

# SELF-ESTEEM



## Purpose

This lesson will teach younger children (pre-K) the importance of having a positive self-esteem and feeling good about themselves. Children will gain knowledge and skills to help them build a positive self-esteem.

## Objectives

Participants will:

- recognize happy people.
- learn what makes them special.

## Learning Activities

- “I Am Special!”
- “Happy People”
- “My Favorite Person”
- “Helping Others”

## Advance Preparation

1. Read Background Information for this lesson.
2. Review Activity Sheets.
3. Secure necessary materials for the lesson as described.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Self-esteem** means truly loving and valuing oneself and is a personal assessment of worthiness. Persons with high self-esteem appear poised and confident and are less influenced by others. This is different from being self-centered, conceited, or obnoxious. Building self-esteem is an ongoing process. It reaffirms that you have accepted yourself as you are, but continue to work on capitalizing on your strengths.

An individual with high self-esteem feels good about himself, and can face the challenges of life more effectively. High self-esteem provides the basis for success and coping with daily living in a rapidly changing environment. Individuals are responsible for building their self-esteem; however, family, parents, teachers, and friends can provide support and influence many of their life decisions and choices.

**Self-esteem** is the way we relate to ourselves, to others, and to life in general. It affects the way we learn, work, and build relationships. Our personal success or failure lies in our self-esteem. If we believe we **can** – we **do**. If we believe we **can't** – we **don't even try**. If you have high self-esteem, you are willing to try new things, develop closer relationships, maintain self-confidence, and remain flexible.

How people feel about themselves affects everything they do, from forming friendships and relationships with others, to setting and achieving appropriate goals. Research shows that students with high self-esteem do better in school, have more appropriate friends, and fewer problems with parents and teachers. They also are less likely to become involved in destructive behaviors. When people feel good about themselves, they do good things. When they feel bad about themselves, they may participate in negative behavior patterns and treat others in a negative manner.

**Self-esteem** is important in every aspect of life. How we learn, how we work, how we act, and how we play are all determined by our level of self-esteem. Four factors are important for an individual to develop and maintain a high level of self-esteem.

- Positive Role Models to provide meaningful goals, values, ideals, and standards.
- Personal Strength that gives you the ability to influence life's circumstances.
- Uniqueness and Individuality that provide a special personal sense of individual worth.
- Sense of Connectivity and Belonging that foster satisfaction from associations that are significant.

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Some ways to enhance self-esteem in others are:

- Be genuinely interested and concerned about them as individuals.
- Accept them unconditionally.
- Recognize their successes.
- Give sincere praise.
- Be open, warm and affectionate.
- Recognize individual talents, interests, skills and abilities.

Negative messages from others can add to feelings of low self-esteem, while words of encouragement and praise can result in a higher sense of self-worth. Comments such as “I don’t care,” or “I can’t help it -- that’s the way I am,” are indicative of low self-esteem. They may express fatalistic attitudes toward life such as “it really doesn’t matter,” “I don’t care,” or “what difference does it make?” Beneath the surface of such defenses hides an uncertain person, afraid to lose the little self-esteem he/or she is protecting by staying away from risk. This person may be quiet or boisterous, but will inevitably refuse to participate in things he or she feels unsure of. Persons with low self-esteem may feel isolated, unloved, unappreciated, and powerless. Withdrawal, rebellion and isolation can result from low self-esteem.

## REMEMBER:

**People who feel good about themselves are more likely to engage in behavior that is in their own best interests; however, those who suffer from low self-esteem often view themselves as unlikable and unattractive to others. Developing a high self-esteem begins at birth and is greatly influenced by the reactions and responses of significant others. Positive self-esteem is reflected in an optimistic, outgoing personality, while negative self-esteem often results in underachievement and an inability to interact appropriately with others.**

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## LESSON OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

Young children are sensitive to ridicule and like to mimic adult behaviors. They are beginning to be concerned about how they look to others. Self-esteem can be fragile at this stage. Family members, teachers, and others must provide a positive, caring and loving environment for preschool children.

### DO

- Review Background Information
- Complete “I Am Special!”
- Complete “Happy People”
- Complete “My Favorite Person”
- Complete “Helping Others”

### REFLECT

After completing the activities in this lesson, help the children reflect on what they have learned and how they will use this information. Here are some suggested questions:

- How do you feel about yourself?
- Do you like the way you look?
- Do you have fun with your friends?
- Are you a happy person?
- Who makes you feel good about yourself?

### APPLY

Ask the children the following questions to help them apply what they have learned.

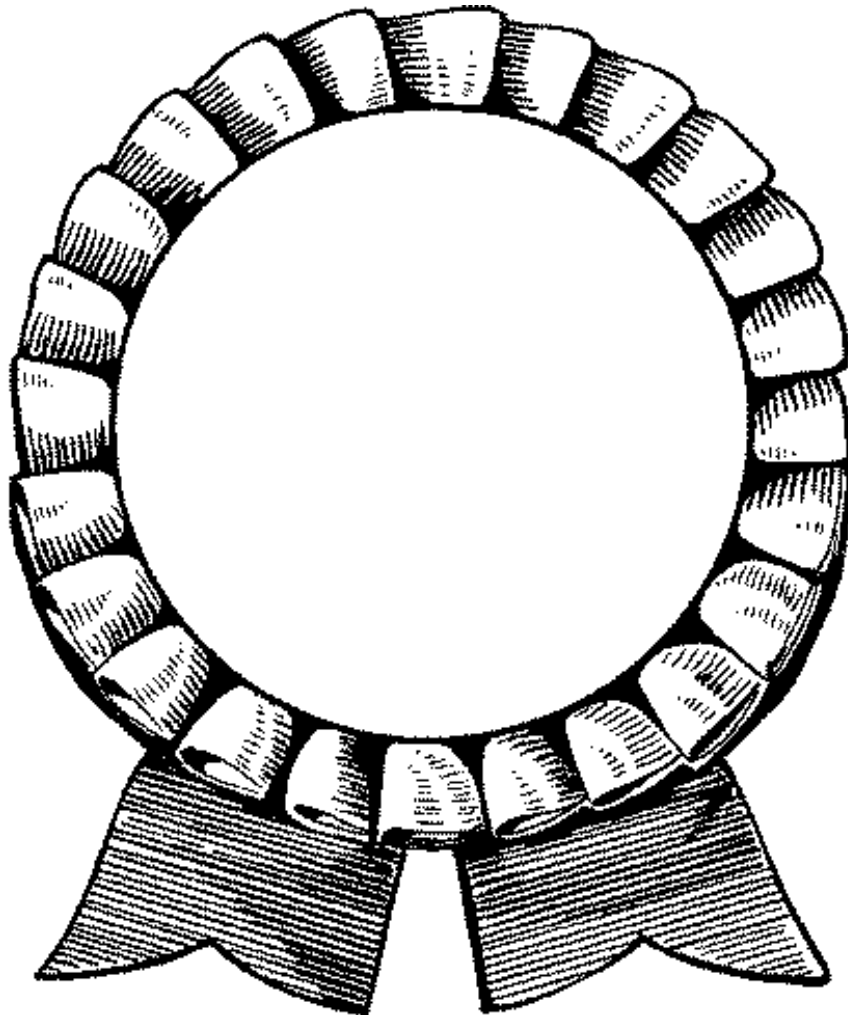
- Who is your favorite person?
- What are your favorite colors?
- What do you like about yourself?
- Where is your favorite place to take a vacation?

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## I AM SPECIAL!

Ask each child to draw a picture of themselves in the circle. Next, draw pictures of some of their favorite things around their picture. Examples: toys, pets, food, people.



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## HAPPY PEOPLE

Have the children look for pictures in magazines and catalogs of people who look like they feel good about themselves. Cut them out, then in a small group talk about the people in the pictures. Use the following questions to help the children get started.



**Why did you pick these pictures?**



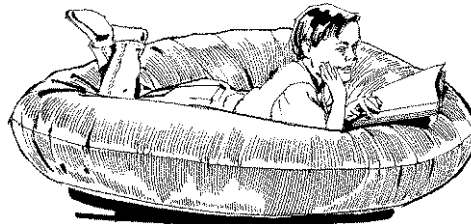
**What about these people make you think they feel good about themselves?**



**What are they doing?**



**Do they look happy?**

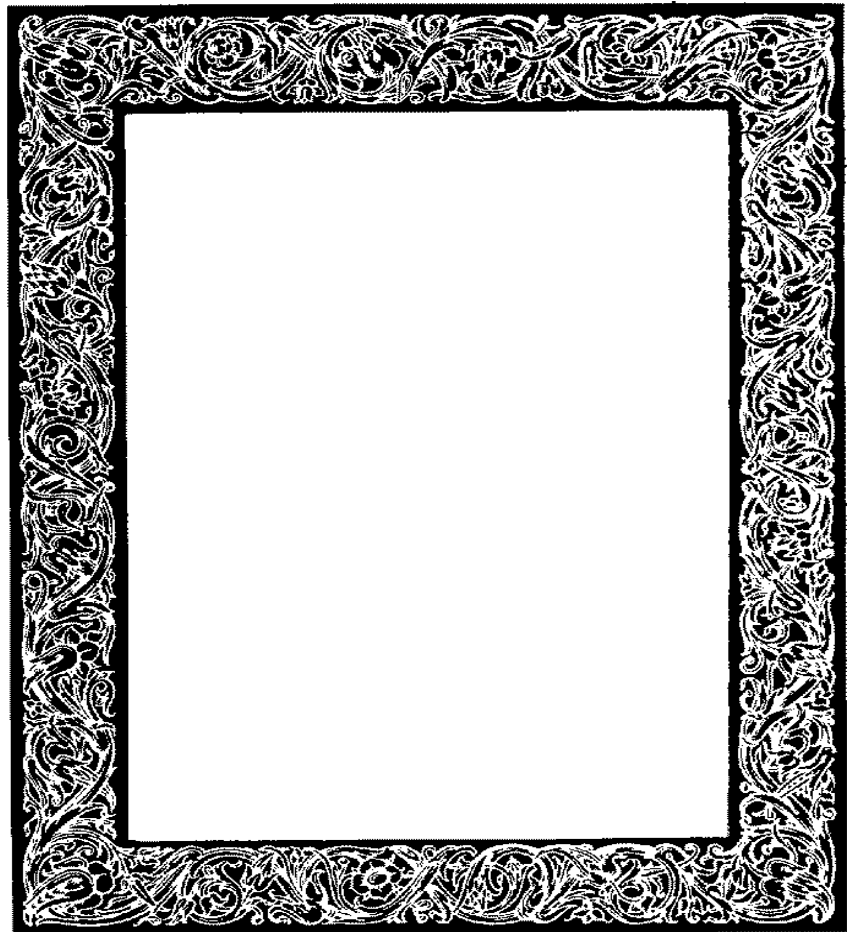


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## MY FAVORITE PERSON

Have each child draw a picture of what they would like to be when they grow up.



**When finished have each child tell:**



**WHO IS THIS PERSON?**

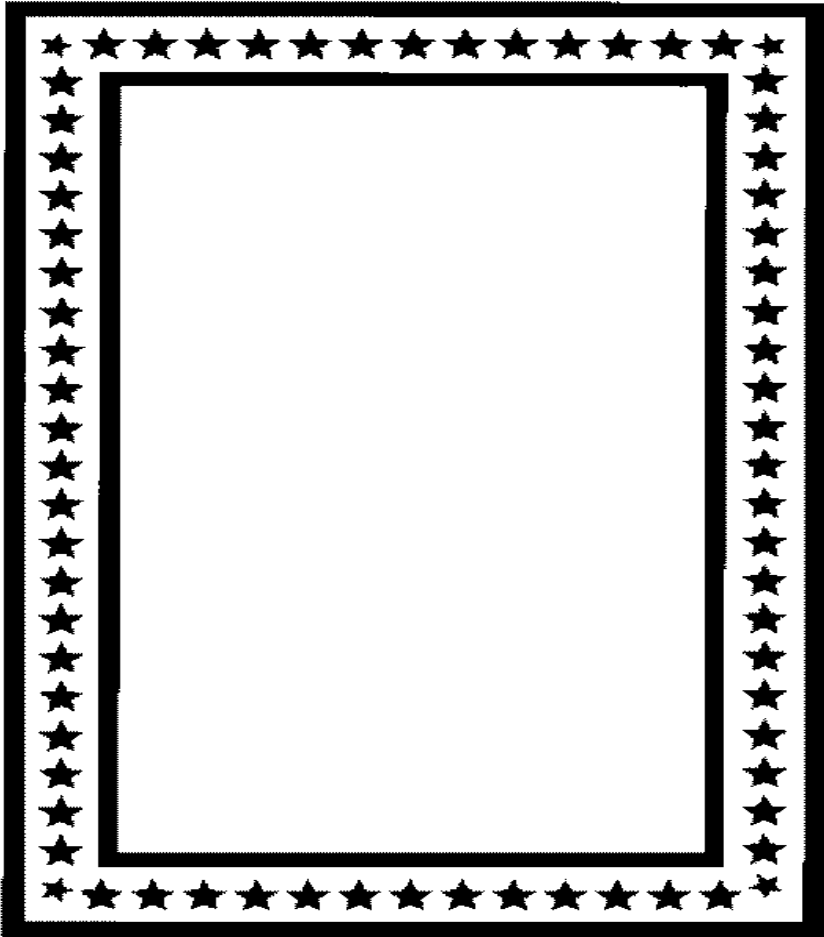
**WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS PERSON?**

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## HELPING OTHERS

Have the children draw a picture of themselves helping someone.



Have the children share their pictures with everyone and tell:

♥ Who are you helping?

♥ How did you feel?