

Is That for a Boy or a Girl? by S. Bear Bergman

Grade: 3rd grade

OVERVIEW

Each page of *Is That for a Boy or a Girl?* is written from a different character's perspective. Each character describes things they enjoy doing, wearing, being or playing. This book explores gender expression in a playful rhyming way that depicts a wide range of experiences. The book introduces the concept that many things are gendered that do not have to be.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Describe ways that gender roles can vary considerably
- Understand the importance of treating others with respect regarding gender identity
- Use evidence from the text to answer questions
- Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator

STANDARDS

- Washington State Sexual Health Standard: Describe ways that gender roles can vary considerably. (H1.Se5.3a)
- Washington State Sexual Health Standard: Understand the importance of treating others with respect regarding gender identity. (H1Se53b)
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 3.1 Ask and Answer Questions to demonstrate understanding of a text. Referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 3.6 Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters

TIME

One 30-40 minute lesson

RESOURCES / MATERIALS NEEDED

- Book: Is That for a Boy or a Girl? By S. Bear Bergman
- Chart paper or white board/pens
- Exit tickets

VOCABULARY

Place vocabulary words up on the wall/board. Review vocabulary terms.

- **Acceptance:** The act or state of being supportive, kind or friendly to others. It is especially important to show acceptance to groups different than you.
- **Ally:** A person who works for equality to support people and groups different than them. Anyone can be an ally.
- **Biological gender/Sex:** The body and body parts you are born with.
- **Gender:** A person's feeling about being either boy or girl or another gender.
- **Gender identity:** A person's internal, deeply felt sense of being either man, woman, boy or girl or another gender.
- **Gender Role:** Cultural ways of how men and women are "supposed" to act.
- **Stereotype:** To believe unfairly that all people with a particular characteristic are the same. For example, only girls can like flowers.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Cultural differences should be acknowledged and respected as students share things they do, like or wear based on their gender.

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

Activity:

Draw a Venn Diagram on the board. (two circles that intersect/overlap some in the middle) Label one circle Boy, the other Girl. Tell the students that we are going to talk about some stereotypes about gender. Review term if needed.

Ask students to brainstorm things that our society sometimes assumes are girl things. Remind them that these may be *stereotypes* and they certainly may not be true for all girls or all boys. Point out that this might look different if it were done in different countries or cultures.

Write the ideas the students share within the GIRL circle, then repeat with the BOY circle.

Tell students you will return to the Venn Diagram after you read a book. Tell students that people sometimes feel that girls and boys cannot play with the same toys, read the same books, like the same colors, wear the same clothes, play the same games, or do the same jobs.

Tell students you are going to read a book titled, "Is that for a Boy or a Girl?" Ask them to think about the *stereotypes* they wrote in the Venn Diagram as we meet the characters in the book.

Periodically stop after reading a page and ask questions. Possible questions to ask as you read:

"How many of you like doing this activity..?" Look around and see who else has their hands up.

"How does this kid express their *gender*? What things do they like to wear/ play with?"

"If you met someone like this, how might you show *acceptance*, or be an *ally* to them?"

After you read the book, ask students whether they saw examples of characters who did not fit the stereotypes. **Reinforce the message** that there are no such things as girl colors, boy colors or girl toys, or boy toys, etc.

- Ask students to return to the Venn Diagrams and give them a chance to revise how they had initially sorted them.
- Introduce the ideas/activities/items list (attached page) and ask students to determine where these additional things should be placed.

Extension: Ask students to discuss or write how it might feel when people treat someone differently or tease them for breaking a stereotype about their gender.

Discuss ways your class rules, or school expectations support treating people with respect, etc.

Have students compare and contrast themselves with one or more characters from the book.

Have students sort the words on the hand out at their desks in groups, or hand out strips of paper with one word/activity on it and have them individually walk up to the Venn diagram and tape it to where they feel it should live.

Have students create their own book page about themselves. The page should highlight 2 or more things about themselves depicting their own *gender expression*. (Ex: drawing showing them wearing what they like, doing an activity they enjoy)

List 3 ways you can show respect for other people's *gender expression*.

List 3 ways you are similar and 3 ways you are different from one or more characters in the book.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Teaching Tolerance: Gender Diversity Lessons

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

Keywords: gender, equity, bullying, lessons, diversity

Gender Spectrum

www.genderspectrum.org

ASSESSMENT

The objective will have been met if students can express the big idea that gender can be expressed in many ways. Possible answers include “I learned boys and girls can play with whatever they want.”
“There is no such thing as girl toys and boy toys.”

Exit ticket

What is something you learned from this book? What is this book teaching us about?

What questions do you still have about gender or gender expression?
