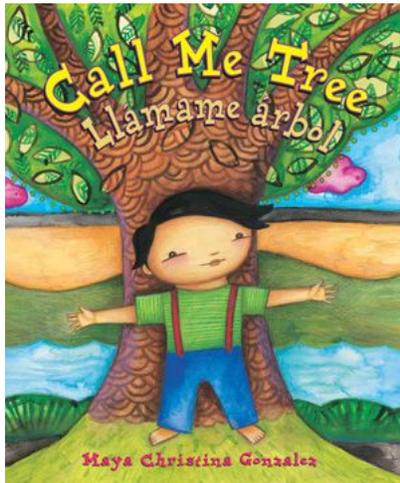


Grades 5-7

Self-Discovery / exploration

Time Frame: 1-2 weeks



For one young child, it all begins as a tiny seed that is free to grow and to reach out to others while standing strong and tall – just like a tree in the natural world.

In this spare, lyrically written story, we join a child on a journey of self-discovery. Finding a way to grow from the inside out, just like a tree, the child develops as an individual comfortable in the natural world and in relationships with others. The child begins “Within/ The deep dark earth,” like a seed, ready to grow and then dream and reach out to the world. Soon the child discovers birds and the sky and other children: “Trees and trees / Just like me!” Each is different too. The child embraces them all because “All trees have roots / All trees belong.”

Maya Christina Gonzalez once again combines her talents as an artist and a storyteller to craft a gentle, empowering story about belonging, connecting with nature, and becoming your fullest self. Young readers will be inspired to dream and reach, reach and dream . . . and to be as free and unique as trees.

<https://goo.gl/wvsKaG> - Gender Free Version

<https://goo.gl/i186Qf>

### **Curriculum Entry Point:**

1. Communication
  - a. I can understand and share information about a topic that is important to me
  - b. I communicate effectively in well-constructed forms that are effective in terms of my audience and purpose.
2. Creative Thinking
  - a. I deliberately learn a lot about something (e.g., by doing research, talking to others or practising) so that I am able to generate new ideas or ideas just pop into my head.
  - b. I can get new ideas in areas in which I have an interest and build my skills to make them work.

**\*Note:** This lesson would benefit from a symbolism lesson beforehand to help the students understand representation in general and for personal reasons. Lessons can be viewed from the following links:

<https://goo.gl/ZhDwBR>  
<https://goo.gl/shNMng>

<https://goo.gl/EC9n5q>

**Lesson Plan - theme of self discovery**

1. Read the book to the class.
  - a. Explore the images and how the main character is feeling.
  
2. Journaling
  - a. What type of tree do you see yourself as?
  - b. What does your tree look like?
  - c. What is hanging from your tree that would represent you?
    - i. Remember they should be items that symbolise who you are and what you're interested in.
  
3. Art Project
  - a. Introduce the next step, letting the students know that this is an art assignment, but will not count as an art mark (this alleviates the concern some students have around not being a good artist)
  - b. Students are to take their journal entry and turn it into an image
    - i. They are to create a tree in some form (options below) and hang things from it to show who they are in a symbolic way
      1. A soccer ball because they love to play soccer
      2. A light bulb because they always have good ideas
      3. A rainbow because they like to be inclusive / have friends who may identify as LGBTQ / identify themselves as LGBTQ
  - c. Give your students choice (if it's open ended, it will allow for more creativity and freedom of thought):

Draw Paint Pastels Pencil Crayons	Create Online - Grab pictures - Collage	Draw a life size image (outline of a student) - Arms / hands become the branches / leaves
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The above are suggestions, not limitations

4. Explore with the students (discuss as a class and one-on-one)
  - a. Where are your branches?
    - i. Up / down / twisty / broken / strong / thick / thin...
  - b. Where are the items hanging from?
    - i. Items on the top (because you show EVERYTHING of who you are
    - ii. Items in the middle because you only show / tell those things to others
    - iii. Items on the bottom because you like to keep those things to yourself

Before the next journal entry, the teacher should explore what an artist statement is, and why it is important.

**An Artist Statement:** A general introduction to your work, a body of work, or a specific project. It should open with the work's basic ideas in an overview of two or three sentences or a short paragraph. The second paragraph should go into detail about how these issues or ideas are presented in the work.

Worksheet: <https://goo.gl/2uRVFV>  
<https://goo.gl/YCjulN>

5. Journalling - follow-up

- a. Students will reflect on their original entry in comparison with their art project.
  - i. Did the tree come out as they expected?
  - ii. What changed from beginning to end?
  - iii. Are they pleased with the outcome?
- b. New entry
  - i. What is hanging from their tree?
  - ii. Why did they select those items
  - iii. What do they represent?
- c. Artist Statement

6. Final Activity

- a. Students will place their tree around the room.
- b. Teacher can set it up as a class presentation, gallery walk, or Q & A (as some suggestions), but should leave it optional for students to discuss their piece as to not put anyone on the spot if they are uncomfortable sharing.
- c. This can also be done one-on-one with the teacher, or expressed through the journal entry.

Further Resources:

King & King - <https://goo.gl/yLAtg>

Tango Makes Three - <https://goo.gl/ShWg4N>

My Princess Boy - <https://goo.gl/quCQxr>

Not Every Princess - <https://goo.gl/Thbkva>

I Am Jazz - <https://goo.gl/kE20TV>

Red: A Crayon's Story - <https://goo.gl/jMu6Os>