



GRADE 6-8 MIDDLE 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 who they are, where they come from, and how they connect with others.

At this stage, students are beginning to explore identity, friendships, and belonging. This day provides a space for them to better understand their own background while learning to respect and appreciate the experiences of others.

It reminds students that every person has a story, and every story deserves to be heard with respect.

Activity 1: My Identity Reflection

Ask students to reflect on:

- 👉 who they are
- 👉 what has shaped them
- 👉 what they value

How to implement:

Give students time to write privately. Let them know they only need to share what they are comfortable with.

Guide with:

- What makes you who you are
- What parts of your background are important to you

Activity 3: Learn and Share

Ask students to:

👉 learn something about another culture or background

How to implement:

This can be through:

- conversation
- research
- shared experiences

Reflect:

- What did you learn
- What stood out to you

Activity 2: Real Conversations

Ask:

👉 "What does identity mean to you?"

How to implement:

Break students into small groups to create a safe and comfortable space.

Set expectations:

- listen without interrupting
- respect different perspectives
- no judgment

Activity 4: Perspective Scenarios

Create situations:

- someone feels different or left out
- someone's background is misunderstood
- someone is judged based on assumptions

How to implement:

Have students discuss:

👉 "How would you respond in a respectful way?"

Encourage thoughtful responses rather than quick reactions.

Activity 5: Culture Through Creativity

Have students express their identity through writing, art, or a short presentation. Let them choose what feels meaningful to share.

For Homeschool and Home Use

- Have open conversations about identity and belonging
- Share family stories and experiences
- Discuss differences in a respectful and supportive way
- Encourage reflection without pressure
- Talk through real-life situations involving friends, school, or social settings
- Discuss how choices and words can affect others
- Encourage independent thinking and respectful disagreement
- Reflect on how identity can shape experiences and perspectives

Simple Reflection

- What did you learn about yourself
- What did you learn about someone else
- Why is it important to respect different backgrounds
- How do your actions affect others
- What is one thing you would do differently next time
- How can you show respect in a difficult situation
- What does identity mean to you
- How can you be more understanding of others

Tip for Educators and Parents

Keep conversations respectful, open, and inclusive. There is no single right or wrong way to explore identity as long as the focus remains on understanding, connection, and respect.

Middle school students benefit from being heard. Allow space for honest expression while guiding them toward empathy and awareness.

Make it Stand Out

- Use small group discussions for comfort
- Allow students to share at their own pace
- Focus on listening as much as sharing
- Create a safe and respectful environment
- Use real-life scenarios students can relate to
- Encourage respectful conversations, even when opinions differ
- Allow private reflection for students who prefer not to share
- Connect topics to friendships, school life, and social situations

Cool Activities (Grades 6-8)

"My Story, My Voice"

Students share:

👉 something about their identity, background, or experience

Can be spoken, written or a small group share.

👉 Keep it optional and low pressure.



"Identity Map"

Students create a map showing:

- 👉 culture
- 👉 family
- 👉 traditions
- 👉 interests

This helps them see that identity has many parts.

"Respectful Conversations" Activity

Discuss how to talk about different cultures respectfully. Students practice turning insensitive comments into thoughtful ones.

Closing Thought

Understanding who we are helps us better understand others. When we listen with respect, we build stronger connections.

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

