Activity: *Spellbound* Episode 5 Isiah Warner Video Questions

**FOR THE TEACHER**

**Summary**
In this activity, students will answer questions while watching a video from the *Spellbound* series produced by ACS. Each episode focuses on a different notable scientist, recounting how their interest in science was sparked in their childhood and how they went on to make great contributions to the scientific community. This fifth episode focuses on the childhood of Isiah Warner, who is an African American chemistry professor and researcher at LSU. He has won awards for his decades-long teaching career and for the programs he founded to encourage and mentor African American students pursuing advanced chemistry degrees.

**Grade Level**
Middle School, High School

**Objectives**
By the end of this activity, students should be able to:
- Explain how childhood experiences can contribute to an individual’s scientific development.
- Reflect on their own interests and role models.

**Chemistry Topics**
This activity supports students’ understanding of:
- History of chemistry

**Time**
**Teacher Preparation:** minimal
**Lesson:** 10-20 minutes

**Materials**
- *Spellbound* Episode 5 Video
- Student Handout
- Computer and projector with volume

**Safety**
- No specific safety precautions need to be observed for this activity.

**Teacher Notes**
- The *Spellbound* series of videos is about the childhood experiences that inspired important scientists to become scientists. They can help students understand that anyone at any age, anywhere in the world can be inspired by science. These videos would be appropriate at any point in the year and, as they are publically available, could easily be used as part of an emergency sub plan.
- The running time of this video is about five minutes. As it is a short video and it moves pretty quickly, you may want to show it twice to ensure students can complete all the questions.
- The student questions/answers are presented in sequential order in the video.
- An answer key has also been provided for teacher reference.
- The last three questions ask for students to reflect on the content of the video as it applies to their life. It could be interesting to have students share answers with a partner or with the class after they have had a few minutes to answer those questions.
FOR THE STUDENT
Lesson

Spellbound Episode 5 Isiah Warner: Video Questions

Instructions
While watching the video, answer the following questions:

1. Where did Isiah live as a child?
2. How old was Isiah when he conducted his first “experiment”?
3. What did Isiah’s parents get him to encourage his interest in chemistry?
4. Why was pursuing science studies in high school challenging for Isiah?
5. What program did Isiah participate in before he began college at Southern University?
6. What did Isiah’s department chair say about him to encourage him when he was struggling with his studies in college?
7. When did Isiah get his Ph.D. in chemistry, and from what university?
8. Where does Isiah teach now?
9. How did Isiah’s presence affect the diversity of chemistry graduate students at LSU?
10. What does Isiah say about what does and does not limit you?

After you watch the video, reflect on the following questions:

11. Isiah’s interest in science began at an early age when he got into chemicals he wasn’t supposed to and ended up in the hospital! Despite this, his family still praised his curiosity and encouraged him to study math and science. What would you have done if you had been his parents, and why?

12. Isiah said that his family never really understood his interest in science, but encouraged him anyway. Who can you support and encourage, even if you don’t understand their interests, and in what way can you support them?

13. If you had the opportunity to ask Isiah one question (about anything – his work, his life, etc.), what would it be?