LENS Project
Me Poems

Ages All Ages, some writing required
LENS Skill Sense of Self
Why? Exploring my identity through poetry helps me express myself in a creative way and share my best self with others.
Materials Poem structure (either on individual pages for each person or one that is shared equally)
Paper
Writing utensils
Sample Me Poems (included after poem structure)

Summary
In this activity, participants will use a poem structure to explore and express their Sense of Self. The structure allows participants to combine creative writing with their own unique personality to create a piece of poetry to share.

Directions
1.) Establish Understanding
Take some time to discuss poetry and look up some examples such as the works of Shel Silverstein, Robert Frost, and Jacqueline Woodson.
  - What do we know about poetry?
  - What sorts of structures do poems follow?
  - What makes a strong poem?

2.) Poem Structure and Sample Poem
Look at the Me Poem structure and the sample poems. Note examples of word repetition (especially at the beginning of lines), adjectives, and descriptive language.

3.) Brainstorming
At the beginning of the poem structure there is a brainstorming section. Each person will complete this section on their own. This initial brainstorming will get each participant’s ideas flowing and generate some words and thoughts that can inspire you and/or be used in the poem.

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4.) Writing and Sharing
Begin writing! Have a copy of the poem structure for each participant, or leave time for each person to re-write the structure on their paper. Consider playing some music in the background during the writing process – but make sure having music playing is helpful to all writers!

Once everyone has completed their poems, encourage each person to share. Consider creating a stage space with a designated place for the poet to stand. Do you have a lamp you can point at the poet to give the impression of “stage lighting?” Make it a memorable performance moment!

Additional tips to ensure the sharing time is successful:
- Make sure each poet speaks loudly and clearly
- Audience members should be attentive and respectful toward the performer.

TIP: Poetry readings often use finger snaps at the end of each piece rather than hand clapping. Incorporate this or the appreciation method of your choice after each poet shares their work!

5.) Optional Extension
Each poet chooses 3 words or sentences that are the most meaningful from their own writing. They then create a tableau (frozen stage picture or pose) to accompany each word or sentence. Poets can perform these individually, or select another participant to show the tableau while the poet reads their work.

6.) Reflect
Discuss or write your thoughts about the following reflection questions.
- How does it feel to share your work with the group?
- How did you decide what to include in your poem?
- What sort of physical and vocal choices did you make to express your poem? How do those choices express your personal qualities?

Other ways to Play:
1. Consider doing this activity virtually with friends or family. Final poems can also be performed virtually.
2. Turn poems into a visual art project by looking for imagery (pictures that come to mind) in the poem and creating illustrations or drawings to accompany the writing.
“Me” Poem

Name:

Four words that describe me:

3 things/people I love:

3 feelings I feel a lot:

3 things I need or are important to me:

3 things I share with others:

3 things I am afraid of:

3 things I hope for:

3 things that make me unique/different/special:

Use these responses to fill in the blanks below. Try to fill up the space by describing your responses using colors, sounds or other descriptions.

My name is ______________ but you could call me ___________________

Remember me. I believe __________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

I am made of ________________________________________________

Remember me. I come from ________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

My people are known for ____________________________________________________________________________

Remember me.

Remember me me.
Sample 1:
My name is Ramon, but you could call me a little kid with a big heart.
I believe I am the best Mario Cart player ever.
I am made of green and red gummi bears, my grandma’s cookies and my best friend’s goofy laugh.
I come from grass instead of sidewalks, sharing my Gogurt with my baby sister and long walks with my dog.
My people are known for sleeping in on Sundays, skating where we aren’t supposed to and treating everyone with kindness.
Remember me.

Sample 2 (courtesy of HeArtWork Collective):
My name is Daemon but you could call me A Long way from Home
I believe in being my brother’s keeper, red light dance parties, and the power of poetry
I am made up of spontaneous laughter, Salt from the Caribbean Sea, and the trail of my mother’s tears.
I come from the rotten apple, from the echo chambers in my father’s heart, from a loneliness that can fill a room.
My people are known for the swing in their steps, the fire in their eyes and making the sun proud of getting to shine on us.
Remember me.