

Jacob's New Dress by Sarah and Ian Hoffman

Grade: 2nd-4th grade

OVERVIEW

Students may express or be exposed to gender diversity in many different ways. Wanting to conform can be stressful for young people as they figure out what makes them comfortable. Using the literature book, Jacob's New Dress, this lesson illustrates the story of a boy who wants to wear a dress to school and how his family handles the situation.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Explore an example of gender diversity
- Understand the importance of accepting differences
- Discuss the negative impacts of bullying and how to be an ally

STANDARDS

- **California Health Education Content Standard 1 – 1.7.M (2nd grade):** Discuss how to show respect for similarities and differences between and among individuals and groups.
- **California Health Education Content Standard 4 – 4.2.G (3rd grade):** Identify how to show respect for individual differences.
- **CCSS Writing:** Text Type and Purposes #1 #3, Production and Distribution of Writing #4
- **CCSS Speaking and Listening:** Comprehension and Collaboration #1, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas #4-6

TIME

- **Two 20-30 minute lessons**
 1. Lesson One: Discussion and Read Aloud
 2. Lesson Two: Review story and Writing Activity

RESOURCES / MATERIALS NEEDED

- Jacob's New Dress by Sarah and Ian Hoffman
- Whiteboard or chart paper, markers
- Writing paper and pencils/crayons

VOCABULARY

Define key words for discussion:

- **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.

- **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.
- **Stereotype:** To believe unfairly that all people with a particular characteristic are the same. For example, only girls can like flowers.

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

LESSON ONE

Discussion: Brainstorming about gender

Post and discuss the vocabulary words for this lesson guiding students to think about gender roles and stereotypes. Ask students to describe what comes to mind when they think of a “boy” (short hair, deep voice, boys clothes, plays soccer, etc..) and a “girl” (dresses, long hair, pink backpack, etc...). Record student answers on chart paper or whiteboard. Explain that these are **stereotypes**. Some people think that there are certain ways that boys and girls are “supposed” to act or look. If some answers are not stereotypical, you can circle the ones that are, to discuss.

“Can you think of situations where boys are ‘supposed’ to be one way and girls are ‘supposed’ to be another way?” [Girls aren’t supposed to be play football or wrestle, boys aren’t supposed to cry, etc...]

You may also go through the list and ask students, *“Is this true for all boys in this class? What about girls? If it’s not always true then it’s a stereotype.”*

“What happens to people who don’t fit stereotypes?”

Read Aloud

1. Introduce the book, Jacob’s New Dress.
 - *Keeping our ideas about gender and stereotypes in mind, let’s look at what happens to Jacob when he decides to wear a dress to school. Be aware of how all the people in Jacob’s life handle the situation.*
2. Read Jacob’s New Dress, pausing for discussion questions or think-pair-share along the way
 - (p.3) *When Christopher sees Jacob choosing girls’ clothes at dress-up time what does he do? [makes fun of him] Why do you think he does that? What does Emily do? [stands up for Jacob] Why do you think she does that?*
 - (p.9) *Jacob asks his mother if he can wear a dress to school, what is her reaction? [She frowns, gets quiet, says “let me think about it.”]*
 - (p.16) *Jacob tells his mom what happened at school and says “he can’t breathe.” What do you think he is feeling at that moment? Why?*

- (p.19-21) Notice how Jacob's expression changes over those three pages. What happened to help him feel happier? [mom and dad's acceptance, they helped him make the dress]
 - (p.26) Christopher is still teasing Jacob. How can we help children like him become more accepting with and respectful of Jacob's choices?
3. Identifying with the characters
- Structure this activity as a think-pair-share followed by a whole-group share.
- Have you ever felt like Jacob and been bullied?
 - Have you ever bullied someone like Christopher did?
 - Have you ever stood up to a bully like Emily and showed your support for a friend?

Part Three: Writing activity/"What happens next..."

In the last scene of the book, we see Jacob telling Christopher that he is proud of his dress and then Jacob plays happily. Read aloud the last few pages of the book again and ask students: *What do you think might happen next for Jacob? How do you think he will talk about his day with his parents? What do you think Christopher will do or say next?* Have students imagine what will happen in the book if it is continued for a few more pages. Instruct them to write and/or draw the next scene as they imagine it.

Closure and Wrap Up

Stereotyping does not allow people to be as they are. *"What can we do about stereotyping in our classroom so that students feel comfortable to dress and act how they want?"* Emphasize the idea that being an ally takes action. Use examples from their writing that show the positive things Emily might have done to help Jacob.

ASSESSMENT

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

- Understand that gender identity can change and stereotypes can be limiting
- Identify what it means to be an ally and accept other people's differences
- Have students identify examples of gender diversity in their community by writing/drawing about it

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Support Services for LGBTQ Youth, SFUSD

www.healthiersf.org/lgbtq

Keywords: LGBTQ family, gender, diversity, curriculum, approved vocabulary

Transgender Youth Rap

Link: <https://youtu.be/bWPEvmwG9Vw>.

Keywords: transgender, trans, youth, rap,

Teaching Tolerance: Gender Diversity Lessons

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

Keywords: gender, equity, bullying, lessons, diversity