



## National Black Lives Matter at School Week

### What is Transgender, and How Can I Be an Ally?

By Alma Alonzo, Tracy Castro-Gill, and Danielle Woods

Grade: Pre-k-3

Theme: Trans and Queer Affirming

Day: Wednesday

#### Content standards:

Understand that there are many ways to express gender. (H1.Se5.K)

Understand there is a range of gender roles and expression. (H1.Se5.2a)

Understand the importance of treating others with respect regarding gender expression. (H1.Se5.2b)

#### Knowledge: students will **know** that...

Gender Expression is how a person presents to the world (hair style, what they wear, etc.). When a person is able to express their gender in a way that makes sense to them, they are able to be who they are and feel happy.

#### Skills: students will be **able** to...

Understand the importance of accepting differences.  
Discuss the negative impacts of bullying and how to be an ally.

#### Essential Questions: to guide the lesson discussions –

Why is it important to accept people the way they want to be accepted?

Why is it my responsibility to be an ally, and how can I do that?

**Teacher Preparation:** Part 1: You will need to be prepared to help students develop their awareness and understanding of the following concepts: **biological sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, non-binary, gender spectrum**. Here is one source of background information.

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2015/sex-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-gender-expression>.

Part 2: Create a T-chart with two sections labeled "girl" and "boy." Also create a Venn Diagram with lots of overlap in the center and label the opposite sides "boy" and "girl"

**Student Preparation:** This lesson plan will be more effective if there have been lessons for Monday and Tuesday's theme which offer background knowledge on racial discrimination and oppression. It will also go more smoothly if your students have prior experience with and understand the Venn Diagram. For younger students, break this lesson into two parts.

Explain to the students that everybody has many different parts that make up their whole person/identity. Race is one characteristic, and today we will focus on gender, and how transgender people have unique experiences. We will also brainstorm ideas on how we can best support them by being allies.

1. Warm up activity: Have the students discuss the following prompt:

"What makes a person a boy or a girl?" The teacher should explain that the answers should include physical characteristics, hobbies, preferences (in clothes, sports, school subjects), feelings, thoughts, etc.

Share out until the T-chart is well populated enough to move the conversation to the next part. The teacher should record them on the sticky notes and ask students which side of the T-chart the post-it should go. If possible, use sticky notes rather than writing directly on the T-chart.

*Note: This will save you time later as well as serve a visual demonstration of how gender expression is non-binary, and fluid. Students need to see how problematic our binary notions of gender are.*

Explain that the students have just defined what our society calls gender, and most people are assigned to either the boy side or the girl side based on these characteristics.

Say: But wait! I notice something interesting about what we have here. Can you see what I see? (Validate student observations but steer students to discover that their descriptors do not fit exclusively in one category or another) If students do not readily see this you can say, "for example, here we have a post-it that says "likes sports" and we have put it on the "boy" side but I like sports and I feel like a girl. And look! Here we have a post-it that says "has long hair" and

we have put it on the "girl" side but my cousin Jamal has long hair and he says he is a boy. How can this be?

Ask the students if anyone sees other things that they disagree with on the T-chart. If students find that some characteristics could be for both genders, move those on the line of the T-Chart.

If you have time, suggests to students that you have another way of sorting the post-its and bring out the Venn Diagram. Briefly explain how the Venn Diagram helps us to see how two categories can share some characteristics. Now take the students through each post-it and ask, "Where on the Venn Diagram do you think this should go?" They should see that more post-its go in the middle and really, only such things as body parts go on the outside.

Closing Part 1:

Explain that gender isn't always so easy to identify. If our doctor and our parents assign us a gender and it matches what we feel inside, then we can say we are **cisgender**. However, we may look like what society says a girl or boy should look like, but inside, we feel something different than just boy or just girl, we are somewhere in between, we can say that we are **gender-expansive** or **transgender**. (10 minutes or do this as a separate lesson)

Part 2

Now we are going to read a book titled \_\_\_\_\_. This story will help us understand how having the idea that we can only be just a girl or just a boy makes friendships hard for some people. Afterward, we will make a plan for how we can make sure everyone can enjoy friendships.

2. Read Introducing Teddy by Jessica Walton or My Princess Boy by Cheryl Kilodavis\_ while asking:
  - a. Introducing Teddy:
    - i. What are some special things Teddy and Thomas do together?
    - ii. How do Thomas and Teddy feel about each other?
    - iii. What does Thomas do when Teddy tells him that Teddy doesn't feel like a boy or girl teddy? How does that make Teddy feel?
  - b. My Princess Boy:
    - i. What are some things that make Princess Boy special?
    - ii. How does it make Princess Boy feel when people laugh at him?
    - iii. Think of a time when someone laughed at you or made fun of something you liked. How did that make you feel?

3. Closing:

- a. Tell students to think about what makes a good friend (guide them toward – acceptance)
- b. Have students draw or write about being a good friend (see template below)

**Text / Materials:**

**T-Chart, Venn Diagram, Post-it notes & markers**

**Notes:**

Kindergarten prompt

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am a friend when \_\_\_\_\_.

First grade prompt

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I can be friends with people who are different from me because \_\_\_\_\_

Second grade prompt

Think of someone whom you enjoy being with. What is one thing that is different about you? Why do you enjoy being with this person?" Sentence frame: \_\_\_\_\_ and I are different because \_\_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_\_. We still enjoy being with each other because we both \_\_\_\_\_. Example: Gerald and I are different because Gerald is a boy and I am a girl. We still enjoy being with each other because we both love 70's music.