

Lesson adapted from: Student, Family and Community Support Department - San Francisco Unified School District

Jacob's New Dress by Sarah and Ian Hoffman

Grade: 2nd grade

OVERVIEW

Jacob loves playing dress-up, when he can be anything he wants to be. Some kids at school say he can't wear "girl" clothes, but Jacob wants to wear a dress to school. Can he convince his parents to let him wear what he wants? This heartwarming story speaks to the unique challenges faced by boys who don't identify with traditional gender roles.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand there is a range of gender expression
- Build classroom community by understanding the importance of compassion and accepting differences
- Understand the importance of accepting differences
- Discuss the negative impacts of bullying and how to be an ally

STANDARDS

- **Washington State Sexual Health Standard:** Understand there is a range of gender roles and expression. (H1.Se5.2a)
- **Washington State Sexual Health Standard:** Understand the importance of treating others with respect regarding gender expression. (H1.Se5.2b)

TIME

One 30-40 minute lesson

RESOURCES / MATERIALS NEEDED

- [Jacob's New Dress](#) by Sarah and Ian Hoffman

VOCABULARY

Define key words for discussion:

- **Acceptance:** Being supportive, kind or friendly to others. Accepting other people and their differences.
- **Ally:** A person who works for equality to support people and groups different than them. Anyone can be an ally.
- **Gender:** A person's feeling about being either boy or girl or another gender
- **Gender Role:** Cultural ways of how men and women are "supposed" to act.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Ground rules: Introduce or review classroom rules in order to create a safe place for students to discuss the book. Consider using the ground rules listed below:

- Respect other people in the class
- One person speaks at a time
- Everyone has the “right to pass” if someone doesn’t want to talk
- Everyone will have a chance to speak

Introduction: Ally

Post and discuss the vocabulary words for this lesson. Emphasize **ally** and **gender roles** and explain to students that you are going to read a story about someone who is made fun of for being different, but that some characters are allies.

Some people say certain things are for boys or for girls. Some people say that only girls like pink, playing make believe, and wearing dresses, while only boys like blue, playing sports, and wearing pants.

Raise your hand if you like... 1) sports, 2) wearing pants, 3) the color blue, 4) playing make believe (a game where you make up the rules).

Looking around the room at all the raised hands, many of us like different things than what other people might expect. Anyone, whether you are a boy or a girl or somewhere in between, can like sports, like a variety of colors, and enjoy playing make believe.

I want you to think about how you would feel if someone made fun of you for what you were wearing, what colors you like, or what toys you like to play with. How might that make you feel? (Take a few students’ feelings).

You probably have all heard of a bully. A bully is a person who makes fun of someone or puts other people down. Remembering our new vocabulary, an ally is someone who speaks up in the moment for someone who is getting bullied by showing their support and being a friend.

Today we are going to read a book where the main character gets made fun of for not fitting their expected **gender role**. From just looking at the cover, can you make a prediction, or a guess, about why the character might not fit their expected gender role?

While we are reading today, I want you on the lookout for an ally. As our main character is getting bullied, think about who is being a good friend and supporting them, and how they are doing it.

****T-chart with Character (name) on left and “How are they supportive? How do they act like an ally?” on the right****

pg. 3 (Christopher frowned.):

- When Christopher sees Jacob choosing girls' clothes at dress-up time, what does he do? (makes fun of him)
- Identify Emily as an ally (write this on the chart). What does Emily do to stand up for Jacob? (write ideas on the chart)

pg. 7 ("How was school today?"):

- Do you think the mom is an ally?
- How is she supporting him here?

Pg. 17. ("How was school today?"):

- Jacob says "the longer she didn't answer, the less Jacob could breathe." What does he mean by that?
- How is he feeling?
- What makes him feel that way?

Pg. 21 (Dad looked up from his book.):

- After these two conversations, how is Jacob feeling?
- How is his dad supporting him? (write ideas on the chart)

pg. 24 (Christopher shook his head.)"

- Why does Christopher say that? (in recapping the answer, address how there is a range of gender expressions and that Jacob can definitely wear the dress)
- I think we have another ally on this page. Ms. Wilson says that Jacob can wear what he's comfortable in. How do you think this helps Jacob in the classroom?

End of book:

- Jacob finally accepts himself at the end of the book. What helps him be able to do this? (the allies and their support)
- How can we help children like Christopher become comfortable with and respectful of Jacob's choices?

It can be confusing when people look or act differently than how we expect them to, but we are all people and we can accept and appreciate how different we are. School is a place where students learn to respect one another and learn to work together regardless of their differences.

ASSESSMENT

The objective will have been met if the student is able to:

Answer these Exit Ticket Questions:

1. Why is it important to be an ally and treat people with respect about their gender choices?
2. List three things you can do to be a better ally at school for all students to feel safe, supported, and accepted?

Things to consider

If students disclose being bullied, or witnessing bullying at school...be prepared to talk about the

school rules regarding bullying as well as the reporting process if they witness or experience bullying.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Teaching Tolerance: Gender Diversity Lessons

<http://www.tolerance.org/>

Keywords: gender, equity, bullying, lessons, diversity

Gender Spectrum

www.genderspectrum.org