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Activity Guide

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Bein' With You This Way

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ABOUT THE STORY

This is a joyous, high-spirited rap about the ways people are different, unusual, strange – but still the same, and still beautiful. Straight hair, curly hair, brown eyes, blue eyes, long legs, short legs – are all celebrated in a hand-clapping, foot-stomping rhythm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

W. Nikola-Lisa is the author of several children's books, including *Night is Coming* and *America: My Land, Your Land, Our Land*. He was awarded an Ezra Jack Keats Fellowship in 1990 and now works as an associate professor of English. He lives in Chicago with his wife, sculptor Barbara Cooper, and his two daughters.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Michael Bryant has illustrated the picture books *Our People* and *Goodbye Hello*. In 1991, he was awarded the University of Wisconsin Multicultural Mirror Fellowship. Mr. Bryant lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and two daughters.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children if they know what rap is. Explain that rap is similar to a poem and has a strong rhythm. Then tell them that this book is a rap about the many ways people can look different and still be similar.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How are the noses in the book different?"
- "How are the eyes in the book different?"
- "How are the arms in the book different?"
- "What does the narrator mean by saying 'Different-but the same'?"
(Interpret)
- "Do you agree that people who look different are 'perfectly remarkably strange'?" (Express opinions)

Vocabulary

Many words in the song are formed with prefixes and suffixes. Write these words from the book on the chalkboard. Have volunteers underline each prefix and suffix and then define the word. Children can use each word in a sentence of their own.

unforgettable
perfectly
delightful
insightful

remarkably
incredible
different

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Music: Rhythmic Reading

Invite children to read the rap in a choral reading, with a different group of children reading each stanza. If possible, supply each group with a rhythm instrument, such as a tambourine, hand drum, or castanets. One child can accompany the group as the others read. Urge the whole class to join in at the refrain.

Language Arts: Write a Verse

Encourage children to think of another way in which people are different, but the same. Using the same rhythm, children can write another verse for the song. Have volunteers read their verses aloud.

Art: Different – But the Same

Have children create artwork inspired by the rap. They may choose to make a collage, a painting, or a sculpture. Urge them to reflect the song's theme of people who are different but the same in their art.

Math: Chart the Difference

On the chalkboard, create a chart for hair color and one for eye color. Write the various colors across the top of each chart, and then have children put a mark below the color of their eyes and hair on the charts.

When you are finished, discuss the ways in which the members of the group are different, but the same.