

Gender Roles

A Lesson Plan from *Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 2nd grade, students will be able to:

ID.2.CC.1 – Describe differences and similarities in how boys and girls may be expected to act.

ID.2.INF.1 – Provide examples of how friends, family, media, society and culture influence ways in which boys and girls think they should act.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 3

TIME: 40 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A copy of the book *I Love My Purse* by Belle DeMont
- Newsprint
- Markers
- A chart with two headings: “What do you need to bake a cake?” and “What do you need to play baseball?”

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

Teacher should read *I Love My Purse* by Belle DeMont ahead of time in order to be familiar with the story and able to lead a discussion.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name at least two ways that children of all genders are expected to behave. [Knowledge]
2. Name at least two ways some people expect children to behave differently based on their gender. [Knowledge]
3. Name at least three ways that other family, friends, media, society, or culture can influence how children of different genders think they should act. [Knowledge]

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Explain to students that you are going to talk about ways that people are expected to behave. Sometimes how you are expected to act can be different depending on whether you are in school, at home, at the playground, in the library, with your friends or other situations. Ask: “What are some ways that children are expected to behave in school?”

Note to the Teacher: Answers may include: *friendly, respectfully, being good listeners, following teacher’s directions, etc.*

Then ask: “What are some ways that children are expected to behave outside with their friends?”

Note to the Teacher: Answers may include: *running around, using loud outside voices, playing nicely, following playground rules, etc.*

Thank students for their answers. Next ask: “Are there some ways that people expect children to behave based on their gender? Gender usually means whether you are a boy or a girl.”

Note to the Teacher: Answers may include: *Boys are expected to run faster, like sports, and play superhero; girls are expected to like pink, not run as fast and to like to play princess, etc.*

Again, thank students and tell them that you are going to read a story that talks about how we expect boys and girls to behave. (5 minutes)

STEP 2: Read *I Love My Purse* to the students that addresses gender role stereotypes.

After reading the book ask students:

Gender Roles

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- What things does Charlie do that surprise others?
- How does Charlie react when others question him?
- What would you say?
- Can the way someone's friends or family treat them affect how they feel about wanting to do different things?
- Can what someone learns in school or from watching television about the things boys and girls are expected to do, affect how they feel about wanting to do different things?
(17 minutes)

STEP 3: Ask students: "Does the job a person has, or what they wear mean the person is a man or woman?" (No) "Do the activities someone likes to do for fun or what they wear mean they are a boy or a girl?" (No)

Post a chart with two headings: "What do you need to bake a cake?" and "What do you need to play baseball?" Ask students to call out a list of what things someone would need to do each of these activities.

***Note to the Teacher:** Responses may be things like "hands to throw" under the "Play Baseball" list or "hands to stir" under the "Bake a Cake" list. Other responses may be "eyes to see," "others to play/work with," "directions or rules," etc. If student responses don't include body parts, ask them, "What body parts do you need to have?" Or "What does your body need to be able to do?" Alternatively, if they don't mention equipment, ask: "What equipment do you need?" etc.*

As students call out answers, record them under the appropriate heading.

Once the students are satisfied that they have included all of their ideas, read each item and ask: "Raise your hand if you have..." or "Raise your hand if you can use..." or "Raise your hand if you can..." depending on the item (e.g. "Raise your hand if you have hands to throw" or "Raise your hand if you can use a mixing spoon" or "Raise your hand if you can run." It is likely every child will raise their hands every time. Support students by acknowledging that all of them can do almost all of these things not just one gender or another. Point out how exciting it is to know that boys and girls can do all of these things and lots more.
(10 minutes)

STEP 4: Ask the children to consider why it is that some people make decisions about what children can and can't do. Discuss that children and grown-ups have choices and may like to do all kinds of things. Ask what might make people not choose an activity that they might really like to do. For example, a girl playing football or a boy taking ballet class.

***Note to the Teacher:** If students are stuck, prompt them with some examples such as "What might make a boy decide not to put on toenail polish even though he wants to? What might make a girl decide not to wear a spiderman costume even though she wants to?" (3 minutes)*

STEP 5: Ask students, "What are some things you can say to a friend who feels like they can't do or try something because it's not for their gender?"

Gender Roles

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Note to the Teacher: *Have students think back to some of the responses by characters in the book that might help. Also, encourage them to look at the list they made for the Playing Baseball/Baking a Cake activity for ideas.*

Praise students for their hard work and great ideas. Close the lesson by asking “How could you support others in trying new things and participating in activities that some people may sometimes say are only for boys or only for girls?” Ask for volunteers to offer strategies. (Some responses might include: tell them that you think it’s great; tell them that they shouldn’t listen to what other people think; tell them that you will do it with them; tell them that there is no such thing as girl activities and boy activities, etc.) (5 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Students’ responses to the questions in Step One will meet learning objectives one and two.

The questions in Step Three are intended to address Objective Three.

HOMEWORK:

None.

Adapted from a lesson by Emmy Howe, Open View Farm Educational Center, Conway, MA www.openviewfarm.org, with Aimee Gelnaw, M.S.