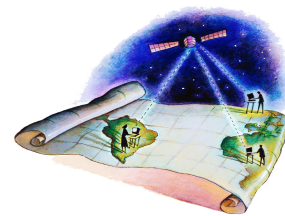




GRADE 9-12 HIGH SCHOOL Heritage and Heart Day (October 15)

Created by Mona Liza Santos
Founder of Heritage and Heart Day



What This Is About

Heritage and Heart Day encourages students to reflect on identity, culture, and the role they play in shaping how they treat others.

At this stage, students are forming their values, perspectives, and sense of belonging. This day creates space for deeper understanding of their own background while learning to respect and connect with others.

It reinforces that identity is personal, evolving, and deserving of respect, and that understanding others is key to building a more inclusive and thoughtful environment.

Activity 1: Identity Reflection

Ask students to reflect on:

- 👉 what has shaped who they are
- 👉 their values, experiences, or background

How to implement:

Give 10–15 minutes for writing. Emphasize that this is personal and sharing is optional.

Guide with:

- What experiences have influenced you
- What parts of your identity matter most to you

Activity 3: Understanding Perspectives

Ask students to explore:

👉 a culture, identity, or experience different from their own

How to implement:

This can include:

- research
- conversations
- shared experiences

Reflect:

- What did you learn
- Did it change your perspective

Activity 2: Open Dialogue

Ask:

👉 "How does identity influence how we see others and ourselves?"

How to implement:

Create a respectful discussion space. Topics may include:

- culture
- assumptions
- belonging
- respect

Allow students to lead parts of the conversation when appropriate.

Activity 4: Real Life Scenarios

Present situations:

- someone is judged based on background
- someone feels excluded
- someone's identity is misunderstood

How to implement:

Discuss:

👉 "What is a respectful and thoughtful response?"

Encourage students to think beyond reaction and consider impact.



Activity 5: Identity Expression



Have students express their identity through writing, art, spoken word, or presentations, allowing freedom and creativity while focusing on authenticity rather than perfection.

For Homeschool and Home Use

- Discuss identity, values, and experiences
- Reflect on real-world situations
- Encourage independent thinking and respectful dialogue
- Connect discussions to everyday life

- Explore personal heritage and what it means to you
- Talk about how culture and background shape perspectives
- Discuss current events related to identity, diversity, and respect
- Reflect on how to engage with different viewpoints respectfully

Simple Reflection

- How has your background shaped who you are
- What did you learn about someone else
- How can understanding others change how you treat them

- How does your identity influence your choices and actions
- What perspectives have you gained from learning about others
- How can you show respect in situations where people are different from you
- When have you had to think differently about someone and why

Tip for Educators and Parents

Keep discussions open, respectful, and grounded in real-life experiences. There is no single right or wrong way to explore identity as long as the focus remains on understanding, connection, and respect.

High school students benefit from being treated as individuals with their own perspectives. Encourage reflection, critical thinking, and respectful dialogue without forcing participation.

Make it Stand Out

- Encourage student-led discussions
- Connect topics to real-life situations
- Allow multiple forms of expression
- Focus on growth, not perfection
- Create space for honest, respectful dialogue
- Encourage critical thinking and self-reflection
- Allow different perspectives to be shared without judgment
- Connect identity to leadership and responsibility

Cool Activities (Grades 9 -12)

“Where I Come From”

Reflection 🌍

Students write a few lines about what shapes who they are.

Focus on experiences, values, or background.

🎤 “My Story in 1 Minute”

Students share one aspect of their identity or background in 1 minute.

Sharing can be spoken, written, or optional.

🖍️ “Quick Reflection”

Prompt: 🙌 “What does identity mean to me?”

Students write a short response

Closing Thought

When we understand our own story and take time to understand others, we create a more respectful and connected world.

Need more ideas or support?

Mona Liza Santos can help tailor activities for your classroom or home.

Email: missmonaliza81@yahoo.com

Website: www.monalizasantos.com

