

STORY OF MY NAME

MATERIALS |

None

OPTIONAL: paper or cardstock for name tent

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OBJECTIVES | The objectives of this activity are for participants to learn more about the lives and backgrounds of others, to practice deep listening, and to build meaningful relationships with each other.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS |

Introduce the importance of names.

- Ask participants to brainstorm why names are important.
- A few points you could make: everyone's name is different; sometimes our names reflect our culture, background, and history; sometimes people decide to change their names for various reasons; our legal names might be different than what we would like to be called; some people like their names and some people do not; some people experience bullying or favor as a result of the name they have; in the United States most people do not get to pick their own names; names can be a great point of connection because we all have them!

Facilitators should model sharing the story of their own name and then invite participants to share in pairs or small groups. Some potential questions each person may choose to answer:

- What is your name?
- How did you come to have this name? Did someone give it to you? Did you choose it?
- What is the significance of your name? Does it mean anything?
- How do you feel about your name? Do you like it? Do you wish it were different? Why?
- What is the best thing about your name?
- What is the worst thing about your name?
- How have you been treated by others as a result of your name?

Write out the story of your name if you'd like to include in your portfolio.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS |

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- What did we learn about each other in the process?
- How did we treat each other when we were doing this? Were we kind?



SUPPORTING MEDIA |

<https://www.michiganlearning.org/sharing-who-we-are/>

NOTES |

INCLUSIVITY: Be cautious about demanding participants share the history of their names or answer any specific questions as this can be fraught for people who are transgender, nonbinary, adopted, in foster homes, or estranged from family.

OPTIONAL: Have participants write their full names on a name-tent (folded paper or cardstock) to be displayed throughout the class period or even over the first few weeks of school.