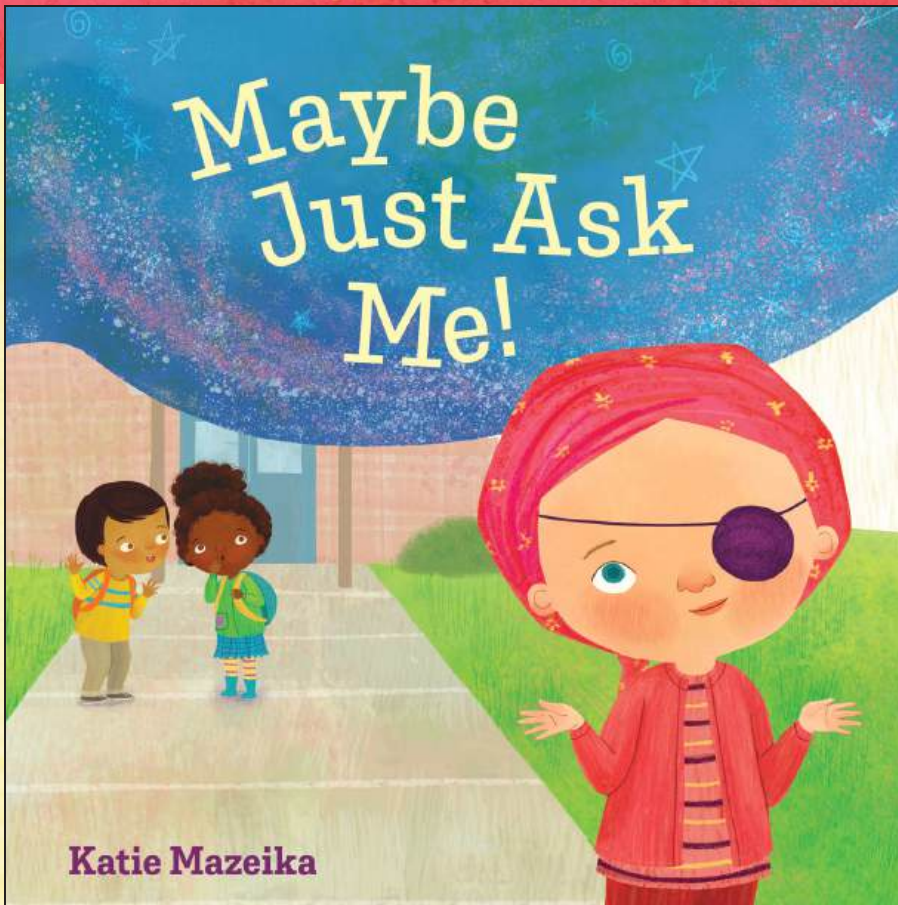


Curriculum Guide

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Maybe Just Ask Me!

BY
KATIE MAZEIKA

BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S OWN childhood experience, this funny and heartfelt picture

book follows a young girl who wants to bring discussion of her disability into the open.

Mazie wears an eyepatch and a head scarf, and on her first day at a new school she's prepared for her classmates to wonder why. And they do, but no one talks to her about it. Instead, wild rumors fly around the classroom that she's a pirate or that a dragon burned off her hair! Mazie doesn't mind explaining her disability, but can she find the courage to tell the other kids to just ask her?

"If you haven't guessed yet, Mazie is me!" begins a note at the end of the book from author Katie Mazeika explaining her own journey with childhood cancer. She also offers a personal list of things children and adults can do to be supportive of people with disabilities.

"The story encourages young readers to embrace differences, dispel assumptions, and foster open communication." —Booklist

"Offers significant social-emotional learning opportunities for younger readers." —School Library Journal

"A reminder that kids with disabilities are the authorities of their own stories."—Kirkus Reviews

Discussion Questions

- ✦ It's Mazie's first day at a new school. How did you feel on your first day of a new school year or in a new school for the first time?
- ✦ Describe how Mazie feels when she arrives at school and introduces herself to her new classmates.
- ✦ What happens to Mazie when she is outside collecting leaves with her classmates?
- ✦ How do Mazie's classmates react when they see that she does not have any hair? What ideas do they have about what might have happened to Mazie? What stories do they offer to explain why she wears an eye patch?
- ✦ Why don't Mazie's classmates ask what happened to her to cause these differences? How does being talked *about* instead of talked *to* make Mazie feel?
- ✦ Describe how Mazie shares the truth about her life with her classmates. If you were in the PE class with her, how might you have reacted to her story?
- ✦ Look closely at the illustration in the scene where Mazie tells her classmates the real story behind her eye patch and bald head. What is happening in the image with the dragon? Why do you think Mazie wears an eye patch and has no hair?
- ✦ What lessons do you think Mazie learns in this story? What lessons do you think her classmates learn from meeting Mazie? Compare and contrast these lessons.
- ✦ If you could give advice to Mazie on her first day at a new school, what would your advice be? How would you advise your classmates to encounter a new student with disabilities?
- ✦ Read "The Story Behind Mazie" aloud and discuss author Katie Mazeika's list of things to do to be supportive of people with disabilities. How does this book change how you might approach a disabled classmate or community member in the future?



The discussion questions and activities in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

Activities for Students



Mazie the Brave!

Instead of asking her directly, the kids in Mazie’s class come up with all kinds of wild stories to explain why Mazie wears an eye patch and has no hair: she’s a pirate, she lost her hair in a circus accident or when she was frightened by a shark, tiger, or space monster. Mazie lost her eye and her hair by battling a scary illness, so she is as daring as any circus girl, fiercer than any pirate, and brave enough to face tigers, sharks, and space monsters (if they even exist!). Draw a picture of courageous Mazie in one of these scenarios.

Introducing: Me!

None of your classmates are exactly like you. Everyone has their own likes/dislikes, background, and experiences. Create an “All About Me” poster that highlights what makes you the person that you are. Include photos, drawings, magazine pictures, and words to express and describe yourself. Create a gallery of “All About Me” posters in your classroom so everyone can get to know one another better.

I think...

In your opinion, what is the most important part of the story? Draw and write about your selected part of the book. Meet with a partner to compare and discuss your opinions.

All Are Welcome!

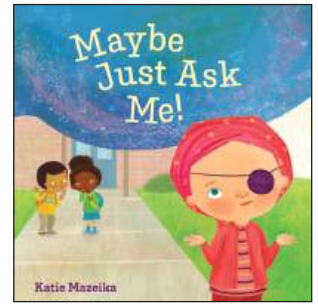
Become an ambassador at your school to welcome new students. Create a map of the school to show new students where important places on the campus are located. Add a list of names of people new students should know, such as the custodian, school secretary, the nurse, and the librarian. Include other information that would be helpful to you if you were new—perhaps the most popular games played at recess, any after-school clubs or activities to join, or favorite local playgrounds.



Name: _____

What Comes Next?

Draw four events from the story in the order in which they occurred in the book.



1

2

3

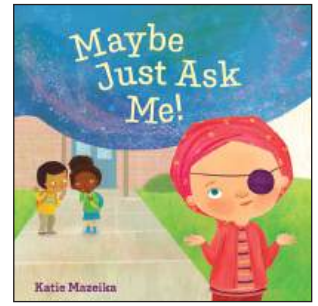
4

Now, write a few sentences about what happened in the story after the last picture that you drew.

Name: _____

Interview The Main Character

Imagine that you could meet with Mazie. What three questions might you ask her? What answers do you think she would give? Write a script of your imagined interview.



INTERVIEWER: _____

MAZIE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

MAZIE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

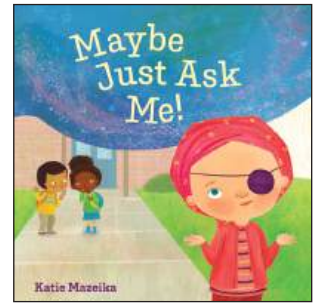
MAZIE: _____



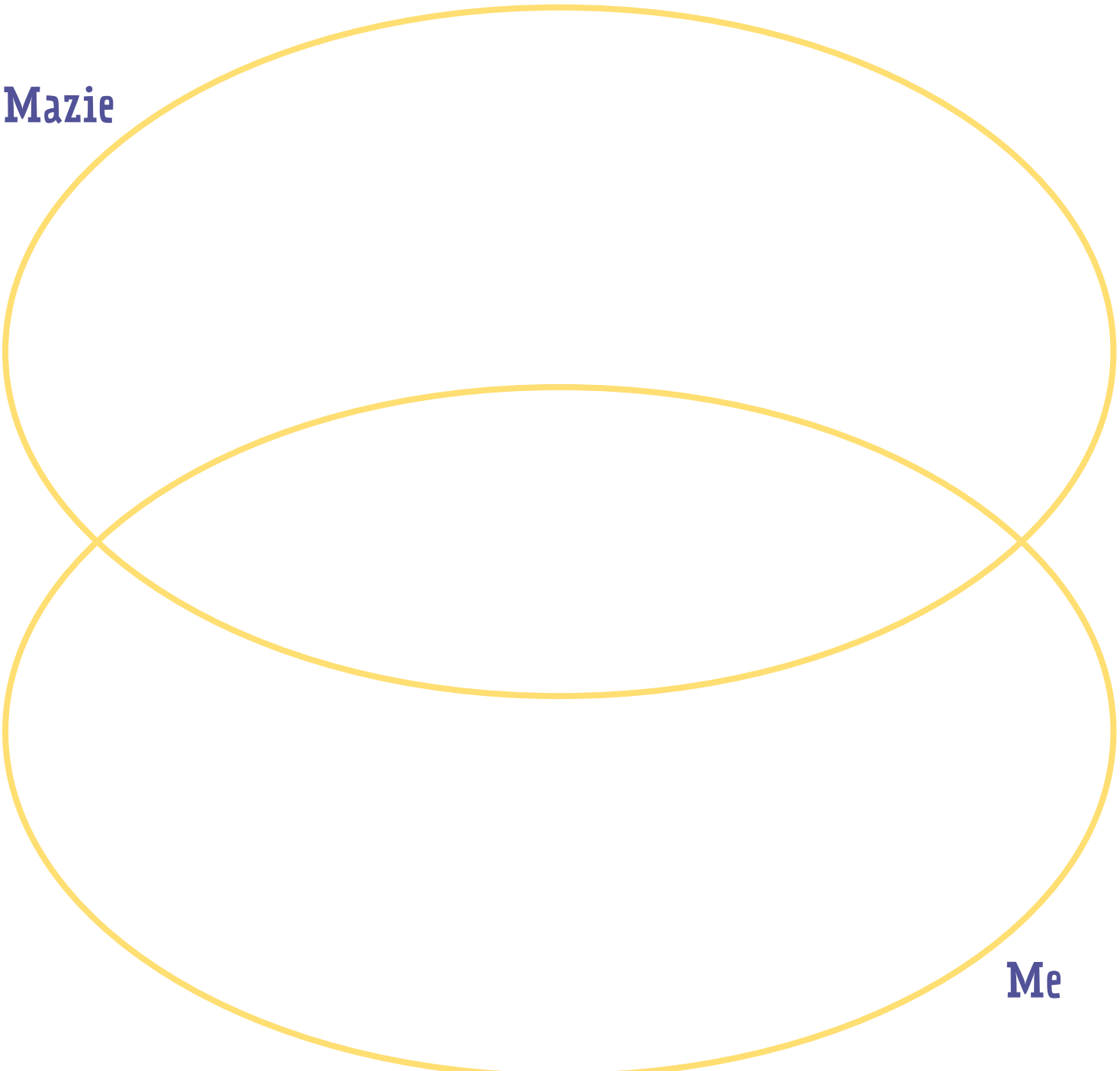
Name: _____

Comparing Mazie And You

Think of words to describe Mazie. Make a list on the back of this sheet. Do any of these words describe you too? Make a list of additional words that describe you. Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast Mazie and yourself. Fill in the overlapping part of the circles with words that describe both of you. In the separate parts of the circles, write words that just describe you or Mazie.



Mazie



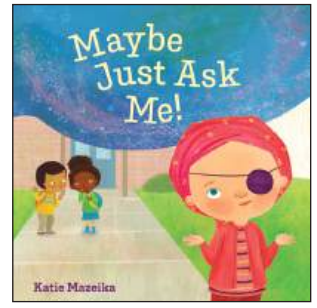
Me

Name: _____

Maybe Just Ask Me!

We all have things that make us different.

What kinds of things do you wish other people just asked about you?

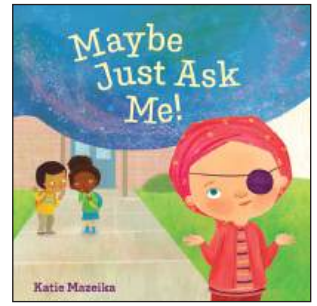




Name: _____

Draw Your Favorite Thing

Mazie is nervous on her first day at her new school. How will the kids react to her eye patch and bald head? Will she make new friends? But in art class, all her worries are temporarily forgotten when she gets to draw her favorite thing. Draw your favorite thing in the frame below!



What part of the school day helps you forget your worries?

Why?
