

Lesson Title: Be Kind, Be You
Unit Title/Theme: Gender Roles, Gender Identity, and Gender Stereotypes
Time: Day 1 - 30-35 minutes; Day 2 - 20-30 minutes
Grade Level: Elementary: Pre-Kindergarten-1st Grade
Authors: Alicia L. Moore, Ph.D. and Gracie Huber

National Council of the Social Studies (NCSS) Thematic Strands Addressed¹:
(<https://www.socialstudies.org/national-curriculum-standards-social-studies-chapter-2-themes-social-studies>)

Strand 1: Culture - Human beings create, learn, share, and adapt to culture. The study of culture examines the socially transmitted beliefs, values, institutions, behaviors, traditions and way of life of a group of people; it also encompasses other cultural attributes and products, such as language, literature, music, arts and artifacts, and foods.

Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity - Personal identity is shaped by an individual's culture, by groups, by institutional influences, and by lived experiences shared with people inside and outside the individual's own culture throughout her or his development. The examination of various forms of human behavior enhances an understanding of the relationships between social norms and emerging personal identities. The study of individual development and identity will help students to describe factors important to the development of personal identity.

Standard 6: Power, Authority & Governance - Learners in the early grades explore their natural and developing sense of fairness and order as they experience relationships with others. They develop an increasingly comprehensive awareness of rights and responsibilities in specific contexts.

Teacher Background Knowledge and Overview: Before teaching any concepts, knowledge or skills, teachers should do their own personal and professional research. The following background knowledge resources, definitions, and overview are not all-inclusive. Please conduct your own research to gain a fuller understanding of the importance of teaching this lesson. Below, there are some resources to review for use as a foundation for the lesson.

What are Gender Stereotypes?

- Gender norms and stereotypes are so ingrained in our society that adults are often surprised to realize how early children internalize these ideas. When young children get caught up in stereotypical notions of gender, though, it can harm their self-images and

the way they interact with peers. Children need opportunities to consider these internalized stereotypes and think about the problems they cause.²

- *In this lesson, students will think about characteristics they ascribe to either boys or girls. They will learn about the idea of “stereotypes” and will consider whether gender stereotypes are fair or unfair. They will also discuss how it feels to not conform to socially defined gender norms.³*
- *Because stereotyping can affect how children feel about themselves and how they relate to others, it's important that they learn to recognize and understand gender stereotypes in different media. Images of men and women in the media are often based on stereotypical roles of males and females in our society.⁴*
- Visit the Believe Earth website and read⁵: [How to educate children for gender equality: Education against stereotypes and discrimination begins in early childhood](https://believe.earth/en/how-to-educate-children-for-gender-equality/), Giovana Romano Sanchez, New York, United States, Believe Earth.
<https://believe.earth/en/how-to-educate-children-for-gender-equality/>
- Read: [How Children Learn Gender](https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=gender_studies) ⁶.
[https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=gender studies](https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=gender_studies)
- Watch the following YouTube video: [How Parents Influence Kids' Gender Roles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swSy6pdAS-0)⁷
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swSy6pdAS-0>

Definitions

- **Gender identity:** *One's own internal sense of self and their gender, whether that is man, woman, neither or both. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not outwardly visible to others.⁸*
- **Gender Roles:** *Societal norms about what it means to belong to a certain gender. These roles refer to behaviors, interests, etc. They may also differ across cultures.⁹*
- **Socially-Constructed Gender Stereotypes:** *Ways in which other people believe that each person should “perform” masculinity/maleness or femininity/femaleness based upon societally-constructed dichotomous norms.¹⁰*

Materials/Resources Needed:

- Selected Books and Videos (see Technology Resource Integration section below)
- Teacher-made sign that reads “Be Kind, Be You”
- Write or type the list of “stereotypically-gendered words” on index cards.
- Create a T-Chart for sorting of stereotypically gendered words on large chart paper. T-Chart headings are “GIRL” and “BOY”
- Art supplies
 - Markers

- Crayon
- Colored pencils
- Blank Paper (chart paper or drawing paper)

Technology Resource Integration

Download or queue videos to be viewed on Day 1 or Day 2, respectively

- Fight Like A Girl Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs>)
- Gender Roles and Stereotypes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ulh0DnFUGsk>)
- A Class That Turned Around Kids' Assumptions of Gender Roles (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3Aweo-74kY>)
- Always #LikeAGirl (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs>)
- My Shadow is Pink (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53ipg9ImrPU>)
- William's Doll (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgC9mnlOcJo>)

Student Learning Objectives

1. Students will identify the importance of being kind and valuing others.
2. Students will create scenarios to practice respect and individuality.
3. Students will understand socially constructed gender roles and stereotypes.
4. Students will understand the societal pressure to perform “maleness” and “femaleness”.
5. Students will learn the importance of respecting and valuing gender identity.
6. Students will learn that personal interests are individual choices often unrelated to gender.

DAY 1

Objective/Purpose

Teacher: *Scholars, today, we are going to learn about gender. Gender is a word that means how we identify ourselves. When we are born, the doctor identifies/assigns us as a boy or a girl. Based on that identification, others, sometimes including our teachers and parents, expect us to behave like a girl or a boy. Today, we are going to discuss examples of what society/people tell us girls and boys should do and how they should behave.*

Instructional Plan

Procedures

1. The teacher will call students together to participate in a class meeting (children gather on the carpet or may sit at their tables/desks).
2. Anticipatory Set: Warm Up Activity:

- a. Teacher: *When I was a little girl, for my birthday, I really wanted a toy truck. I had seen it in a toy store and I knew that I wanted it very badly. However, my mom and dad said, 'No!' I was sad. I knew that we could afford it because it was not at all expensive and it was on sale. I reminded them that they said I could have whatever I wanted for my birthday. They still said they would not buy that truck for me.* **Note:** The teacher may choose their own personal story about gender stereotyping.
- b. Teacher: *Why do you think that they would not buy it for me?* [Try to encourage students to think about ways in which toys, such as trucks, etc. might be perceived to be gendered toys. If students do not guess, DO NOT provide hints at this time. Accept their responses as great assumptions, but do not indicate a final answer. Teacher shrugs and says: *Great guesses. I wonder why they did not buy it.* Move on to the next activity.
- c. *When I say the following words, I want you to:*
 - *Raise your hand if you think the word is something that should describe what girls like or like to do.*
 - *Do not raise your hand if you think the word is something that should describe what boys like or like to do.*
 - Teacher repeats for clarification: *Hands up means girls like it; hands down means boys like it.*
- d. Teacher reads the following list of stereotypically-gendered words, careers, etc. Teacher uses the T-Chart to sort the words under the headings “GIRL” or “BOY.”

Hero Ballet Cooking Pink Pilot	Nurse Cars Crying Unicorns Rainbows	Video Games Glitter Teacher Firefighter Police Officer	Cleaning Blue Doctor Scientist
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- e. Pass out blank drawing paper. Have the students go to their tables or desks and draw age and developmentally appropriate pictures of: a doctor, a firefighter, OR a pilot (each child chooses one). After finishing their drawing, instruct the students to choose a name for the person drawn and write it on their picture. For younger children, assist with writing the names on the picture.
- f. **Discussion Questions:** Bring students back to the group to discuss the sorting activity and their drawings.
 - Teacher: *Let's go back and look at our chart. Why do you think these things or jobs are only for boys/men and girls/women? Where did you get that information about whether those jobs or things are for a boy and girl?*
 - Teacher: *Now let's share your amazing pictures of the career/job you chose.*

Make note of the name chosen for the person drawn and the gender assigned.

3. Explain the term “gender roles”. Teacher: *We view or describe certain things (objects) or behaviors as being appropriate for a girl or a boy. Because of this, many times we behave the way that other people say we are supposed to - everyone around us is telling us to do so. This happens all of the time when we think about the words we just sorted.*
4. Show the following video clips about gender roles and stereotypes in succession:
 - a. [A Class That Turned Around Kids' Assumptions of Gender Roles](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3Aweo-74kY) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3Aweo-74kY>) 2 minutes
 - b. [Gender Roles and Stereotypes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ulh0DnFUGsk) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ulh0DnFUGsk>) 2 minutes
5. **Closure/Discussion:**
 - a. Have students share their thoughts about the videos. Point out the connections between their word sort choices and their drawings, including the names given to the person who represented the chosen career.
 - b. Teacher: *So when we began our lesson today, I told you a story about my parents not buying me a toy truck. What I did not tell you, is that their choice not to allow me to have a truck to play with was an example of gender stereotyping. They did not want me to have a toy truck because they thought that the toy was a toy for a boy and it could not be a toy that was appropriate for a girl, too. That made me really sad. Later, we talked about this and they understood that girls can do things and play with toys that people consider to only be appropriate for boys.*
 - c. Teacher: Summarize gender roles and stereotypes. Have students share their thoughts.

DAY 2

Objective/Purpose

Teacher: *Scholars, today, we are going to explore the importance of always being kind, respectful and accepting of others who are different. These differences might include the ways we play and things we do. Remember when I told you the story about the toy truck that my parents would not buy for me? Well, also remember that later, my parents realized that it was ok for girls to play with toys that many people believe are only for boys. Also, remember the video you viewed yesterday -- the children were surprised to see the female doctor, pilot and firefighter. Many of you also drew pictures and named the people in your picture with names that are generally given/assigned to boys. Well, today we want to think about how we respect people when they don't play with or behave the way people think that boys or girls should behave. Boys can play with dolls and girls and play with trucks. Girls can run fast and play basketball, and boys can be ballet dancers or cheerleaders.*

Sometimes our world can be confusing. A lot of people might try to tell you what to do, who you should be, and how to behave and/or play. We know that we should each follow the school rules and do our work, but we are going to look for ways in which we might work together to support one another based on our differences. We want to explore ways we can be the best versions of ourselves and how we can support others in doing the same.

Instructional Plan

Procedures

The teacher will call students together to participate in a class meeting. Review gender roles and stereotypes.

1. Listen to a video read aloud of the children's book or read the actual hardcopy, [My Shadow is Pink](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53ipg9ImrPU) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53ipg9ImrPU>) by Scott Stuart (6 minutes)

Alternate video read aloud: *William's Doll* (1972) by Charlotte Zolotow
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgC9mnlOcJo>)

- a. Before listening: Have students predict what will happen based on the title and cover of the book.
 - b. Stop and discuss certain events and behaviors from the characters in the story.
 - i. How do others react to the character? What are the ways in which others expect the character to behave? Does the character behave the way others think they should? Why or why not?
2. Watch the video: [Always #LikeAGirl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjQBJWYDTs) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjQBJWYDTs>) 3 minutes
 3. **Discussion** [After each set of questions (a-c) allow students to share their responses]
 - a. Teacher: *Should we be ourselves? Why is it important to be yourself? Why is it important to respect the choices others make when they are choosing to be their best selves?*
 - b. Teacher: *How should we treat people who are different from us?*
 - c. Teacher: *How can you make sure that everyone is being treated fairly? How can you make the space around you better?*
 4. **Check for Understanding:** Talk to students about the importance of being themselves and liking whatever they like despite what anyone else thinks (ex. playing with toys that are not perceived to be those they, based upon gender assignment, should play with).
 - a. Teacher: *Is it okay to play with any toy you want because you like it? Can you play a sport even if you are a girl just because you like it? Or dance if you are a*

boy? Being you is so important because no one else can do it.

5. Practice: Students will then draw a picture of themselves interacting with someone that may be different from them OR they can draw a picture of themselves doing things that may not align with traditional gender roles.
 - a. Modeling: Example #1: A person who others identify as female may draw a picture of themselves throwing a ball with a friend on a football field. Explain that they are trying to throw the ball as hard and as far as they possibly can (disrupting a gender stereotype).
 - b. Modeling: Example #2: A person who others identify as male might be drawn wearing a dress and someone complimenting them on their outfit (disrupting a gender stereotype).
6. Hang all the drawings the students have created under the phrase “Be Kind, Be You”. Teachers may also have students sign their names on chart paper with the title, “Be Kind, Be You”. This can serve as a social contract for individuality, and respect for self and others.
7. **Closure:** Bring students to a group. Ask students about some of the things they like to do. Ask how they would respond to someone that likes different things. Discuss the different things that girls can do (even refer back to the original list). Discuss different things that boys may like or do. Discuss the value of being kind to those who do things differently and are not defined by the gender roles assigned by others.
 - a. Teacher: *It is so important that we are always true to ourselves. It is also important that we are kind to everyone. So we have two jobs: be nice to others and be nice to ourselves. This means that we always stand up for what we believe in and it does not matter if we are a boy or a girl or neither.*

Assessment/Evaluation:

Learned concepts are assessed based on three major aspects of the lesson: discussion and participation, their understanding of the different stories viewed and read, and how they relate to the understanding of respect, kindness, and individuality.

- ***Discussion and Participation:*** The teacher will listen to the students’ input during the discussion of gender roles, stereotyping, and what it means to be oneself. They will also discuss the importance of being kind and respectful. The teacher should also observe student behaviors while they work together and actively listen to their peers’ points of view.

- *Understanding of Gender Roles and Stereotyping*: Students should be able to address the ways that the videos and books represent how certain interests are not based on gender. They should also be able to discuss the importance of being able to be themselves and not basing their decisions off of what other people think. Their involvement in predicting what happens in the Day 2 story and their ability to analyze the videos are key indicators of lesson mastery.

Notes

1. National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Strands
<https://www.socialstudies.org/national-curriculum-standards-social-studies-chapter-2-the-mes-social-studies>
2. Overview from “What are Gender Stereotypes” - Learning for Justice.
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/what-are-gender-stereotypes>
3. Ibid. *What are Gender Stereotypes - Learning for Justice*.
4. Ibid.
5. Romano Sanchez, Giovana. *How to educate children for gender equality: Education against stereotypes and discrimination begins in early childhood*, New York, United States, Believe Earth.
<https://believe.earth/en/how-to-educate-children-for-gender-equality/>
6. Tokhvre, Laura, "Children Learn Gender Roles" (2018). Gender & Sexuality Studies Student Work Collection. 12. https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/gender_studies/12 and https://digitalcommons.tacoma.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=gender_studies
7. Children may internalize society’s traditional gender roles—unless parents act as a guiding force. Watch on *The Atlantic*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swSy6pdAS-0>
8. Cuncic, Arlin, “Glossary of Must-Know Gender Identity Terms” (2021).
<https://www.verywellmind.com/glossary-of-must-know-gender-identity-terms-5186274>
9. Wamsley, Laura, “A Guide to Gender Identity Terms” (2021). NPR.
<https://www.npr.org/2021/06/02/996319297/gender-identity-pronouns-expression-guide-lgbtq>
10. Moore, Alicia L. (2021). Definition of *Socially-Constructed Gender Stereotypes*.