



DISCUSSING GENDER STEREOTYPING WITH CHILDRENS BOOKS

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 4 – 5

LENGTH OF TIME: 40 minutes

GOAL

- For students to use literature to examine and understand gender roles and recognize gender stereotyping.
- To expand students' perception of activities/roles for boys and girls.
- For students to understand ally behavior

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and discuss a story to examine gender stereotyping.
- Students will learn the meaning of gender stereotypes and sexism.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS SL 4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Also SL 5.1.
- Social Studies Theme 5: Individuals, Groups and Institutions – Experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

Children receive formal and informal messages about gender from a multitude of sources — their families, their peers, their communities and the media. Many of the messages empower them, and many of the messages limit them



This activity provides a fun, age-appropriate way to talk about the serious issues of gender stereotypes, gender-based discrimination and the limitations that traditional gender roles and expectations place on individuals and to provide messages that will empower them to see the range of human behaviors as possible and positive ways to be, regardless of their genders.

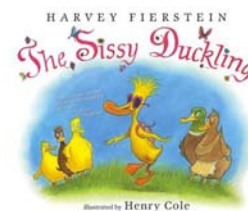
Television, movies and toys are examples of places in our culture that divide the world into male-appropriate and female-appropriate behaviors. At school, it is important for educators to create gender-expansive environments where children can be whole by expressing every part of their personality

It is often important to review classroom rules about kindness and respect when starting these discussions because talking about gender can become very personal.

MATERIALS: Chart paper or whiteboard, markers.

SUGGESTED BOOKS

Choose one of the following books: *The Sissy Duckling* by Harvey Fierstein, *Brothers of the Knight* by Debbie Allen, *Amazing Grace*, Mary Hoffman or *The Seven Chinese Sisters*, Kathy Tucker & Grace Lin.

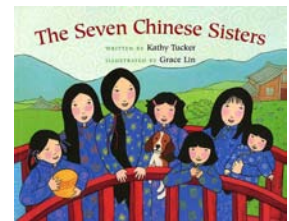


ACTIVITY

- Write the words “gender stereotype” on the board. Ask students what the phrase means. Ensure students understand the words prejudice and discrimination.
- Read a book such as *The Sissy Duckling*, *Brothers of the Knight* by Debbie Allen, *Amazing Grace*, Mary Hoffman or *The Seven Chinese Sisters*, Kathy Tucker & Grace Lin to clarify the term “gender stereotype.” Have a brief discussion of the book.
- Elicit conversation about the way that people hold prejudices and discriminate against others because they are girls or boys/women or men. People may exclude someone or a group of people from activities or opportunities because of their gender. Use examples from the past, such as when women were discouraged from becoming doctors, lawyers or truck drivers and men did not stay at home to take care of the kids or have jobs like teaching or nursing. Explain how people’s opportunities are sometimes restricted because of their gender.
- Ask students to think about their early memories of the influences of gender stereotypes and limitations. Then ask students to share with the class.
- Discuss with the class where they still see stereotyping or bias based on gender. Is it something they themselves experience? How does it hurt people? What can they do to stop it? How is it the same as and different from stereotyping or bias based on race?
- Have children break into small groups and act out parts of the story where someone could behave in a way that would make a main character feel better sooner than they do in the story. This gives students a chance to demonstrate ally behavior

EXTENSION

Why do you think people say that only boys can do some things and only girls can do some things? Do you think it’s important for boys and girls to like or do different things? Why or why not? This can be a writing project or a class discussion. If it’s a class discussion, start in pairs or small groups and report ideas back to the class.



ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Ask students to make a list of stereotypes that they think are not true and why.
- Ongoing teacher observation and class discussions on whether or not gender-based teasing is recognized more often, becomes less frequent or is eliminated.
- Ongoing teacher observation on whether or not students feel comfortable making choices outside gender expectations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM *WELCOMING SCHOOLS*

- Gender and Children: A Place to Begin for Educators
- Extensive Annotated Bibliographies on Gender Stereotyping and Identity

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