



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Eyes That Kiss in the Corners

ABC CHAMPION YEAR LESSON 5  
PROJECT CORNERSTONE

**PROJECT  
CORNERSTONE**  
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

This presentation is intended for use by ABC Leads who have attended the monthly ABC Lead training.

## **ABC GPS**

Use this to help with planning for your school training. It will help you select the goals and activities for your readers.

## **Parent Letter or Email Newsletter Blurb**

Available to use in emails or newsletter to parents at home. Available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, and Ukrainian.

## **Yard Duty Tips and Lanyards**

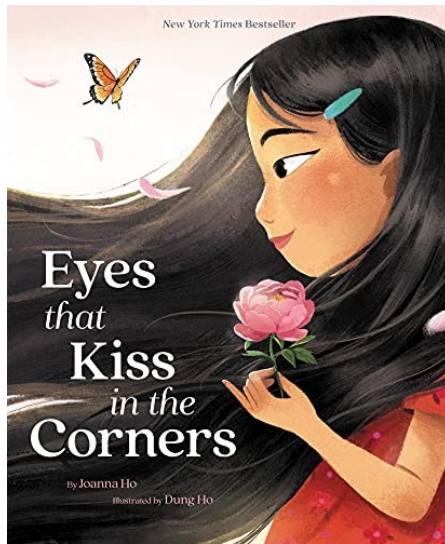
Post the yard duty tips. Pass out the lanyard tags to wear. Invite yard duty to the trainings. Ask them to read in the classroom.

## **Staff Letter**

Email all school staff about the lesson. Lesson plan can be included.

**ABC:**

**Champion Year**



**Key Phrases:**

- **Be True to You**
- **Find Your Authentic Self**

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, pages 1-2

**This book builds the Developmental Relationships:**

Express Care - Listen, Believe in Me, Be Warm, Encourage  
Expand Possibilities – Inspire, Broaden Horizons, Connect

**Social and Emotional Learning: Self-Awareness**

(identify emotions, self-perception/identity, recognizing strengths, sense of self-confidence, and self-efficacy)

**In our lesson today, our goals are:**

- Students will express gratitude for the people in their lives.
- Students will celebrate their authentic self and their contribution to the diversity in our world.
- Students will develop a greater understanding and respect for people from different backgrounds.

**Narration of the book:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFz0wktGr2k>

## Empathy: Connect with Empathy

### Empathy is...

seeing with the eyes of another.  
listening with the ears of another.  
and feeling with the heart of another.

#### Focus on These Empathy Skills:

- Compassion
- Celebrate your authentic self
- Relate and care for others by understanding more about them

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Refer to **Lead Guide**, Empathy, pages 7-8

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings, perspectives, and experiences of others. It's important that we guide children in understanding and caring for people who are different from them and who may be facing challenges very different from their own challenges. Empathy builds healthy relationships, promotes social connections, and fosters community.

**Ask for examples of what they did as a result of the last book. Did they:**

- identify and name their own feelings?
- respond to the emotions of others in an empathetic manner?
- reconsider and offer second chances?

**How to help students become Empathy Ambassadors:**

- Express gratitude for the caring adults in their lives.
- Celebrate uniqueness and diversity in the world.
- Learn about others and respect people that are unique and come from other cultures.

# Information for ABC Readers

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View this video for adults only:

When People Speak Up

<https://youtu.be/b1nJqpqgzR0>

It is important to be mindful and reflective of your own identity. Understand that you bring your own background, beliefs, behaviors, and biases into the classroom. Some of these biases may cause microaggressions to be exhibited without really realizing it.

## Background Information: Key Points

**Microaggressions** are subtle, often unintentional actions or comments that convey negative messages toward individuals or groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. These everyday slights could be insensitive jokes, backhanded compliments, or implicit bias.

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Key Ideas, page 2

It is important to be mindful and reflective of your own identity. Understand that you bring your own background, beliefs, behaviors, and biases into the classroom. Some of these biases may cause microaggressions to be exhibited without really realizing it.

Microaggressions may not be overtly hostile or even intended to cause harm, but they reinforce stereotypes and create an environment that marginalizes others. The cumulative impact of microaggressions can be emotionally damaging, contributing to a pattern of systemic discrimination and inequality.

One way to shield yourself from microaggressions is to learn to be your authentic self. This means embracing who you are and all that you are. It means living in alignment with your true values, beliefs, and identity without fear of judgement or societal expectations. It is about your heritage. Take your heritage with you wherever you go and share it with the world.

## Background Information: Key Points



Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Key Ideas, page 2

To get a better idea of your cultural reference points you can ask yourself:

- How did your family identify ethnically growing up?
- What did your culture teach you about success?

We are all layers of stories. Share your story by speaking up and being seen and heard, never assuming others understand or know you. It is up to each person to be authentic. By representing your authentic self to the world, you belong without conforming to the dominant culture or popular way of being. We can feel connected to our ancestors and histories and bring these beautiful parts of ourselves to our present selves.

As we love ourselves and share ourselves with others, we can build a diverse community where everyone, including those people with a wide variety of identity markers, is valued, celebrated, and known. Remember that being authentic is a lifelong journey that involves ongoing self-reflection and refinement. Believe in yourself and be confident in your ability to shape your life, leading to a path of discovery for your authentic self.

# Conversation Starter

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## Conversation Starter: Grades K-2 Your Reflection is You



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Conversation Starter, pages 2-3

Have students close their eyes and imagine themselves in their best state. Imagine what they're doing, who they're with, how that environment makes them feel. Pass out the mirrors:

- Ask: Who do you see? Say your name! Say it louder. Say it with pride. Whisper it...
- Close your eyes. Take a few breaths. Open them and look at your face. What do you see? Have each child look in the mirror and make observations about their features.
- Encourage them to view their features as wonderful and unique.
- Ask what wonderful features do they see? Talk in detail (shape, colors, size, etc.) about their eyes, noses, faces, smiles, hair, etc.
- Put the mirrors down and as a group look at your hands, what do they see? Yes, a variety of skin tones.
- Say we are all unique and different. It makes us interesting, authentic, and wonderful human beings.
- Discuss with students the idea of *being true to yourself* or your authentic self.

Show this video: The Reflection of Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9OOXCu5XMg>



## Conversation Starter: Grades K-6 Restorative Justice Circle

- What is your favorite color?
- What is something fun to do?
- What is your favorite meal?



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Conversation Starter, page 3

The circle focuses on welcoming newcomers, helping students get to know each other, and building bridges between different cliques and ethnic groups. Have students form a circle and sit comfortably. Remind them of the rules about not using names, showing respect by using active listening, and agreeing to maintain confidentiality. To warm up the students, throw or roll the ball to students. Only the student who is holding the ball may speak.

Once you feel that the students are feeling comfortable, ask students more personal questions.

- What emotion are you feeling right now?
- What is something you like about yourself?
- What is something you would like to change?

Let students talk and share about themselves. If some students show disrespect: "I'm hearing some of you disrespect your classmates. That's hurtful to use those words. Try to think before you use words like that." If students put themselves down, remind them of positive affirmations, and *turning mud thoughts into clear thoughts*.

# Reading The Book

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**This is a **new** book to the ABC Program. Read the book to the students and ask the discussion questions. Focus on the concepts. If time, a video can be shown to extend the lesson.**

## **Reading to Grades 3-6**

Show these videos:

- Steve Hartman this month is: Gratitude
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfd6vtNEfrs>
- Pre-recorded Conversation Video by Austin is on the website.
- Let's Eat (8 minutes)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MX\\_fJAhmEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0MX_fJAhmEE)

## **Follow up with discussion and choose one activity:**

1. Unique Me in a Diverse World-Identity Map
2. Gratitude Circle
3. Gratitude Tree
4. Speech Bubbles

## Reading the Book



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Read the book, pages 3-4

Show the cover of the book and read the title, author, illustrator, and publisher. (For younger students explain what these are.)

1. Ask students to think about the title. What do they think the book will be about? What gives them clues? What does the title mean?
2. As we read, really look at and appreciate the illustrations. Imagine this story without the illustrations. Read a few pages without showing the pictures and then show them.
3. How does seeing the pictures effect the understanding of the story? There are important clues about the main character's authentic self revealed in the illustrations. (Note: girl in the mirror, significance of flowers, phoenix, butterfly, etc.)
4. Look for details of Chinese culture that appear in the illustrations. Discuss the possible meaning and substance of these illustrations.
5. Read the book slowly to appreciate the descriptive language.

# Discussing The Book

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Let the discussion of the book be a relationship booster! Look to the discussion questions as ways to begin relationships and learn about each other.

The conversations, connections and insights gained through conversation about the book are crucial to internalizing the skills of the lesson. Don't rush.

Here is one of the techniques from the Classroom Management Workshop:

In order to promote more students being involved with the discussion, have students turn to a neighbor and discuss a question. Make sure they know how you will call them back to the group. Practice doing a waterfall:

Waterfall (move hands from top to bottom and say shh, shh, shh,)

## Discussion:

## Grades K-2



1. The author writes that the family in the book has “eyes that kiss in the corners”. How are other eyes described in the book?
2. What words would you use to describe your eyes?
3. How do eyes show different emotions?

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Discussion, page 4

1. Why is the girl looking in the mirror at the beginning?
2. The author writes that the family in the book has “eyes that kiss in the corners”. How are other eyes described in the book? What words would you use to describe your eyes?
3. How do eyes show different emotions?
4. What else makes us each unique and different?
5. What do you know about families? Who is in your family? (Be aware that families come in many shapes and sizes.)
6. How does your family show love? What are some of your favorite family moments? What do families give or share with each other?
7. How do you appreciate or show gratitude for your family?

## Discussion:

## Grades 3-6



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Discussion, page 4

1. In the story we learn about the girl's family and how it relates to her. What would you share about your family and how it makes you, you? What stories have you heard from the elders in the family?
2. How does your family show gratitude for each other?
3. Why is it important to show gratitude to others?
4. What rituals does the author write about in the book?
5. Do you have any rituals that ground you in your heritage?
6. What would you share about your culture with the class?
7. What are some ways to learn about other cultures? (books, documentaries, attend cultural festivals or museums, try new foods, learn new dances, etc.)
8. Have you ever experienced microaggressions (subtle put-down, back-handed compliment or insensitive joke)?
9. How did they make you feel?
10. How does being your authentic self shield from the sting of these comments?
11. What is good about being part of a diverse community and sharing your authentic self with others?

# Activity Options

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Choose **one** activity to match your intent/goals for the lesson.

- This part of the lesson can be done if you have 45 minutes or longer.
- If your discussion takes longer, it is ok to go directly to the Closing.
- You can leave the activity for the teacher to, ask to come back for a second visit, or do at recess time.

## Activity Options: Grades K-6

### Mirror, Mirror on the Wall



Positive affirmations  
are positive thoughts  
about YOU!

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Activity Ideas , pages 4-5

Discuss with students what positive affirmations are and give some examples. Brainstorm ideas and make a list. Then have them quietly reflect on what positive things might they say about themselves? Hold up the large or small mirror and say positive affirmations about your self. Give students these sentences to fill in to help them:

- I'm an awesome \_\_\_\_\_
- Most people really like my \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a good friend because \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a kind person because \_\_\_\_\_
- I know I am loved because \_\_\_\_\_
- I am proud of \_\_\_\_\_

Have students glue the reflective paper on to the paper plate or the mirror template. Decorate the edges of the mirror. On the back of the mirror, students can draw something that they like about themselves or something they want to stand out about themselves. As a group, hold up the mirrors and say we are all unique and different. It makes us interesting, authentic, and special human beings.



## Activity Options: Grades 3-6 Unique Me in a Diverse World

Create an Identity Map that celebrates you!



- What makes you unique?
- What talents, interests, values, and personal traits contribute to your story?

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Activity, page 5

Emphasize the importance of appreciating individuality and understanding the positive impact it has on the world. Ask each child to reflect on what makes them unique. Have them close their eyes and think about their authentic selves. What talents, interests, values, and personal traits contribute to their individuality? What is their story?

Ask them to create a self-portrait or a poster using symbols, phrases, words, or images that represent themselves. Each student can explain what they have created and share a few words how this relates to their authentic self.

Explain that this poster represents the diverse contributions of each child, forming a beautiful mosaic of uniqueness.

- What do you notice about the diversity and beauty of our collective creations?
- How does this poster represent the uniqueness and contributions of each individual?
- How does celebrating our authentic selves contribute to a diverse and inclusive world?
- How can we appreciate and respect the authentic selves of others?

## Activity Options: Gratitude Circle

Grades K-6



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Activity Options, pages 5-6

Have the students sit in a circle. Begin by explaining to the children what gratitude means and why it is important to appreciate and express gratitude for the people in their lives. Discuss how expressing gratitude can make both the giver and receiver feel good and strengthen relationships.

- Hold the gratitude wand and share something they are grateful for and briefly explain why.
- Pass the gratitude wand or ball to someone in the circle and say "I pass the gratitude to \_\_\_\_"
- Each student shares what they are grateful for and continues passing the wand to another person. Continue until all students wishing to participate have had a chance to express gratitude.
- If time allows, follow up by creating a classroom or school gratitude tree.

## Activity Options: Grades K-6 Gratitude Tree



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, Activity Options, page 6

Prepare the Gratitude Tree base:

- Take the large poster paper or cardboard and cut it into the shape of a tree trunk and branches. Do this ahead of time. Attach the tree to a wall.
- Cut out multiple leaf shapes from construction paper of various colors. (See leaf handout on the website.)

Discuss who in their lives have made a positive impact, such as family members, friends, teachers, or community helpers.

- Encourage the children to think about specific actions or qualities that they appreciate about these individuals. For example: I'm grateful to my grandmother for letting me help bake cookies.
- Have the children write or draw the names of the people they are grateful for on the leaves.
- They can also write or draw something specific they appreciate about each person on the leaves. Using glue or tape, attach the decorated leaves to the branches of the Gratitude Tree.
- Invite students to write in their first language as a way to celebrate their authentic selves.

## Activity Options: Grades 3-6 Be True and Be Kind Pins



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### **FUNvisor Idea**

Refer to **video:**

<https://www.crayola.com/crafts/kindness-clothespins-craft/>

### **Be True and Be Kind Clothespins**

Materials: paint, brush, glitter pens, permanent markers, clothespins

If you have students paint the clothespins this will be a 2 part activity as they will need to dry. You can also purchase pre-colored clothespins.

Brainstorm phrases that students can write on the clothespin. These phrases should reflect their authentic self. They can wear them on their own backpack.

Students can also make a kindness clothespin to share with a friend or caring adult.

# Closing

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Refer to **Lead Materials** on website, Champion Year Cheer  
Think of how you want to end the lesson. What skill did your lesson focus on? Use the Closing to coach youth on ways to take these skills from the classroom to the playground. One idea is to always end with the cheer as final closing moment:

***We're Cornerstone Kids and we're here to say  
Connect with empathy everyday!***

***Invite and include others***

***Listen with your whole heart.***

***We're Cornerstone Kids and we're here to say  
Connect with empathy everyday!***

***Be a world changer.***

***Keep your cool.***

***Be true to you.***

***We're Cornerstone Kids and we're here to say  
Connect with empathy everyday!***

## Closing:



Call to Action: **BE TRUE TO YOU AND SHARE YOUR STORY**

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, page 6

Have students close their eyes, take a deep breath. Take a moment to think about their authentic selves and what makes them proud of who they are. Using the Share Stories Speech Bubbles handout, have students cut out a speech bubble and attach a craft stick. They can attach two speech bubbles one on either side of the stick if they want to do more than one. Have students select a speech bubble that speaks to them. After it's completed, hold it up and share with a partner or the class. Take a photo of the class holding up their speech bubbles.

- I'm an awesome \_\_\_\_\_
- My authentic self is \_\_\_\_\_
- I am a kind friend because \_\_\_\_\_
- I am unique and beautiful because \_\_\_\_\_
- I know I am loved because \_\_\_\_\_
- I am proud of \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to share this about my culture \_\_\_\_\_

This can also be completed verbally if time is short.

# School Wide Extensions

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## School Wide Extensions: Multi-Cultural Festival



- Set up an art walk.
- Ask for families and restaurants to contribute foods that reflect the community.
- Encourage all to dress in traditional clothes that represent their culture or heritage.
- Set up stations to teach games, dances, or arts from different countries.
- Students can be encouraged to do live cultural performances.

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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, School Wide Extensions, page 7  
Diversity skills help develop a more culturally inclusive lens. This lens may give you a stronger understanding of different languages, cultures, and experiences. It helps you be ready to listen when others stand up and share their authentic self.

### Cultural Displays

Learning about diversity helps to create an environment where everyone feels respected and valued. It's important for students to see themselves represented at school. It also reminds them and others about the richness of culture and different ways to learn from our heritage. By celebrating heritage, people may appreciate each other and develop stronger relationships.

Choose a place to set up displays of various cultures. Ask families in the school to loan the school different items to share in the display. Establish a "loan" procedure where parents allow borrowed cultural artifacts to be displayed for a period of time. This could be a table, book shelf, or other space in a common area of the school. It should be an area that has some monitoring like the office, library, or lab area. Have the families come in and talk about the items they loan to the school at an assembly or flag pole ceremony.



## School Wide Extensions

### Film Festivals



### Storytelling Circles



### Guest Speakers



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Refer to **Lesson Plan**, School Wide Extensions, page 7

### **Inclusive Film Festival**

Screen a series of movies or documentaries that highlight diverse cultures and perspectives. This can spark meaningful conversations and promote empathy. Provide families with discussion questions to use at home.

### **Guest Speaker Series**

Invite individuals from different backgrounds, professions, and experiences to speak at school. The sharing of their stories and insights can be empowering. Look for former graduates of the school to return and share their journeys.

### **Story Telling Circles**

Organize storytelling circles where students, parents, staff, and community members can share personal experiences related to their backgrounds, challenges they've overcome, or inspiring stories that have shaped their lives. This can be an inter-generational event where elders of the community can share their stories and make history come alive.

# Home and School Communication

## Newsletter Blurb

## Student Stickers

## Parent Letter or Email Blurb

## Family Movie Night



Be true to you

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### **Make the Home-School Connection:**

#### **Email Blurb**

Give the teacher the email blurb to include in her class email note or make it into the newsletter blurb.

The blurb is a great way to write a short paragraph for the school newsletter or Parent Loop etc.

#### **Parent Letter**

Available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian and sometimes Mandarin.

#### **Student Stickers**

Give to students to stick on their backpack, special note pad, or article of clothing to bring home.

#### **Family Movie Night**

Every lesson has a handout to a suggested Family Movie Night.

This is another way to remind parents about the book of the month.

#### **Bulletin Boards and Marques**

Ask for volunteers to help post student art or tag lines.

## Closing Comments



- Refresh ABC Group Norms
- Budget for New Books
- Asset Champion Breakfast March 15!

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### **Remind your ABC Readers :**

- Set group norms to create a safe place at trainings.
- February is a short month.
- Make plans to attend the Asset Champion breakfast.

### **ABC Lead Support**

- Share ideas in ABC Leads Facebook group.
- Ask volunteers for help with leadership roles and to shadow you.
- Talk with PTO/HSC/PTA about budget needs.

### **Top 3 Action Items for January**

1. Valentines Day provides a heartfelt opportunity to thank teachers. Host a reader/teacher tea.
2. Think about next year. Start recruiting new leads if needed.
3. Matching grants for campaign will add towards \$1,000 for banner.