

Dear Teachers, Welcome to **“Who I AM Makes A Difference Because Jesus Loves Me!”**

Who **I AM**...is a unique Catholic outreach that touches on faith formation, Religion curriculum, Positive Mental Health, Resiliency, and Spiritual Wellness. The goal of Who **I AM**... is to affirm with each of your students that they have a valid and valuable role in our community. They are our 21st century ‘schools’, our ‘church’ and our ‘family’. They are a precious child of God and from God.

The phrase Who **I AM** originated in a conversation between God and Moses...on a Mount...through a Burning Bush. The value of Who **I AM** has two meanings. The first meaning speaks to the importance of God as being the center of our life. I AM = value of God. The second meaning speaks to the priceless gift we are to self and to others. I AM = value of Me.

God makes a difference to us. Through His Son Jesus, unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness was offered to all. Who you are makes a difference to others because God blessed you with talents and gifts. The Who **I AM** project is a golden opportunity to express the combination of a Religion project with a Positive Mental Health and Wellness project.

Day 1 – a beautiful prayer service has been crafted specifically for this grade. It is the anchor to this Who **I AM**... mini-unit. The Old Testament focus will feature Exodus 3:14 while the New Testament highlights ‘I AM’ message from Jesus. From our scars He creates brilliant shining stars!

Day 2 – a mentor text will add a literary component to Who **I AM**... This selection of text is only to be used with this grade as the lesson is unique to the learning within. Day 3 and Day 4 will scaffold in Who **I AM** experience by building on the resiliency God has blessed upon us.

Day 5 – is referred as The Presentation / The Challenge. A template is attached to this lesson for you to write kind words of affirmation about each of your students. This is referred to as the ‘gift of words’. Use the words, **“Who you are makes a difference to all of us because... (humour, love, smile, joy). Thank you for being who you are!”** The entire class witnesses this presentation so classmates can appreciate each other’s uniqueness. Day 5 consolidates learning, knowledge, understanding of the value within God and self while recognizing healthy mental awareness and spiritual well-being.

DON’T FORGET – several days after the presentation, students complete a self-reflection ☺ The self-reflection is attached to the Day 5 lesson but use it at your convenience.

The Who **I AM**... CHALLENGE is based on the pay-it-forward movement. It involves each student receiving two ‘gift of word’ templates that they write a message on and present to two people in their life who make a difference to who they are. It could be a friend, coach, or priest. Allow a few days for students to outreach. This action acknowledges the connectedness and interconnectedness of relationships. The ripple of gratitude becomes a tsunami of unconditional love. Student reflections have stated “gratitude becomes contagious.”

Teachers are angels who walk among us...thank you for being who you are!