
My Very Own Way

Classroom Guide

The path nobody else takes might be the one that was always yours

CASEL Competency: Self-Awareness

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 35–45 minutes

Category: Growing Up

Learning Objectives

- Recognize that doing things differently is not doing things wrong
 - Discover personal strengths by stepping off the expected path
 - Understand that originality requires courage
 - Practice celebrating what makes each person unique
-

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Unique • Original • Path • Different • Courage • Create • Rhythm • Style • Confidence • Belong

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Paper and art supplies
- Playdough or clay
- Music (various tempos)
- Optional: variety of textures and materials

Before Reading

Connection Question

Is there something you do differently from everyone else? How does that feel?

Background Building

Sometimes everyone does things ONE way — and when you try to follow, something feels off. Not wrong, just... not YOU. In this story, the hero tries to do things the way everyone else does, but it doesn't feel right. When they finally step off the expected path and try their OWN way, something amazing happens: it works. Not just works — it's BETTER, because it's authentically theirs.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero tries to follow everyone else's way and it feels wrong** — The hero is trying so hard to fit in, but something doesn't feel right. Have you ever tried to do something "the normal way" and it just didn't click?
- **When the hero steps off the path and tries their own approach** — That took courage! The hero stopped following and tried something new. How does being different feel — scary? exciting? both?
- **When others notice and admire the hero's unique way** — People are noticing! The hero's way is not just different — it's wonderful. Why is originality something to admire?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero tried to follow everyone else and it felt wrong. Why doesn't "the same way" work for everyone?

↳ Think about how you hold a crayon, or how you like to sit, or how you solve a puzzle — is it the same as your neighbor?

2. Stepping off the path took courage. What was the hero afraid of?

↳ What's scary about being different? What's exciting about it?

3. When others saw the hero's unique way, they admired it. Why do we sometimes admire things that are different?

↳ What's something unique about someone in our class that you think is cool?

4. The story says "the path nobody else takes might be the one that was always yours." What does YOUR path look like?

↳ Is your path always the same, or can it change?

Facilitation Tips

This lesson works best when you model vulnerability. Share your own "different way" of doing something. Children need to see that adults also struggle with conformity and find freedom in originality. Celebrate the weird, the unexpected, the uniquely personal.

Emotional Payoff

The hero discovers that the discomfort of not fitting in wasn't a flaw — it was a signal pointing toward their own path. Originality requires leaving the comfort of the crowd, and that's scary. But the hero's unique way turns out to be exactly what was needed. Different isn't deficient — it's distinctive.

After Reading Activities

Same Materials, Different Art

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Identical sets of 5 materials per child (paper, 3 crayons, 1 sticker)

Everyone gets the EXACT same materials. Make anything you want. Then compare: identical starting points, completely different results. Celebrate: THIS is what "my own way" looks like. No two are alike.

Walk Your Own Way

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Open space, music

Play music and have everyone walk the same way (march!). Then stop the music and say: "Now walk YOUR way." Skip, twirl, moonwalk, tiptoe, hop. See how many unique walks emerge. Discuss: which felt more like YOU?

My Unique Fingerprint

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Ink pad, paper, magnifying glass

Make fingerprints and examine with magnifying glasses. No two are the same — ever. "You are literally one of a kind, down to your fingertips." Decorate your fingerprint into a character that represents you.

Writing Prompts

- Draw your path. It doesn't have to be straight! What does it look like? Where does it go?
- Write about something you do YOUR way. Why does your way work for you?
- If everyone in the world was exactly the same, what would be missing?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "My Very Own Way," about a child who discovers that doing things differently isn't wrong — it's original. Your child learned that the discomfort of not fitting in can be a signal pointing toward their own unique path, and that originality takes courage.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Ask your child to teach YOU their way of doing something — tying shoes, drawing a cat, telling a joke
- Share something YOU do differently from most people and talk about why
- Celebrate a moment this week when your child does something their own way

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- Elmer by David McKee
- The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds
- Ish by Peter H. Reynolds
- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae