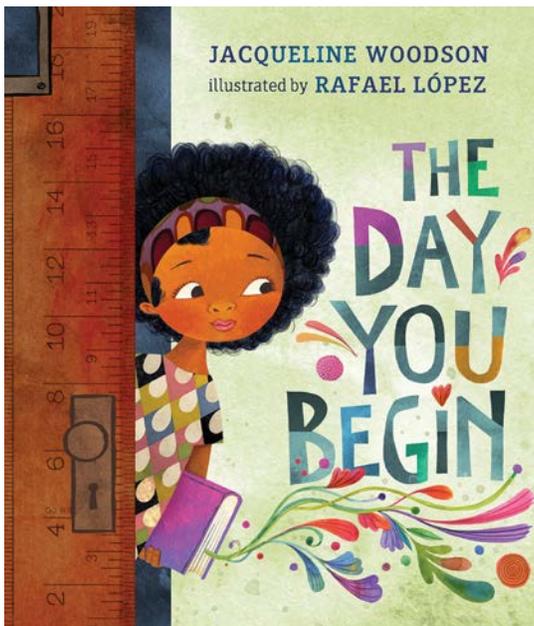


The Day you Begin

Lesson Plan



Summary: Everyone feels they don't belong sometimes. Maybe you look different from other children in your class. Maybe you like different games or food. Maybe you come from a different country and no one seems just like you. It's sometimes hard, but it's also an opportunity to learn about yourself and to teach others about your world. You just have to begin.

Author: Jacqueline Woodson is the 2018-2019 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. She has won over a dozen literary prizes including the Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor. Her books include another WITS Pick, *Each Kindness*.



Photo credit © Marty Umans

Illustrator: Rafael López is an internationally recognized illustrator and artist. The illustrations created by López bring diverse characters to children's books and he is driven to produce and promote books that reflect and honor the lives of all young people. He is the recipient of the 2017 Tomás Rivera Children's Book Award, three Pura Belpré honors and two Américas Book Awards.

Connection to WITS LEADerS Program: Look and Listen. Explore Points of View. Practice skills about accepting yourself and others and understand the meaning and importance of diversity and inclusion. The WITS' vision is to create welcoming caring, respectful communities where all children, parents and teachers feel safe and belong. Ending victimization for all students makes this possible.

Connections to Language Arts: Exchanging Ideas, Information and Experiences; Generating and Developing Ideas, Relationships and Cultural Contexts; Recognizing Personal Values and Choices, Personal Strengths and Abilities: Developing Self-determination and Well-being; Valuing Diversity, Building Relationships.

This story is on line for you at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XUkWoRpeR4> read by Linda of Brightly Storytime

Pre Reading activities

Diversity and inclusion are complicated concepts for school elementary students, but most have had times when they felt that they belonged or didn't belong in a group with other children. We all meet others who do somethings can better, faster, or easier than we can; who seem to have more opportunities, or who just seem different from us in some way. This wonderful book provides a way to start thinking about diversity and inclusion.

1. General class question: Can you remember your first day of school this year? How did you feel? (Excited, nervous, happy, sad?) Sometimes it's hard to walk into a room with people you don't know. How did your feelings about your class change as time passed? Do you feel more at home now? What do you think changes as we get to know people better?

2. Think, pair, share: Pair students up in your usual way. Give students one minute of silence, perhaps with eyes closed, to think of something that makes them unique! It can be visible or invisible, positive or negative. (If they are having trouble thinking of what makes them unique – ask the children to consider what their friends or parents think is unique about them!) Then have them tell their partner about what makes them unique while their partner listens closely. Close listening matters so they can share what they heard! Ask for a few volunteers to tell the class what makes their partner unique. Have each child draw a picture or write a short paragraph about what makes their partner unique. NB: Point out that taking the perspective of others requires listening, respect and not judging or making fun of them!!

Diversity means understanding that each person is unique yet we all belong together. We each come from different races, cultures, religions, beliefs, and points of view and we all have different abilities and appearances. No two people are exactly alike, and yet everyone deserves our respect and acceptance. How do we differ from each other? How are we the same? Create a definition of diversity for your class!

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belong for all learners! (see the Alberta Education website for more about inclusion principles <https://education.alberta.ca/inclusive-education/what-is-inclusion/>)

(See also the famous book **WHOMEVER YOU ARE** by MEM FOX it is read online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOB6k4nwPUE>) It's also a WITS PICK with a lessonplan!

Reading Activities

Choose either to read the story yourself or you can find the story on line at <https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv=-XUkWoRpeR4> Start and stop start as you like.

1. Show the first few pages of the story. How are the children diverse? In appearance hair clothes racial backgrounds, boys, girls, emotions, names. What do you think each of them is feeling? We all have similar feelings no matter how different we might appear!
2. What differences do you see in the first drawing of Rigoberto and the second? Turn the page to see how does Rigoberto feel when his teacher pronounces his name correctly? Learning to say people's names properly is an excellent way of making them feel safe and included. Does anyone in your class have a first or last name that people often mispronounce? How would they like people to say it? Listen carefully – who can say it correctly next? Try again in a few minutes.
3. Many of the children travelled over the summer and brought back lovely **souvenirs** that help them remember the things they did there. Can you figure out why Angelina did not travel anywhere in the summer (Maybe her family could not afford trips, maybe her family works in the summer)? What did she do instead? At the time, was she happy doing that? What is making her sad now? (She feels left out of all the amazing things the others did and maybe a little jealous!) How much our families can afford to do is something that makes people diverse, but it doesn't need to make us feel left out. Have your children had any experiences of wanting to do or have something when their parents said it was too expensive? What did they do or think about that? Talk about jealousy and *how* it makes us feel different from someone else.
4. Some children in this book are feeling sad because other kids make fun of the food they eat or because they are not fast and strong enough to play some of the games. But no one can be good at everything. Ask: What are you really good at? What are you not so good at? (Or what would your friends say you are good at or not so good at?) Tell a story about the day you found out you were pretty good at something you like doing. Maybe the children have a story too? **Telling your own story helps make connections to others.** When Angelina begins to tell her own story, Rigoberto finds out they have something in common. What is it?

Post-Reading Activities:

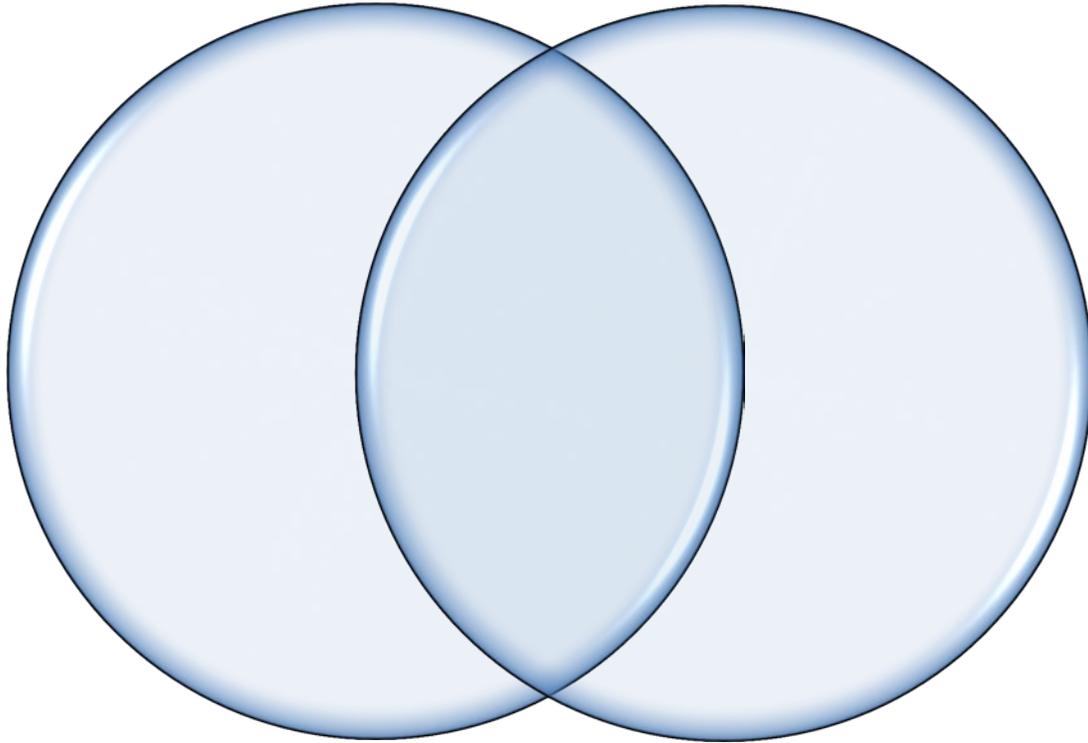
1. **How many rulers are there?** Review all the illustrations in the book, asking students to count how many rulers they see! Why does the illustrator choose to make so add so many rulers? (When the rulers appear – as doors, tables and trees could this be a metaphor about how we “measure” ourselves against others. When we compare ourselves to others, how do we feel – (It might make us feel bad, sad or mad if we feel left out or happy or glad if we can do things together). Make your own rulers and show your students unique and activities at the top of the ruler, maybe include something they are trying to improve in the middle and something they really can't do at the bottom!

2. Create a “Getting to Know You” Interview. Ask students to think of a few questions they could ask when they meet someone new, giving them a few seconds to reflect. Record all suggestions, then encourage them to think of a few questions that will help them dig a little deeper for questions to get to know someone they have already met. The goal is to develop questions that will allow each one of us to discover both the things we have in common and our wonderful differences. (Hi how are you? What is your name? Do you have a nick name? What is your favorite sport, activity, colour, tree, book, song, character, animal. What do you like for lunch? Does anyone in your family have a pet? What is your favorite place to be alone? Where do you feel safest? Where do you feel like you really belong? How come?)

3. Distribute the Venn diagram handouts. Partner students and ask them to interview each other. It might be useful if the teacher creates the dyads randomly by numbers instead of pairing friends. Have each student put his/her name over one of the Venn circles and their partner’s name over the other. Ask them to interview their partner using the questions generated by the class and any others that may occur as they work together. Answers that apply only to one child can be entered in the circle under that child’s name. Put answers that they have in common in the overlap area called “US”. Do they have more things in common than they thought? What surprised them? Might they be interested in trying some of their partner’s interests and activities? Do they know each other better now?

Use the interviews to make an overall class Diversity-Inclusion Poster and the Venn diagrams that can be part of your class décor.

4. Create a class book by including pictures by each student or a video with students talking about their special interests. Do you class have pen pals or buddies. Send your book or video to them and ask for one back! Or interview your buddies by mail using your interview questions and find out what you can that you don’t know yet about their everyday lives.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION