



I LIKE WHO I AM

By Tara White

Celina, a young Mohawk girl moves to her mother's home reserve. Celina is teased because she looks different from the other children. The teasing intensifies with more people becoming involved in the taunting and exclusion. Celina talks it out with her grandmother and discovers that being Mohawk is more than just the way you look.



WITS Connection : Walk away, Ignore, Seek help

WITS LEADS Connection: Look and Listen, Act, Seek help

Questions and Activities



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

The Mohawk People belong to the Iroquois Confederation. To understand an important part of this story it will be helpful for children to understand some traditions of the Mohawk community including the Smoke Dance.



The Smoke Dance was originally a war dance performed by the men of the Six Nations of the Iroquois People. The dance was originally slow and dramatic. The women's Smoke Dance is especially popular because of the fast and intricate footwork.

To find out more about the Iroquois Smoke Dance view two short clips: <http://snipurl.com/27553vw> <http://snipurl.com/2755405>

The Jingle Dress:

The traditional jingle dress may take years to make and requires personal reflection, ceremonial fasting and the consent of community Elders before it is given to a woman. The dress is knee length and covered from shoulder to hem with hundreds of "jingles" which are cones traditionally made from metal or shells.

To find out more about the jingle dress visit this link:
<http://snipurl.com/275544f>



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Look at the cover of the book and the characters in the foreground.
 - What details do you notice about each character's appearance? *One girl is dressed in traditional garments while two girls are dressed in clothes similar to us.*
 - What do you notice about their facial expressions? *One girl looks happy, another girl looks concerned, angry.*
- Based on the title of the book, what do you think the story is about?



QUESTIONS DURING THE READING

- Page 6: Why does Becky say to Celina, "You are not Mohawk!" *Celina does not look like other children who are Mohawk. Celina has blue eyes and blond hair.*
- How does Celina respond? *She says that her Mom, granddad uncles and cousins are Mohawk which makes her also Mohawk.*
- What does Heather suggest to Celina after Becky says, "You are not Mohawk!" *Heather suggests that Celina ignore Becky because she is "always mean."*

4. What do you think of Heather's statement? *Labeling someone as "mean" does not stop negative behaviour. This is a judgment that does not help to understand the person or situation.*
5. Page 8: Becky approaches Celina and yells again, "You are not Mohawk!" What is different about this experience? *Becky becomes more aggressive – she yells, turns red and clenches her fists.*

WITS LEADS Connection: Look and Listen, Act

1. What do you think Celina could do after this second negative experience with Becky? *Celina could seek help from her teacher or a responsible adult.*
2. How could an adult help with this situation? *An adult could talk with Becky to find out why she is angry and encourage Celina to share her understanding of her Mohawk heritage with the class in order to show others what they have in common.*
3. Page 12: How do Becky's friends react when Becky yells at Celina again and says that she is not Mohawk? *They laugh at Celina.*
 - a. Why do they laugh? *They may laugh because they may be afraid and/or uncomfortable. They may laugh because they want to belong and not feel left out as Celina appears to be.*
 - b. Becky's friends are called bystanders. Instead of laughing what could these bystanders do? *They could ask Becky why she says "You are not Mohawk" to Celina. They could seek help from an adult.*
 - c. Page 28: Becky's friends "turn on her" and begin to tease her about not being Mohawk. Why did they do this? *Sometimes friends who think it is okay to tease others will also tease their friends too.*



POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. What does Celina's great-grandma know about being Mohawk? *It's not about how you look it is how you live your life, what you understand and believe that makes you who you are.*
2. After the children watched Celina dance they stared at her with their mouths "gaping open." What do you think they thought of Celina after watching her dance? *Her dancing revealed what was in her heart. She really was Mohawk.*
3. Page 20: Celina finds Becky crying beside a tree. Celina discovers that Becky isn't "just mean." What does Celina learn about Becky? *Becky feels bad about herself because she does not have a Mohawk name, she cannot speak the Mohawk language and she cannot dance.*
4. Celina decides to teach Becky how to dance. Why does Celina help Becky? How does Celina's kind response affect the other people at her school? *Heather, Becky and Celina become friends and other bystanders such as Joey become friends too.*

DIGGING DEEPER: Belonging

The plot of this story is familiar to many of us. Discuss these questions in order to explore the elements of fear, judgment, empathy and compassion that are expressed through the characters in this story.

1. These children through their actions (laughter) and words suggest that Celina does not belong to the Mohawk Community? Why do they treat Celina this way?
2. Why do these children eventually reject Becky by teasing her and making her cry?
3. Why do people tease and exclude one another?
4. In the end, how is Celina able to reach out to Becky despite being hurt by her?
5. How do Celina's actions influence all the children in the story?
6. How do our actions affect those around us?



POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Distribute the *See, Say, Feel, Discover* handout to students
<http://snipurl.com/275538g>

Students select a character from the story and write about what character sees, says and feels at the beginning of the story and at the end of the story. Emphasize that discovery in the story is about an important lesson learned by the character. What is the important lesson learned by their chosen character? When students are finished writing they may draw and colour a picture of the character inside the center rectangle.

- My Name: Ask students to research the background of their name. What does it mean? Does the definition reflect any part of their personality? Discuss how their parents picked your name. Students may create a Name Poem – an acrostic poem with each line beginning with a letter of their name.
- Find out more about the Mohawk People by visiting these links
 - <http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/transcripts/mohawk.html>
 - http://www.debramorningstar.com/docs/lessonplan_iroquois_creation.pdf

I LIKE WHO I AM: *See, Say, Feel, Discover*

Name: _____

During the story

End of the story



What does this character see?



What does this character hear?



What does this character feel?



What does this character do?



What does this character see?



What does this character hear?



What does this character feel?



What does this character do?

What does this character discover?


