



Do Something! (Grades 3-5)

Objectives

Activities will help students:

- synthesize all discussions and activities they have participated in with regard to gender expression and identity;
- solidify their understanding of the harmful nature of stereotypes and the socially constructed nature of gender;
- see themselves as activists with the potential to stand up to gender stereotypes in a variety of ways; and
- celebrate their diversity, growth and strength as a community.

Essential Questions

- What is activism, and why is activism important?
- How can we be gender freedom activists on a daily basis?
- What bigger projects around gender freedom might we want to take on, and how can we do this?
- How can we continue thinking about gender identity and expression after completing this series of lessons?

Glossary

gender [jen-dur]

(*noun*) refers to the social roles, behaviors and traits that a society may assign to men (masculine) or to women (feminine)

(Note: There are many different ideas about how to define the term gender. We provide a working definition, but one of the goals of Teaching Tolerance's work is for students to come to individual and collective understandings and criticisms of the term that make sense to them and their personal and developmental needs.)

gender expression [jen-dur eks-**PRESH**-uhn]

(*noun*) the way a person chooses to show their gender to others

freedom [**FREE**-duhm]

(*noun*) the power and belief in your power to determine your own identity and actions

activism [**AK**-ti-viz-uhm]

(*noun*) intentional actions geared toward creating change

Materials

- chart paper
- markers
- student notebooks or journals
- any articles or reports relevant to gender activism in or near your school or community (optional)

Activities

1. Tell students that today is their last official lesson from the series about gender. Ask them to talk with partners about what they have learned in this series. Then have each pair share one or two ideas with the group.

2. Introduce the term activism to your class. Explain that today's lesson will focus on how we, as activists, can create change in small ways on a daily basis as well as through bigger projects in our schools and communities.
3. Break students up into groups and assign each group one of the following categories: lunchtime, recess, classroom, after school. Each group should brainstorm a list of five to 10 ways they can be activists standing up for gender freedom in each of these areas. Remind them that being an activist can be as simple as speaking up, but they should brainstorm specific ideas about words they might realistically say. Have each group create a poster on chart paper showing how they would put activism to use in their assigned setting. Then, allow the children to circulate and view the other groups' posters. Hang the posters in your classroom and allow students to refer back to them at relevant times.
4. Come back together as a group. Ask students to brainstorm bigger activist projects they might take on in your school or community to work toward gender freedom. Chart student responses. You may want to explain that education can be a powerful form of activism, so they can consider projects geared toward educating others about what they have learned. When students have come up with a list of projects, help them construct a plan of how they might realistically approach one of these projects over time.
5. Congratulate your class on all the powerful work and learning they have done around freeing themselves and each other from gender stereotypes!

ELL Extension (Optional)

Explain to your students that translation is actually a form of activism in and of itself, because making words and information available in different languages gives access to more people. Have students work in pairs or groups to create a guide translating key vocabulary words having to do with gender from English to another language. Students should draw a small illustration and write or dictate an example sentence in English to go with each word. They can even put their words together into a small gender activist translator's dictionary.

Extension Assignment (Optional)

If your class is excited about being gender freedom activists, don't let their enthusiasm fizzle with the end of this series. Make time during social studies, choice time, recess or before or after school for them to follow through on activism projects. Students will feel proud of this work, and it will help them fully internalize many of the objectives of this series while also working for change in their community.

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