

# Ycteen

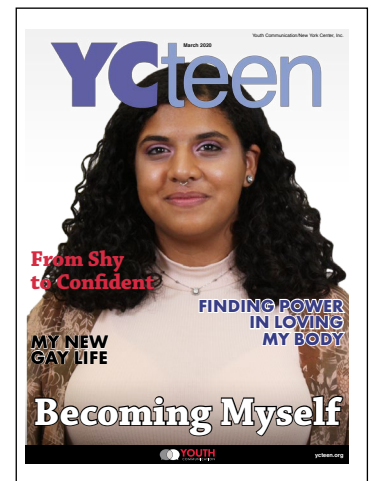
March 2020

## LESSON GUIDE

Dear Educators and Counselors,

The new semester and a new decade start with an issue on identity. Whether it's about body image, cultural identity, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs, our teen writers are covering it. In this edition, you'll also find stories on dealing with responsibility, living with depression, or adjusting to a new life and new expectations.

This guide contains lessons to help your students practice important literacy skills, deepen critical thinking skills, and talk with their peers about important issues. In "The Shape of Beauty," students read Daleelah's story of her journey to self-acceptance and reflect on their own self-perception. Claire's story of being caught between two identities and two worlds inspires a lesson on celebrating one's identity, even when you don't fit into other people's boxes of what you should be like. Finally, in "Resenting Responsibility," students read a story by L.V., who feels that having to take care of her baby sister is unfair. Instead of shirking these responsibilities, students are asked to analyze their feelings about them as a lesson on self-awareness.



In addition to these Lesson Guides, we offer periodic lessons and tip sheets for teachers. Last December, we sent out [a teacher-friendly guide for supporting homeless youth](#). These tips are easy-to-implement tools that will help any student experiencing homelessness feel safe and supported. Make sure to check your inbox for future lessons and tip sheets. Next up: a guide with lessons to use for Respect for All Week (February 10-14, 2020).

As always, let us know any success stories that come with using *Ycteen* in your classroom!

Sincerely,






**Janelle Greco & Tim Fredrick**

Co-Directors of Education

[jgreco@youthcomm.org](mailto:jgreco@youthcomm.org)

[tfredrick@youthcomm.org](mailto:tfredrick@youthcomm.org)

# Summary of Lessons

LESSON	STORY	SUMMARY	ACTIVITIES	SUBJECTS
<p><b>The Shape of Beauty</b></p> 	<p>"Redefining Beauty for Myself" by Daleelah Saleh</p>	<p>Students will read about Daleelah's journey of self-acceptance and reflect on their own.</p>	<p>Freewrite and Pair Share; Letting Go, Holding On</p>	<p>ELA; Media Studies</p>
<p><b>Identity Mash-Up</b></p> 	<p>"Taking the Best of Both Worlds" by Claire Shin</p>	<p>Claire's story of being caught between identities serves as a model for students to celebrate themselves.</p>	<p>Concentric Circles; Questioning Carousel</p>	<p>ELA; Social Studies</p>
<p><b>Resenting Responsibility</b></p> 	<p>"I Was a Second Mother to My Baby Sister" by L.V.</p>	<p>Students consider what emotions are brought up by all kinds of responsibilities—especially those they don't like.</p>	<p>Toss One, Take One; Learning from Our Responsibilities</p>	<p>ELA; Health</p>

# The Shape of Beauty

## **SEL FOCUS:** SELF-AWARENESS

**Story Title:** "Redefining Beauty for Myself" by Daleelah Saleh

**Story Summary:** Daleelah is already self-conscious about her weight when a switch in schools and her parents' divorce leave her focusing on it more than ever. She turns to extreme dieting and workouts until she realizes that there's more than meets the eye when it comes to what influences her body image. She soon turns to self-love and acceptance and sees this as a revolutionary act in the face of a society that tries to tell us what we should look like.

### **Learning Objectives**

**Youth will build their SEL by:**

- Reflecting on their sense of self-acceptance
- Increasing empathy for other youths' experiences

**Youth will increase their literacy by:**

- Making meaning of text through group read-aloud and discussion

### **Important Vocabulary**

- fixate
- amplified
- imperialism
- internalize
- whitewashed
- capitalism
- perpetuated

### **Materials**

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #270 for each student
- Scrap paper, pencils, and large waste basket, box, or bin
- Journals or notebook paper and pencils
- Chart paper and markers

### **Preparation**

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Write Freewrite quote (**in bold**) on the chart paper.
- Create a model for "Letting Go, Holding On."

## GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: The Shape of Beauty

- **Opening Activity: Freewrite and Pair Share**
- **Read and Discuss: "Redefining Beauty for Myself" by Daleelah Saleh**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Letting Go, Holding On**
- **Closing Circle**

## OPENING ACTIVITY — FREEWRITE AND PAIR SHARE

(8 minutes)

**This activity helps students activate background knowledge.**

1. After reviewing the agenda, tell the class that they are going to do a freewrite that helps them make personal connections to the story they're going to read. Remind students that this is a chance to express their thoughts and feelings without stopping or worrying about spelling and grammar. The expectation is that everyone writes for the full time.
2. Pass out journals or notebook paper and pencils.
3. Read aloud the following prompt from the chart paper you prepared:
  - **Media, such as advertisements, commercials, and magazines, can oftentimes give us messages about ourselves (both good and bad). Think of a recent piece of media that gave you a message about yourself. Describe the media if you can. What was the message? How did it make you feel?**
4. Give students three minutes to respond to this prompt (They can have the option of writing lists and/or drawing. This supports diverse learners.)
5. When three minutes are up, ask students to finish their last thought and put their pencils down.
6. Explain to the class that they are now going to do a Pair Share. (Remember: Even in a Pair Share, students have control over how much they share from their writing.)

7. Ask students to turn to the person next to them and take turns sharing parts of their responses that they feel comfortable sharing.
8. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. You can use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
9. Thank students for sharing.

### **READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY** (20 minutes)

**By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.**

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 3 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
  - What's standing out to you about the story?
  - What advice would you give the writer if you were her friend?
  - What changes for the writer and why?
4. Thank the group for reading and sharing.

## **EXPLORE THE IDEAS — LETTING GO, HOLDING ON**

(12 minutes)

**During this post-reading activity, students make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.**

1. Introduce the next activity by explaining to the class:
  - “Now that we’ve read Daleelah’s story, we’re going to do an activity where we practice letting go of negative thoughts and holding on to positive ones.”
2. Using a piece of drawing paper, model for the class how to fold the page in half and then open it back up.
3. Next, model for them how to label one half of the paper “Letting Go” and the other half “Holding On.”
4. Ask students to consider negative messages about themselves that they’ve gotten from media, including commercials, advertisements, movies, music, etc. that they would want to let go of.
5. Next, ask them to consider the positive messages they get about themselves from family members, friends, teachers, classmates, etc... that they would want to hold on to.
6. Explain that on each half of the paper, group members should list as many things as they can.
7. Pass out drawing paper and pencils. Have everyone fold their paper and label it using their teacher’s as a model.
8. Give the class some silent think time, and then tell them to begin writing. Move around the room offering support and encouragement.
9. After about five minutes, tell students to rip the page in half, separating the two sides.
10. To symbolize “letting go,” have students crumple up that half and toss it into a basket in the middle of the circle.
11. Next, ask students to look at their “holding on” list and share some of the items from their list with the person next to them. Have them take turns sharing their responses.

12. Each member of the pair should take about a minute to share. Use a timer or wait until the hum of conversation dies down before closing the activity.
13. Thank students for participating, supporting, and sharing.

### **CLOSING CIRCLE** (5 minutes)

**In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.**

Guide students in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in Daleelah's story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "One positive message I could tell myself is..."

#### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

**Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:**

- The November/December 2018 issue of *YCteen* featured a [three-day lesson](#) (starting on page 8 of the document linked) using three stories about beauty. This is a great way to explore the topic more deeply.
- Bring in magazines or have students do an internet search for different beauty advertisements. Have them print or cut out the advertisements and create a collage. They then write an analysis of the messages that these advertisements portray. Students can also create their own advertisement that provides a positive message.
- On a piece of chart paper, have students write down positive self-affirmations. At the beginning of each class, pick a student to read several of the affirmations out loud.

# Identity Mash-Up

## SEL FOCUS: SOCIAL AWARENESS

**Story Title:** "Taking the Best of Both Worlds" by Claire Shin

**Story Summary:** Mocked by her family for not being able to properly hold chopsticks and teased by her friends for her heavy American accent, Claire doesn't feel "Korean enough." A friend helps Claire see she isn't alone and Claire finds comfort in the many cultures that surround her in New York City.

### Learning Objectives

Youth will build their SEL by:

- Reflecting on their sense of identity and culture
- Increasing empathy for other youths' experiences

Youth will increase their literacy by:

- Making meaning of text through group read-aloud and discussion

### Important Vocabulary

- authoritative
- jeered
- patronizing
- heritage

### Materials

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #270 for each student
- Journals or notebook paper and pencils
- Chart paper and markers

### Preparation

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Create an open space in the room for the Concentric Circle activity.
- Write up steps for Concentric Circles activity (**in bold**) on chart paper (optional).
- For the Explore the Ideas Activity, write each question (**in bold**) on a separate piece of chart paper and post them around the room.



## GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: Identity Mash-Up

- **Opening Activity: Concentric Circles**
- **Read and Discuss: "Taking the Best of Both Worlds" by Claire Shin**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Questioning Carousel**
- **Closing Circle**

## OPENING ACTIVITY — CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

(8 minutes)

**This activity helps students activate background knowledge.**

1. After reviewing the agenda, tell the students that they are going to do an activity during which they will share their opinions with others.
2. While the students are still seated, read aloud the activity procedure that you wrote on chart paper:
  - **You will form two standing circles, one inside the other.**
  - **Each person will be facing a partner.**
  - **I will read questions aloud and everyone will have a chance to respond while their partner listens.**
3. Divide students into two equal groups. One way to do this is to have students count off by twos. (If you don't have two equal groups, you can join one.)
4. Have the 1s stand and move into the open space you cleared and form a circle facing outward.
5. Have the 2s stand and form a second circle around the first one, facing inward.
6. Then explain to the students that the person they're facing will be their first partner.

7. Review the specific steps of the activity with the students (you may wish to write these steps on chart paper for students' reference):
  - **You will take turns responding to a question that I ask.**
  - **When one person speaks, the other listens.**
  - **When I say "Switch," the speaker and the listener switch roles.**
  - **When time is up, I will ask one circle to rotate and everyone will have a new partner.**
8. Have partners greet each other by shaking hands and saying "Hello."
9. Ask the students:
  - "What is one way you celebrate your identity?"
10. After both partners have answered the question, ask the inside circle to move two spaces to the right while the outside circle stands still. When new pairs form, have students greet their new partner.
11. Time permitting, repeat the process using these prompts:
  - "What is one thing you really like about yourself?"
  - "What is one strength you see in others that you admire?"
  - "Describe a time when you've felt out of place."
12. Have everyone return to their seats and thank group members for sharing.

## **READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY** (20 minutes)

**By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.**

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 8 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
  - What's standing out to you about the story?
  - What advice would you give the writer if you were her friend?
  - What helps the writer feel more comfortable by the end of the story?
4. Thank the group for reading and sharing.

## **EXPLORE THE IDEAS — QUESTIONING CAROUSEL**

(12 minutes)

**During this post-reading activity, students make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.**

1. Introduce the next activity by explaining to the class:
  - "Now that we've read Claire's story, we're going to do an activity where we move around the room and share our thoughts about the story."
2. While the class is still seated, review the directions. Tell them:
  - "I have posted four posters around the room, each with a question on it."
  - "Spend three minutes at each poster in small groups, discussing and writing down your responses to each question."
  - "When I call time, rotate one poster clockwise with your group. At your new poster, read what has been written."
  - "Add ideas and comment on what's already there with new

thoughts or questions. Feel free to get creative.”

- “Wait for more instructions when you have completed a full lap and have returned to your first poster.”
3. Read the signs in each corner aloud, checking for understanding about each question:
    - **How is Claire’s identity not valued by her family?**
    - **How does it make Claire feel that her identity is not valued?**
    - **What could Claire’s family and friends change to value her identity?**
    - **What changes for Claire and how is she able to value her own identity by the end of the story?**
  4. Divide the class into four groups by having them count off 1-4, directing each number to start at a separate poster.
  5. Hand out one or two markers per group. Then tell them to begin answering the question at their poster while you keep track of time.
  6. While the small groups write and discuss, move around the room to listen and support them.
  7. In three minutes, or when the hum of conversation dies down, regain everyone’s attention and tell all groups to rotate one spot clockwise.
  8. Repeat steps 6 and 7 until the groups have traveled to all posters
  9. When groups are at their first poster again, regain their attention. Tell them:
    - “Read over the comments written at this poster. Circle or underline two or three responses that stand out.”
  10. After groups have chosen their favorite responses, ask one student from each poster to share what they chose and why.
  11. Time permitting, have students share a few highlights from their discussions with the whole class. They can share points of agreement or disagreements, new ideas, or questions.
  12. Have students return to their seats and thank them for sharing.

## **CLOSING CIRCLE** (5 minutes)

**In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.**

Guide students in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in Claire's story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "One way I celebrate my identity is by.."

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

**Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:**

- Claire's experience is common among YCteen writers. "[Finding Friends Who Accept Me](#)" by Anonymous is a good example. Search [YCteen.org](http://YCteen.org) for other great stories on this topic.
- Have students create an identity board that represents different aspects of their identities with drawings, magazine cut-outs, etc. They can present these or display them in the classroom.

# Resenting Responsibility

## **SEL FOCUS:** RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

**Story Title:** "I Was a Second Mother to My Baby Sister" by L.V.

**Story Summary:** Because her parents are busy working or going to class, L.V. frequently has to take care of her baby sister, which is frustrating. In response, L.V. behaves in unproductive ways—skipping school and smoking marijuana. She eventually realizes that she has to be a better role model for her younger siblings and approaches her responsibilities with a different outlook.

### **Learning Objectives**

**Youth will build their SEL by:**

- Identifying responsibilities and emotions
- Discussing the impact responsibilities have on emotions
- Making a plan on dealing with frustrating responsibilities

**Youth will increase their literacy by:**

- Reading aloud and discussing a teen-written story
- Writing informally and for the purpose of reflection

### **Important Vocabulary**

- fussing
- acrylic
- extracurricular
- quinceañera

### **Materials**

- One copy of *YCteen* Issue #270 for each student
- Scrap paper, pencils, and a large waste basket, box, or bin
- Blank paper, one sheet for each student

### **Preparation**

- Read the story ahead of time.
- Prepare and post the session agenda.
- Write the Toss One, Take One prompt (**in bold**) on chart paper.

## GETTING STARTED

Review the agenda (posted):

Agenda: Resenting Responsibility

- **Opening Activity: Toss One, Take One**
- **Read and Discuss: "I Was a Second Mother to My Baby Sister" by L.V.**
- **Explore the Ideas Activity: Learning from Our Responsibilities**
- **Closing Circle**

## OPENING ACTIVITY — TOSS ONE, TAKE ONE

(8 minutes)

**This activity helps students activate background knowledge.**

1. Welcome students to the class. Tell them that before reading a story, you are going to do an activity that allows you to do some anonymous writing on a topic related to a story you'll be reading together.
2. Introduce the Toss One, Take One activity by explaining they are going to do an activity that gathers everyone's ideas and allows them to hear multiple perspectives.
3. Pass out pieces of scrap paper and pencils. Tell students not to write their name on their paper. This is an anonymous activity.
4. Ask students to write a response on their paper to this question:
  - **Responsibility is....**
5. Give students three minutes to think and then write their responses. If some students are struggling, ask them to write about why they find it difficult to answer the prompts.
6. Write your own responses to the prompts to model the activity.
7. After students have written their responses, tell them to crumple them into balls and toss them into the middle of the circle, or a container you have available.

8. Model for the group how you expect them to crumple and toss their responses into the center of the circle.
9. After everyone has tossed, each student should retrieve an anonymous response and return to their seats. As an alternative, walk around the circle with the responses and have each student blindly pick a paper ball. (If a student happens to choose their own response, it's okay because no one will know.)
10. Go around in a circle or ask for volunteers to read aloud the response from the paper.
11. Invite students to comment on what they heard, such as similarities, differences, or personal connections to their peers' responses.
12. Thank students for sharing.

### **READ AND DISCUSS THE STORY** (20 minutes)

**By practicing active reading strategies while reading aloud, students build comprehension and develop fluency.**

1. Introduce the story (see the story summary on p. 14 of this lesson guide).
2. Share the expectations for a group read-aloud: volunteers take turns reading aloud as much or as little as they would like. As the teacher, you may stop periodically to ask students to share their responses to the story.
3. While sitting in a circle, read the story aloud together. Consider asking these open-ended questions during or after the read aloud:
  - What's standing out to you about the story?
  - What advice would you give the writer if you were her friend?
  - What connections do you make with L.V.'s feelings about the responsibility of taking care of her little sister?
4. Thank the group for reading and sharing.



## **EXPLORE THE IDEAS — LEARNING FROM OUR RESPONSIBILITIES** (12 minutes)

**During this post-reading activity, students make connections, build understanding, and rehearse positive behaviors.**

1. Introduce the activity by telling students:
  - "L.V. felt frustrated by the responsibility of taking care of her sister. Often, we can't get out of certain responsibilities that frustrate us, but we can and should acknowledge the frustration and learn from it."
2. Pass out blank sheets of paper. Demonstrate how to fold the paper into thirds in landscape orientation (i.e., long side of the page on top and bottom).
3. After all the students have folded their papers into three columns, have them write "Responsibility" on the top of the first column, "Feelings" on the second, and "What I Learned" on the third.
4. Say to the group:
  - "L.V. was responsible for taking care of her baby sister. She felt resentful of this responsibility. From this experience, she learned that she should be a good role model for her younger siblings and she should talk to her mother about her feelings."
5. Tell the group to think of a responsibility they have in their lives. They should write this in the first column. Give them a few minutes to think of a responsibility and write it down.
6. Next, ask the class to think about how they feel about this responsibility and write that in the second column. Give them a few minutes for this.
7. Last, tell the students to think about what they have learned or could learn about themselves from this responsibility. Give them a few minutes for this. Circulate around the room to offer support and guidance. Students may struggle to think about what they are learning from a difficult responsibility.

8. If there is time remaining, have student volunteers share what they wrote.
9. Thank students for being thoughtful members of the class and working to make connections to the story, reflect on their own lives, and share with one another.

### **CLOSING CIRCLE** (5 minutes)

**In Closing Circle, students make personal connections to the story and share their take-aways with each other.**

Guide students in a go-round share of responses to these prompts:

1. "What stood out for you in L.V.'s story and our activities today?"
2. Finish this sentence: "When I feel frustrated by a responsibility, I will tell myself..."

#### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

**Were your students interested in this lesson? Here are some ways to extend the learning:**

- For further reading on how children of immigrants balance parental expectations and freedom, read [Jessica Jiang's "Working in My Parents' Chinese Restaurant"](#). Jessica's story comes with [a lesson plan](#) on managing mixed emotions.
- Adolescents can learn the useful skills of compromise and negotiation as a way to handle challenging responsibilities. ThoughtCo.com has [a role play-based lesson plan](#) to help your students practice these skills.