

Blue is for Boys, Pink is for Girls... Or Are They?

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

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to:

ID.8.INF.1 – Analyze external influences that have an impact on one's attitudes about gender, sexual orientation and gender identity.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 7
Lesson 7

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Desktop or laptop computer with PowerPoint on it
- LCD projector and screen
- PowerPoint: "Boys or Girls"
- Homework: "Tia and Martin," one per student
- White board and markers
- Pencils in case students do not have their own.
- Blank paper in case students do not have their own - one per student

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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

1. Name at least two stereotypes associated with why many people value the gender binary of "boys" and "girls."
[Knowledge]
2. Analyze at least two sources of gendered messages and expectations that exist within their culture. [Knowledge, Skill]
3. Describe at least one connection between gender expectations and discomfort around non-heterosexual orientations.
[Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Tell the students, "We're going to be talking today about gender – how we understand our maleness, our femaleness or a combination of that – who we are and how we express that to others. Let's start with a quiz. I'm going to show you a series of pictures, and I'd like you to tell me whether, stereotypically, what you see is made for boys or girls. Now, notice I said 'stereotypically.' So I'm asking you to think of which gender comes to your mind first when you see these."

On the white board, write the word "Boys" with an underline; about 3 feet to the right, write, "Girls" with an underline. As the students react to the PowerPoint, you will record their responses on this list.

Begin to show the PowerPoint, titled, "Boys Or Girls." At each slide, pause and ask the class whether they feel each of the images has to do more with boys or girls. As they assign a gender or genders to a particular image, record the name of the image under the appropriate header you wrote on the board (such as writing "truck" under "boys").

Once you have gone through slide 12, ask the students to look at what's listed on the board. Ask, "How did you know whether to name a

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particular thing as a 'girl' thing or a 'boy' thing?" You will likely hear things like, "that's just the way things are," or "I know what I like and chose that way." (10 minutes)

STEP 2: Tell the class that you are going to ask them to come up with examples of messages they have received about gender so far in their lives. Explain that these messages don't necessarily need to be about their own gender, but they have to be about gender.

Provide an example from your own life growing up – or, if you do not wish to disclose, you may say, "Sometimes, when there is more than one gender of child growing up in a family, they will be treated differently because of their parents' or caregivers' feelings about gender. For example, a boy in a family is allowed to stay out later with friends or have more independence than his sister, regardless of their ages. For this activity, using that case, I would write down 'it's more okay for boys to stay out late than it is for girls,' as well as "parents/ caregivers" as the source of that message."

Break the class into pairs and distribute the blank paper. Then ask them to write down at least 5 messages as well as the source or sources of those messages. Tell them they have about 5 minutes in which to do this. (8 minutes)

STEP 3: After about 5 minutes, ask students to provide some of their responses. Write several of the messages on the board, and next to them, the source(s) of those messages. Ask other students whether they came up with similar messages, and add check marks to show common experiences.

As students identify their sources of messages, feel free to ask whether other parts of the culture provide messages about gender, too. For example, if no one mentions religious institutions, ask whether they can think of any examples. If they can't, ask whether anyone is Catholic, and then whether women can be priests. If the media is not mentioned, ask what kinds of gender images they notice on tv, in movies and in music videos.

Although each class may come up with different examples based on individual students' life experiences, some examples you may hear or probe for include but are not limited to:

MESSAGE	SOURCE(S)
• In male-female relationships, the guy should be the one to ask the girl out.	Parents, media
• Boys are supposed to be tough and not show emotion	Family, friends, media
• Boys are supposed to always want to have sex, and girls are supposed to not want to have sex and fight them off.	Family, culture, media, religious groups

(10 minutes)

*** There are other examples that can be used. To specifically call out a child for being Catholic and attack her religion is not appropriate. It could also be embarrassing. Throughout all the curriculum there is a heavy attack on family, parents, and religion. This material is not being inclusive of those groups.