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# Before You Were You

## Classroom Guide

*You were wished for, waited for, and wildly celebrated before you even arrived*

**CASEL Competency:** Self-Awareness

**Grade Level:** Pre-K–1

**Duration:** 35–45 minutes

**Category:** Seasonal

## Learning Objectives

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- Understand that they were wanted and anticipated before birth
  - Learn that a mother's (or parent's) love begins before a child even arrives
  - Discover that they are part of a story that started before them
  - Practice gratitude for the people who prepared for their arrival
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## Overview & Preparation

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### Key Vocabulary

Before • Wish • Wait • Prepare • Love • Dream • Arrive • Welcome • Nurture • Celebrate

### Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Baby photos (ask in advance)
- Paper and crayons
- Heart stickers
- Optional: baby items for show-and-tell

## Before Reading

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### Connection Question

*What do you think the people who love you did BEFORE you were born? What do you think they felt?*

### Background Building

Before you were you — before you had a name, before you took your first breath, before anyone saw your face — you were already LOVED. In this story, a mother dreams about the child growing inside her: who will they be? What will they love? She talks to the belly, sings to it, prepares a space. And when the baby finally arrives, the first moment of meeting is pure magic.

## During Reading — Pause Points

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- **When the mother talks to the baby before it's born** — The mother is talking to someone she hasn't met yet! Why would she do that? What do you think she said?
- **When the nursery is being prepared** — They're making a special place just for YOU. What does it feel like to know someone prepared a room for you before you even arrived?
- **When the baby and mother meet for the first time** — The very first moment! Everything they dreamed about is finally real. What do you think that moment felt like?

## Discussion Questions

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1. The mother loved the baby BEFORE it arrived. How can you love someone you haven't met yet?  
↳ Is love something that starts at a certain moment, or does it grow over time?
2. The parents prepared a space, chose a name, dreamed about the future. Why is preparing for someone special a way of showing love?  
↳ Have you ever prepared something special for someone you were excited to see?
3. The first meeting was the moment all the waiting was for. What makes something you waited for feel extra special?  
↳ How is waiting connected to love?
4. YOU were wished for, waited for, and celebrated. How does knowing that feel?  
↳ What do you want to tell the people who were so excited for you to arrive?

## Facilitation Tips

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Be sensitive to diverse family structures: adoptive parents, single parents, grandparent caregivers, foster families. ALL children were wanted by SOMEONE. Use inclusive language: "the people who waited for you" rather than only "mother."

## Emotional Payoff

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*The child discovers they are not an accident or an afterthought — they were wished for, waited for, and wildly celebrated before they even took their first breath. That knowledge becomes a foundation of belonging: I was wanted. I am wanted. I belong here.*

## After Reading Activities

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### Before-You-Were-You Interview

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Interview cards

Practice questions for home: "What did you do to get ready for me?" "What did you dream I'd be like?" "What was the first thing you said when you saw me?" Practice in pairs, then take questions home for a real interview.

### Welcome Drawing

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Paper, crayons, heart stickers

Draw the moment someone first saw you — or imagine it. What does their face look like? What are they feeling? Add heart stickers to show the love. Share: "The first time they saw me, they felt \_\_\_\_\_."

### I Was Wished For Card

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Card stock, markers, stickers

Create a card that says "Before I was me, someone wished for me." Decorate with love symbols. This is a keepsake for the child — a tangible reminder of their wanted-ness.

## Writing Prompts

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- Draw what you imagine your family did the day before you were born. What were they doing? How were they feeling?
- Write a thank-you letter to the person who waited for you. What do you want them to know?
- If you could talk to yourself as a baby, what would you say? What would you promise?

## Home Connection

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### Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "Before You Were You," about the love, dreams, and preparation that happened before your child arrived. Your child is bringing home interview questions — please share what you remember about waiting for them. These stories build their sense of belonging and self-worth.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Answer your child's interview questions about before they were born
- Show baby photos and tell the stories behind them
- Tell your child: "Before you were you, we wished for you every day."

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

### Related Books

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- On the Night You Were Born by Nancy Tillman
- Guess How Much I Love You by Sam McBratney
- Welcome Song for Baby by Richard Van Camp
- The Wonderful Things You Will Be by Emily Winfield Martin