Key Questions: What colors are people’s skin? How do people get their skin coloring? (How did we get to be so beautiful??)

1. Introduce myself: Show a piece of writing: My name is Wendy Zagray Warren. I have skin the color of dried pine needles, multi-colored hair the color birch bark, and eyes the color of a loon’s egg.

2. Read All the Colors of the Earth. As we talk today, think about how you might describe the color or your own skin, eyes and hair?

3. Students should sit in a circle. Ask students to make a fist, and put our knuckles together in the middle of the circle. Is our skin all the same color? What colors do you see?

3. Hold up a white piece of paper. Ask if anyone’s skin is this color. Repeat with black, red and yellow. What strange labels people put on people’s skin! What are the colors really like?

All kinds of people live in the United States, right? People with all different beautiful colors of skin. Have you ever wondered how people get their skin color? We don’t get to choose it, right? And we don’t choose the color of our eyes or our hair. We’re born whatever beautiful colors we are. And on the inside, even people with very different colors of skin are all alike. We all have hearts and minds, and we all love and hurt in the same ways…

5. Read and discuss All the Colors We Are. So, our skin color comes from our ancestry, our parents, the sun and melanin. Think about the skin color of your mom and dad. Is your skin like one or the other of them—or a combination of both?

6. What we’re going to do today is celebrate our skin color—all the beautiful colors we are. We’re going to use paint that might start out kind of close to people’s skin color (notice there is no black, white, red or yellow). Then we’ll mix colors a little until we get a color that’s close to the color of your skin. Then you can paint a self-portrait—a picture of yourself so that we celebrate all of our different kinds of beauty.

Play Free to Be, You and Me in the background….

As paintings are finished, lay them out to dry in a place students can conduct a gallery walk…..to celebrate each other’s beauty.

Follow-up lesson: Have students find a way to describe the color of their skin, eyes and hair--much like in the book All the Colors of the Earth. A student might write: My name is ______________. I have skin the color of ______________, hair the color of ____________________ and eyes the color of ______________.