? (e.g., guitar player, football fan, etc...)*
 - *What is your ethnic or cultural background, if applicable? (e.g., religion, race, nationality, place of birth)*
 - *Describe your physical characteristics (e.g., hair color, right-handed or left-handed, gender, etc...)*
- › Let students know in advance that they are going to share their identity charts with a partner. If they do not feel comfortable sharing their identity chart, they can share one or two ideas about their identity with their partner and keep their identity chart private.

Communicate

Discussion: Have students take turns sharing their identity chart with a partner or in small groups and discuss what they noticed or were surprised to learn about their classmates. Optional: You may want to display their identity charts around the room or virtually in which students can participate as a whole class in an in-person or virtual gallery walk. Their artwork can also be displayed virtually or in the physical classroom space.

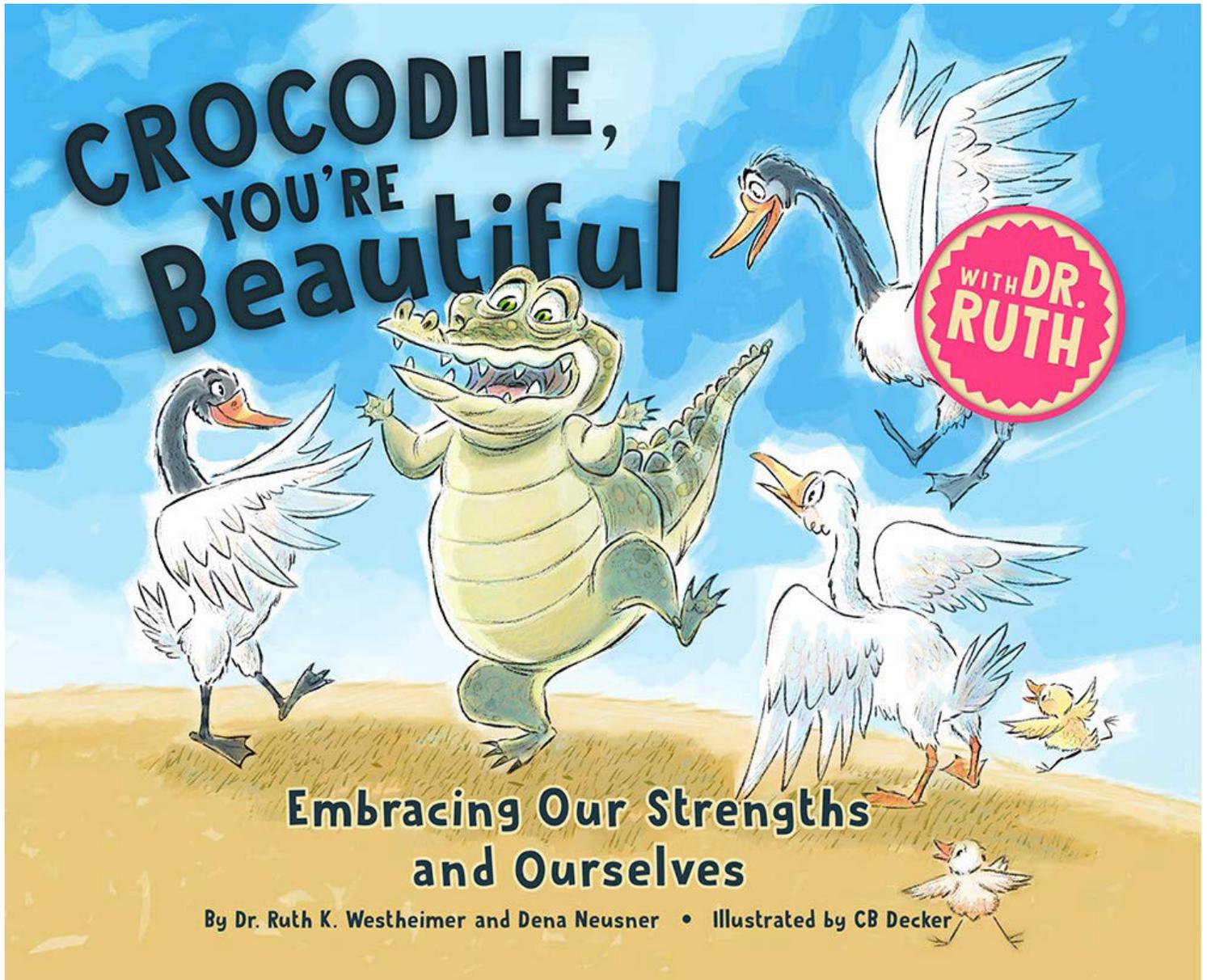
Lesson

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Cover Illustration for *Crocodile, You're Beautiful! Embracing Our Strengths and Ourselves*



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Biography

Dr. Ruth Westheimer

Dr. Ruth Westheimer (maiden name Karola Ruth Siegel) was born on June 4, 1928 in Germany. She lived in an apartment in Frankfurt, Germany with her parents and grandmother, where she grew up as an only child in an Orthodox Jewish family. She remembers attending synagogue services weekly and having 13 dolls and a pair of roller skates.



When Ruth was ten years old, she remembers that violence toward Jews was becoming extremely dangerous in Germany. Ruth's mother and grandmother decided that Nazi Germany was no longer a safe place for Ruth to live and sent her on the Children's Transport, also known as the Kindertransport, to a children's home in Switzerland. For six years Ruth remained at this orphanage. To this day remains thankful that she was kept safe during this challenging time.

After the war, Ruth, learned that both of her parents had died during the Holocaust. When Ruth was 17 years old, she decided to emigrate to British Palestine (now known as the country of Israel) where she studied to be a teacher. She later moved to New York City and completed her education, married, and had two children and four grandchildren. Today, Dr. Ruth is a well-known famous media personality, therapist and author. Her incredible story of survival is also highlighted in her new short animated film, *Ruth: A Little Girl's Big Journey*. She was interviewed on June 8, 1998, in New York, New York.