



What Are Your Words

Activity 1: Boys, Girls, Neither, or Both

Format:

- Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion

Materials:

- Chalk board, white board or chart paper

Timing:

- Following the pre-reading discussion

Objective:

- Students will begin to think of their favorite things as individual preferences rather than “boy” or “girl” things.

Instructions:

Adapted from: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2015/toolkit-for-sex-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-gender-expression> (see link for script)

1. Start the activity by explaining that all of us have different things that we like—colors, toys, activities and so on. Who decides what things we like and what things we don't like? As a class, you will start the activity by talking about those different things and whether they are for girls, or boys, neither, or both.
2. Kick the activity off by asking students to think of a colour they really like.
3. After everyone has thought of a colour, ask each student to share with a partner.
4. Draw two intersecting circles on the board – label the left one boy, label the right one girl, label the portion that overlaps neither or both.
5. Ask a student to volunteer a colour and tell you where the colour should be written in the diagram.
6. Typically, within 3-5 examples, students will point out that all the colors should go in the “both” circle. If they haven't, ask them if they notice anything about where all the colors

seem to be ending up. If it has not come up, be sure to include pink. If no boys raise their hands when you test it with the class (which is rare), ask them if they know any boys who like pink. If still no one raises their hand, then mention that you know some who do.

7. Once you have determined that all colors really should go in the “both” circle teach them the phrase “colors are colors” and write it on the chart. At this point you can also suggest that rather than three circles, perhaps we should just have one that is labeled “kid.”
8. Conclude the “color” activity by pointing out, “Colors are just colors. They don’t have a gender; they’re just colors!”
9. Depending on the time and attention span of the group, you can repeat the process for toys, and then for activities, each time emphasizing that there aren’t boy or girl things, just kid things. Colors are colors, toys are toys, and activities are activities.
10. Following the activity, lead a discussion with the class using the following prompts:
 - What does it feel like to be told colours, activities, etc. are just for girls or just for boys? Who might that exclude?
 - Make sure to address how this impacts ALL people, including cis and trans folks

Activity 2: Gary Learns About Pronouns

Format:

- Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion

Materials:

- Computer
- Projector

Timing:

- Following the pre-reading discussion

Objective:

- Students will learn why it is important to use someone’s pronouns correctly.

Instructions:

1. Watch CBC Kids video “Gary Learns About Pronouns” (1:48):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ov1IF03X5WE>
2. Guide through a discussion about what they saw and heard:
 - Why is it important to correctly use someone's pronouns?
 - How does Gary make it right after using the wrong pronouns to refer to his friend Harmeet?

- How do you think introducing/sharing your pronouns can make others around you feel? Remember that you never have to share, you can simply ask people to use your name.
3. Let students practice if it feels appropriate: With a partner, practice introducing yourself including your pronouns, if you feel comfortable, and asking them for theirs, if they want to share.

Activity 3: Which Outfit, Which Hairdo

Format:

- Individual Activity

Materials:

- Printout of Handout 1: [Which Outfit](#)
- Printout of Handout 2: [Which Hairdo](#)
- Pencils

Timing:

- After the introduction of the story

Objectives:

- Students will begin to think of their favorite things as individual preferences rather than “boy” or “girl” things.
- Students will recognize the difference between patterns (“more girls wear dresses”) and rules (“boys can’t wear dresses”).

Instructions:

Adapted from: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2015/toolkit-for-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-gender-expression>

1. Distribute the 2 handouts for the activity to each student.
2. Read the information at the bottom, and then tell students that they can take a few minutes to color the sheets, choosing the hairdo(s) and outfit(s) that they like, or make up their own on the back.
3. As the students work, again emphasize the notions of things are just things. If kids are saying that certain hairstyles or clothing is only for girls or boys, again “test” by asking students if they or someone they know likes that particular style or clothing. This is also a good time to talk about patterns (“more girls wear dresses”) versus rules (“boys can’t wear dresses”).
4. Wrapping up the activity with a message like: “We are seeing that there are so many ways to be a kid. Even with things like hair and clothes, whatever feels comfortable and makes you happy is OK!”

Activity 4: Shifting Pronouns

Format:

- Individual Activity

Materials:

- Printout of the Shifting Pronouns handout on the next page

Timing:

- As Ari, Rachel and uncle Lior arrive at the party

Objective:

- Students will practice using someone's pronouns correctly.

Instructions:

1. Distribute the Shifting Pronouns handout
2. Have students complete the handout on their own, or read each scenario, pausing for them to fill in the blanks.

Shifting Pronouns

Fill in the blanks in the scenarios below.

1. Amy identifies as a girl.

Amy went to the store with _____ mom this morning. They bought ingredients to bake cookies for a bake sale at _____ school. _____ is so excited to bake them with _____ mom!

2. Taylor is non-binary.

“Hi! This is my friend Taylor. _____ are a great soccer player. I met _____ at sports camp this summer. Taylor would probably describe _____ as an athlete.”

3. Max is a transgender boy.

Max loves to paint. _____ is discovering other creative activities too. Today, _____ went for a walk with _____ sister and _____ camera. _____ took photos of some of _____ favourite things at the park.

4. Sylvie isn't sure which pronouns to use.

Sylvie is a great friend. _____ always make sure all of _____ friends are included in the games _____ play. When someone is feeling sad, _____ are always the first one to try to make _____ friend feel better.

Activity 5: Community Agreements for a Safer Space

Format:

- Teacher-Facilitated Group Discussion

Materials:

- Computer
- Projector
- Chart paper and markers

Timing:

- Following the post-reading discussion

Objective:

- Students will learn co-create agreements to keeping their classroom a safe space for everyone

Instructions:

1. Watch the video What is Gender? (1:40): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqoSL-WRR8o>
 - The video reinforces concepts already learned and builds on them by attaching them to the idea of gender. Use this as the starting point to create Community Agreements for your class.
2. Guide students through an activity to create community agreements for your class by asking: What community agreements could we make so that everyone in our class feels welcome? How can we take care of each other?
3. Use chart paper or some other visual medium to record their ideas and keep them visible in the classroom. Possible examples include:
 - It's okay for everyone to wear the clothes that make them happy and comfortable.
 - It's okay to play with the toys that you like.
 - Everyone will be called the name and pronouns that feel best for them.
 - Everyone can do jobs that they like when they grow up.
 - Treat others how they want to be treated, with respect.
4. Add to this list over time!