



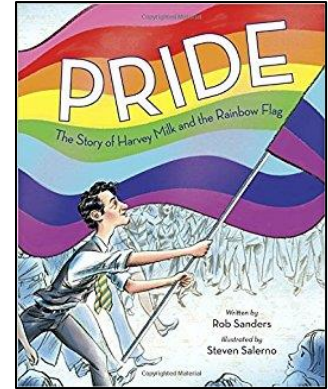
HARVEY MILK AND THE RAINBOW FLAG SYMBOLS OF US: IDENTITY CAPES OR FLAGS

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS: 3 – 5

LENGTH OF TIME: One 35 – 45 minute session for reading and discussion and two or three 40 minute project sessions

GOALS

- To learn about a key activist and leader in LGBTQ history.
- To learn about the creator of the rainbow flag.
- To help students share and explore identity through discussion of literature and art.
- To explore the concept of identity with students.
- To embrace differences in the classroom community through the creation of identity pride flags or capes.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will listen to a book read aloud and discuss its meaning.
- Students will learn about the activist Harvey Milk.
- Students will learn about the power of flags as cultural symbols.
- Students will learn about Gilbert Baker who created the rainbow flag.
- Students will create original identity flags or capes that communicate important aspects of themselves and their identities through colors, symbols and words.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (Also SL 4.1, 5.1)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2: Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (Also 4.2 and 5.2)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.5: Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. (Also SL. 4.5 and 5.5)

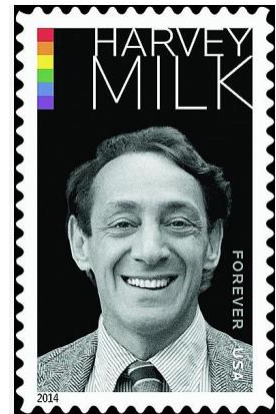
EDUCATORS' NOTES

This project centers the concept that all students are unique and different. It is an opportunity to explore identity and pride with your students while learning about a key time in LGBTQ

history through the book, *PRIDE: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Ron Sanders.

After reading and discussing the book, students will create an original flag or cape design. Identity flags or capes can be a way for students to connect with their own identities, to share their experiences with others and to appreciate the diversity of people in their classroom and larger community.

Art projects about identity are intended to be an empowering activity for all students, not an activity that creates comfort and pride for some while creating confusion, shame or isolation for others. Be sensitive to the individual needs of students in your classroom. The goal of the flag or cape is for all students in the class to find something they feel positive about sharing with the class. It can be realistic or representative of a hope or dream they have for themselves and possibly their loved ones.



ABOUT THE BOOK

In this true story, learn about the renowned social activist Harvey Milk. Trace the life of the Rainbow Flag, the Pride Flag, from its beginnings in 1978 when it was designed by Gilbert Baker, to its role around the world. At the end of the book there is more biographical information about both Harvey Milk and Gilbert Baker.

MATERIALS

- *PRIDE: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders
- Optional: Images of Lena Waithe in her [rainbow cape](#); Lena Waithe [Vogue interview](#) at the Met Gala about her rainbow cape; or 9 Amazing [Fan Illustrations](#) of Lena Waithe in Her Rainbow Cape
- Welcoming Schools' handout [Defining LGBTQ Words for Elementary School Students](#)
- Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils and black permanent markers
- 9" x 12" cardstock paper (8.5 x 11 works as well)
- Optional: Assorted colors of construction paper, tissue paper, scissors, glue (to collage the capes and flags if desired)

SESSION ONE: READING AND DISCUSSION

- We are going to read a story today about an important person in LGBTQ history named Harvey Milk.
- We are also going to learn about a very famous flag that was created in 1978.
- After I read the book, we are going to discuss it.

READ *PRIDE: THE STORY OF HARVEY MILK AND THE RAINBOW FLAG*

DISCUSSION

- What can you tell me about Harvey Milk and his big dream?
- Why did Harvey Milk think it was important to create a symbol for the LGBTQ community?

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- What can you tell me about Gilbert Baker?
 - What does pride mean?
 - To feel good about who you are or what you have accomplished – having self-respect.
 - To feel good about and have respect for your group identity.
 - What does the rainbow flag symbolize?
 - Equality, pride, hope, love.
 - LGBTQ equality.



SYMBOLS: MORE COLOR MORE PRIDE – INCLUDING BLACK & BROWN STRIPES ON THE RAINBOW FLAG

- Take a look at the symbols on the 2-page spread as Harvey first thinks about creating a symbol for the LGBTQ community.
 - Ask students if they know what the different symbols mean.
- In 2017, the city of Philadelphia thought that the Rainbow Flag needed updating. ([Philly's Pride Flag to Get Two New Stripes: Black and Brown.](#))
- Read the following passage to your students from the [More Colors More Pride website](#).

"In 1978, artist Gilbert Baker designed the original rainbow flag, ... So much has happened since then. A lot of good, but there's more we can do. Especially when it comes to recognizing people of color in the LGBTQ+ community. To fuel this important conversation, we've expanded the colors of the flag to include black and brown. It may seem like a small step. But together we can make big strides toward a truly inclusive community."



- Ask your students: Why did Philadelphia think it was important to add black and brown stripes to the rainbow flag?

LENA WAITHE AND HER ELEGANT RAINBOW CAPE

- Lena Waithe is a writer, producer and actress. In 2017, she won an Emmy for Outstanding Writing. In her [acceptance speech](#) she said:
"I love you all and last but certainly not least my LGBTQIA family; I see each and every one of you. The things that make us different, those are our superpowers — every day when you walk out the door and put on your imaginary cape and go out there and conquer the world because the world would not be as beautiful as it is if we weren't in it."

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- In 2018, Lena Waithe turned her imaginary cape into a real one when she wore an elegant rainbow cape to the Met Gala in 2018.
 - Show your students images of [Lena Waithe in her rainbow cape](#).
 - Or show this interview by Vogue with [Lena Waithe on the red carpet at the Met Gala](#). (Note: The word “damn” is used.)
 - The Met Gala is an annual event In New York City for the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Many celebrities attend wearing creative and elegant clothing.
 - Ask your students: Why do you think that Lena Waithe wore the cape? Or if you showed your students the video: Why did Lena Waithe say she wore the cape?
 - “I want everybody to know that you could be whoever you are and be completely proud.”
 - “Let’s not be afraid of who we are.”

SESSION TWO: IDENTITY FLAGS AND CAPES

- Let your students know that they are each going to create a drawing of an identity cape or flag.
- These will be a symbol of how each one of us is unique and wonderful.
- Show your students these fan illustrations of Lena Waithe’s cape. [9 Amazing Fan Illustrations of Lena Waithe in Her Rainbow Cape](#).
- Help your students brainstorm ideas for their identity flag or cape.
 - Think to yourself about the different ways that you identify.
 - Think about your hopes and dreams.
 - What are you proud of?
 - What symbols, if any, do you want to put on your flag or cape?
 - What colors do you want to use? What do the colors symbolize for you? (Colors have different meanings individually and culturally throughout the world.)
- Have your students draw their cape or flag using markers, crayons, or colored pencils. (Students may also create a collage)
- Let students know that as they are working, it is part of the creative process to possibly change or enhance their idea.
- **Note:** Students may need two project sessions on their drawings.

SESSION THREE: SHARING IDENTITY FLAGS OR CAPES

- Take time with your students to admire all of the flags and capes and the diverse colors and symbols in them.
- Give students an opportunity to talk about their flags and capes. It is important for each person to listen respectfully. This could be done as a class or in smaller groups.
- After everyone who wishes has spoken, take a moment to appreciate the richness in the group.

EXTENSIONS

- Have students write a poem about their flag or cape.
- Have students write a short story about their flag or cape.
- Create a space in your classroom where all of your student's flags or capes can be put on display together with their descriptions.
- Have your students read their writing about their capes and flags to each other or to the class.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- As students listen to the book read aloud and take part in the discussion afterwards, are they asking questions or pointing out things that show their comprehension?
- As the students share their flags or capes, listen to see if they understand the concepts of symbols, identity and pride.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM WELCOMING SCHOOLS

- [Children's Books to Prevent Bias-Based Bullying](#)
- [Lesson Plans to Prevent Bias-Based Bullying in School](#)
- [Preventing Bias-Based Bullying – School Resources](#)
- [Booklist: Sticking Up For Each Other: The Power of Allies](#)
- [Professional Development Training](#)