

Mindful Exploration Belonging – Through Validation



TOPIC

Belonging – Through Validation
(Mindful Explorations)

GRADE LEVEL

9th-12th grade

DURATION

40 minutes (10 min per lesson)

SUBJECT AREA

Character Development, ELA,
Homeroom, Advisory

DESCRIPTION OF THE LESSON

Mindful Explorations serve as short daily activities that develop introspection and social-emotional learning. Students are asked to reflect on the challenges they may face, the goals they have for themselves, and the relationships they aspire to have in their lives. Each lesson contains an opening focus question, three 10-minute activities with clips of testimony, and a closing reflection question.

In this activity, students will consider one of the key components in cultivating a sense of belonging. Students will review what it means to value someone's experience, including their own, and show this through validation in order to create acceptance. Students will listen to testimony to determine what actions can be used in making others feel welcome. Then, they will reflect on how showing acceptance through validation creates a sense of connection and belonging.

This activity contains testimonies from Hanna Seckel-Drucker, Dina Gottliebova-Babbitt, and Itka Zygmuntowicz, all Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS. ELA-Literacy. CCRA. W10.

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

MATERIALS

- *Student Handout: Mindful Exploration – Belonging Through Validation*
- Clips of testimony: Hana Seckel-Drucke (3:06), Dina Gottliebova-Babbitt (1:40), Itka Zygmuntowicz (3:23)

LEARNING AIMS

Students will:

- Identify validation, or seeing the value in another's experience, as a necessary component in developing a sense of belonging
- Analyze audiovisual testimonies to understand the virtue of validation/acceptance
- Reflect on the different forms of validation that can develop a sense of belonging

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Consider

ME Purpose Explain to students that belonging is often connected to finding value in someone's experience. Explain that through this validation even those with different opinions can come together in a place of acceptance. Inform students that the following three mindful explorations focus on the development of finding value in others in order to cultivate a sense of belonging even in new and difficult situations.

Mindful Exploration Handout Pass out the *Student Handout Mindful Exploration – Belonging Through Validation*. Read the brief introduction and focus question together. Explain that over the course of three lessons the class will listen to clips of testimony that will help them reflect on this topic.

Collect

Clips of Testimony Each day, play one of the three clips of testimony twice. Begin by providing a brief introduction of each individual and the content of the clip. (See clip information and biographies below.)

First Viewing Have students listen to the clip of testimony and answer any clarifying questions they may have. Then, have students read and respond to the first connected question on the *Student Handout Mindful Exploration – Belonging Through Validation*.

Second Viewing After this viewing, have students respond to the second connected question on the *Student Handout Mindful Exploration – Belonging Through Validation*. Then, have students share their responses.

Repeat Follow the same format for each clip of testimony.

Day 1

Clip 1: Hanna Seckel-Drucke

In this clip, Hanna, a Jewish survivor, speaks about her experience with classmates at a finishing school where she first perceived her attendance as unwelcome because she was different.

Hanna Seckel-Drucke (maiden name - Hanna Dagmar Dubova), daughter of Josef and Emilie, was born on July 2, 1925, in Kolín, Czechoslovakia. Hanna had a younger brother, Petr. Hanna grew up in Prague, where her parents owned and operated a clothing store. The Dub family observed major Jewish holidays by attending synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and by eating matzah on Passover. After the German occupation of Czechoslovakia (March 1939), the family was required to open their apartment to other Jewish families who were forcefully moved. Then, The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom sponsored Hanna, along with approximately 600 Czechoslovakian Jewish children, to immigrate to Denmark. Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, Hanna arrived in Denmark, where she worked on farms, in a finishing school, and as a maid. After the war, she briefly returned to Czechoslovakia, where she was reunited with extended family members. Hanna was the only member of her immediate family to survive the Holocaust. With the help of extended family in Cincinnati, Ohio, Hanna emigrated to the United States in November 1950. This interview was conducted on March 25, 1998, in Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania. Hanna had seven grandchildren, including Rachael Cerrotti, creator of the "We Share the Same Sky" podcast.

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Day 2

Clip 2: Dina Gottliebowa-Babbitt

In this clip, Dina, a Jewish survivor, shares her experience when she had to leave her house for the first time with her yellow, Jewish star on her coat.

Dina Gottliebowa-Babbitt was born in 1923 to an assimilated Jewish family in Brno, Czechoslovakia. She became an accomplished artist before the war. During the war, she was interned in the Theresienstadt ghetto before being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was required to produce portraits for Josef Mengele and other SS officers. Dina was liberated on May 5, 1945, after all camp guards abandoned Neustadt-Glewe, the camp she had been moved to. After liberation, Dina went to Paris and became an assistant to American cartoonist Art Babbitt, one of the animators behind Disney's "Snow White." They married and moved to Hollywood and later divorced. She made her career working in animation at various Hollywood studios. Dina was interviewed on September 26, 1998, in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

Day 3

Clip 3: Itka Zygmuntowicz

In this clip, Itka, a Jewish survivor, recalls a time when she was attacked on her way home from school for being Jewish. When she returned home, her mother shared some poignant words that taught Itka a very important lesson on her humanness.

Itka Zygmuntowicz was born on April 15, 1926, in Ciechanow, Poland, to Elio and Simo Fraiman. Two years after the German invasion of Poland, Itka and her family were deported to the Nowe Miasto ghetto, and in 1942, they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Upon arrival at the extermination camp, Itka was separated from her family and never saw her parents or siblings again. With the Soviet forces rapidly approaching, on January 18, 1945, Itka and other prisoners were forced on a death march to the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany. She was then transferred to the Malchow concentration camp where she was liberated on Passover, April 26, 1945, by the Swedish Red Cross who sent her to a hospital in Lund, Sweden to recover. Itka and her husband, Rachmil Zygmuntowicz, immigrated to the United States on February 15, 1953, and settled in Pennsylvania with their two sons; they had two more sons. She was interviewed on March 3, 1996, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Construct

Final Reflection (Day 4) After viewing and answering questions related to the third clip, direct students to the Final Reflection section of the *Student Handout Mindful Exploration – Belonging Through Validation*. Encourage students to work quietly and respond on their paper.

Communicate

Discuss To close this Mindful Exploration, ask volunteers to reflect on their responses to the final reflection.

Additional Note to Teacher:

If assigning the Mindful Exploration activity series to students, we recommend asking students to keep a Mindful Explorations reflection journal. Using a reflection journal or folder to maintain their responses will provide them a compilation of their thoughts, enabling them to see how their thinking develops.