

The Tree That is Me: Exercise

Objective/Purpose

“The Me Tree” is a fun and creative way for students to explore their gifts and strengths. During this exercise, students are also given an opportunity to describe this representation of themselves to their fellow mentees.

Estimated Time

30 minutes

Materials Needed

- The Me Tree, Mentee Handout
- Me Tree Drawing
- Lead and Colored Pencils

Instructions:

1 Today, we are going to do a fun art exercise called “The Me Tree.” It will help you all to think about your strengths, gifts and talents. (Provide students with the two handouts.)

2 Each of you has two handouts—one of the tree, and one of the instructions to this exercise. The tree stands for *you*, and you will be drawing or writing things down on the tree that represent you.

3 As the handout says, you can change this exercise any way that you want, but it does provide suggestions. (Read instructions off of the handout, or ask a Mentee to read the instructions.)

4 Just like it says on the handout, you can draw a symbol for each thing or write words where, for example, the roots are.

5 You have about 12 minutes to work on your drawing. I will give you a three-minute warning before time is up. The mentors will be going around too, if anyone has any questions.

6 When we stop, we will move into smaller groups, and this will give you an opportunity to share what you each have drawn with other mentees. (Or if time permits, each can share their drawing with the larger group.)

Debrief:

- 1 (Decide whether they will share in the smaller or larger groups.)
- 2 (If they have shared in the smaller groups you can say...) How was that exercise for everyone? Was it fun making a tree that represents you?
- 3 (If they have shared in the smaller group, if there is time, you may choose to have them show their image to the larger group, and ask them to share one or two things about their drawing.)
- 4 (If you have time, you could give students an opportunity to make comments or ask questions about the tree of the student that is sharing. To keep things orderly, it best if they raise their hands to do so.)
- 5 (If this seems like a valid option, you can ask...) How many of you feel comfortable taking your "Me Tree" and showing it to your family, tonight? If you are okay with that, please do so. I think your family will be interested in what you did with this exercise.
- 6 Also, if you feel comfortable doing so, you could tape up this exercise in a special place at home where you could see it all the time. It would be especially interesting to look at this representation of yourself in a couple years; it's likely that you will see yourself differently, even in a short period of time.
- 6 Any questions or comments?

The Tree That is Me HANDOUT

This exercise is all about you—how you see yourself. You can also look at this handout for suggestions. Remember these are suggestions—so change this exercise in any way you wish.

- **ROOTS:** What are your “roots”? Just like a tree, people get their food and water from various places. This is not only just food and water, but how you keep your spirits up. What “feeds” your happiness? What makes you happy? It could be beliefs you have, interests, or activities (such as sports, artwork, school). It could also be friends and relatives, or even pets. You can see there are several roots. So what feeds or nourishes you and makes you happy? This can be more than one thing.
- **TRUNK:** What is your trunk? What is the biggest strength that you have in your life, the thing that keeps you going—moving forward? It could be one of the things that you put down on the roots, or something new.
- **BIG BRANCHES:** What are some of the major directions you have already gone, or the directions you might go in life—the roads you might take?
- **SMALL BRANCHES:** You can decide to use the small branches to represent anything else in your life. The branches could be:
 - some of the decisions you are faced with right now
 - they could represent friends that you have (or even family)
 - you can put down anything you want
 - you can just color them and make them look good—they don’t have to be anything
- **LEAVES:** Leaves dance around, especially when the wind is blowing. The leaves on your tree can represent “fun.” You could write down some of the things that you do to have fun—this could be dancing, singing, playing video games, hanging out with friends, watching TV, doing nothing, cooking—whatever you do to have fun.
- **FRUIT:** One could say that the fruit is the best part of the tree. Many trees produce something good for us to eat—apples, oranges, cherries, peaches, and so forth. What is the “fruit” of your life? This could be related to a goal that you want for yourself. If you want to become a teacher, for instance, part of the “fruit” could be helping children, and another part of it could be the money you make at your job. For others, it could be the ability to buy something, or to travel.

