

# Character and Life Skills: Respect

## SEL Focus: Social Awareness

### Lesson Title: Say My Name — Silently!

#### Grade Level: 3-5



#### Project and Purpose

Students practice social awareness and use the American Sign Language alphabet and gestures to create an original sign for their own names.

#### Essential Question

How does learning sign language help us empathize with others?

#### Materials

- Slide/Chart with the core component social awareness
- Access to information about American Sign Language (Internet, books, or — if possible — someone who uses ASL to communicate)
- **ASL alphabet chart**

#### Introduction

- 1.** Post the definition of the core component of social awareness:  
The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.  
Discuss the idea of looking at things from another person's perspective.
- 2. Ask** students how Sarah looked at the world from Gema's perspective. What did she do to try to understand Gema's background and culture? How did she do this? How did she take advantage of resources and supports?
- 3. Discuss how** Sarah learned sign language to communicate with Gema and become her friend.
- 4. Explain** that in this lesson students will practice the American Sign Language alphabet and learn how to sign-spell their own names. Then they will use their imaginations to create an original sign for their names, a gesture that expresses something unique about themselves.

#### Direct Instruction (I do)

- 1.** Tell students that in the deaf community, people don't spell their friend's entire name each time they want to get their friend's attention or talk to them or about them. People create "name signs" that their friends recognize and use to communicate.

2. Demonstrate how to spell your own name using the ASL alphabet. You may need to practice this beforehand if you have never done this before. Say each letter as you sign.
3. Talk about things you like to do, unique qualities about your appearance, or something about your personality. Think of a move you can do with one hand for one or more of these characteristics. Consider the chart for examples:

Characteristic	Move/gesture that illustrates characteristic
I like to dance	Spin hand back and forth or do the disco point
I like to play basketball	Dribble and shoot an imaginary basketball
I have long hair	Start hand at top of head and pull it along the length of your hair
I have muscular arms	Hold up one arm to show off your muscles
I'm pretty much happy all the time	Run your hand along your mouth as if drawing a smile on your face — and put a smile on your face!
I'm always hungry	Rub your belly

4. Make the first letter of your name with one hand and make the gesture or move that illustrates one of your favorite characteristics (keep your hand in the letter position while doing the gesture). Ask students to mirror your name sign.

### Guided Exploration (We do)

1. Seat the group in a semi-circle and post or display the ASL alphabet where everyone can see. Use this as a reference. Demonstrate how to form each letter of the alphabet, having students say the letter as they form the letter with one hand. Go around the room to help students with their form.
2. Have students practice spelling their names in sign language.
3. When everyone feels confident in spelling their names, brainstorm lists of characteristics and gestures they might consider for creating their name signs.

### Independent Practice (You do)

1. Have students work alone or in pairs to create their name signs.
2. When ready, have students work with a partner to share their name sign and learn their partner's sign.
3. As time allows, ask students to move around the circle to learn as many name signs as possible.

### Conclusion

Gather back as a group and ask students to share one other person's name sign and explain the gesture/move. Have the entire group repeat the sign. Ask students how the class might use these name signs in the future. Then ask the essential question: How does learning sign language help us be more socially aware?

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### Activity: ASL Alphabet Chart

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