

## Plan on a Page

### Lesson 1: Exploring Identity and Belonging through Poetry

#### Guiding Questions

- Where does our desire to belong in a group come from?
  - What are some of the trade-offs between fitting in and standing out?
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#### Activities

##### Activity 1: Reflect in Journals

- Tell students that they are starting a short unit called “From Fitting in to Belonging.” They will be reading, discussing, and writing about a wide range of texts that help them deepen their thinking about how they would answer the unit’s essential questions: *What are the forces that can shape belonging? How can we reduce barriers to belonging for ourselves and others?*
- Project the image **Flower or Weed** and have students respond to the following question in their journals: *Given the choice, would you rather be a flower or a weed? What are the pros and cons of each option?*
- Then have students share their ideas with a partner and then invite one student for each option, flower and weed, to share with the class.

##### Activity 2: Read and Prepare a Choral Reading of a Poem

- Pass out copies of the reading **Identity** by poet Julio Noboa Polanco. Read the poem out loud. If time allows, read it aloud a second time.
- Have students read the poem again to themselves and then do a quick **journal** reflection in response to the following questions:
  - How does the poem make you feel?
  - What does the poem remind you of?
- Move students into groups of 3-4 to discuss the connection questions that appear

below the poem.

- Explain to students that they will prepare a choral reading of the poem. Read the instructions on their handouts as a class.
- Bring the class together and ask if there are any groups that would like to volunteer to perform their choral reading. Then discuss the following questions:
  - In what ways does the poem explore the concept of belonging and the trade-offs between fitting in and standing out?
  - Do you agree or disagree with the speaker's attitude toward the flower and weed in the poem? What makes you say that?

### **Activity 3: Reflect on New Understandings**

- Have students respond to the following prompt in their journals or on an **exit ticket** if you'd like to check for understanding:
  - Review the journal response that you wrote at the beginning of the lesson. How has reading and discussing "Identity" by Julio Noboa Polanco changed, challenged, or confirmed your decision to be a flower or a weed? What makes you say that?