

## Lesson four: My beliefs



### Lesson aim:

Pupils can challenge gender stereotypes, understanding that there is not one way to be a boy, or one way to be a girl.



### Learning outcomes:

- I have identified that there are ways in which some people believe that a boy should behave, and a girl should behave
- I recognise that girls and boys have lots of similarities
- I know that I can follow my aspirations, irrespective of the gender that I was born



### Resources required:

- Resource sheet: Thumb spectrum signs
- Media/advertising images of girls and boys fashion, hobbies, toys etc
- Post-it notes

## Key words: gender, stereotype

### Teacher notes:

The focus of this lesson is on gender stereotypes, enabling pupils to recognise and challenge stereotypes. It is important to be mindful that some pupils may identify as gender questioning or transgender.

If you have time prior to the lesson you could do an anonymous opinion poll to ask pupils their responses to the values spectrum activity in Activity two, as an alternative to pupils exposing their personal opinions if you feel this would be a more effective approach for your class.

### Begin the lesson by...

Explaining that in this lesson we will be learning about gender stereotypes. Your gender describes how much you feel like a boy, or a girl. Some people believe that there are certain ways that people should behave, think and feel because they are born as a boy or a girl. This includes how they dress, the toys they play with and the jobs they later do as an adult. This view is called a stereotype. In this case it is a gender stereotype. If you have collated some images from the media/toy advertisements, these could be shared now to emphasise how the media can also reinforce gender stereotypes. Remind pupils of the working agreement.



## Activity one: Differences?

Divide the class into four groups. Provide each group with a body outline or ask the groups to draw around one of the pupils within their group. Ask two of the groups to write/illustrate their outline with everything that they believe being a boy is about, whilst the remaining two groups do the same for a girl.

Ask pupils to draw clothing, hair, favourite toy etc. Tell them to write/illustrate the things that their character likes to do in their spare time, favourite film etc. Finally, ask pupils to name their character. If pupils choose to draw a penis and testicles or a vulva, encourage them to use the scientific terms. Ask each group to introduce their character to the rest of the class and share the things that they believe makes them a boy/girl.

Highlight any similarities and differences between the boy and girl character. If the pupils have not referred to different genitalia you could introduce this by saying 'There are some very different biological differences between boys and girls. Can anyone tell me what this is? Boys are born with a penis, and girls are born with a vulva'.



**Does being born physically a boy (with a penis) or physically a girl (with a vulva) make any difference to your feelings, likes and dislikes?**

Discuss their ideas as a class. Highlight that there is not one way to be a boy or one way to be a girl. Some people don't feel like a boy or a girl. Some people are born like a boy (with a penis) but feel like a girl inside or born like a girl (with a vulva) but feel like a boy inside.



## Activity two: Values spectrum

Display the agree, disagree and don't know thumb signs on a wall in the classroom to make a values spectrum. Tell pupils that you are going to read out some statements. Ask pupils to move along the line to demonstrate how much they agree or disagree with the statements that you read out. Reassure pupils that there are not necessarily right or wrong answers to the statements, it is more that it reflects their personal opinion. Remind pupils not to move with their friends or most of the class. It is OK to have a different opinion to other people and that everyone's views will be respected. Discuss each point with the pupils to explore their views and any misconceptions.

- **Boys are stronger than girls** – Are boys always physically stronger than girls? Do we give everyone an equal chance to be physically strong? *How important is being strong with your views, feelings and emotions?*
- **Girls like pink and boys like blue** – Why are some toys and fashion items aimed at boys or girls? Why is pink and blue used to differentiate? *You could ask pupils to share their favourite colours and comment on how interesting the range of colours are and that it would be boring if everyone liked blue or pink.*
- **Girls cry more than boys** – Is it more acceptable for girls to cry? Are girls more likely to be seen crying in TV programmes or films? *Why is this? Is it OK for anyone to cry if they are feeling upset?*
- **All boys like football** – Lots of girls like football too, but the sport is largely dominated by boys. Is it fair that men's professional football is more available to watch on TV than women's professional football? Do boys and girls play football equally at break times in school? *Why is this?*
- **All girls like to wear dresses** – Some girls prefer not to wear dresses and some boys like to wear dresses. Is it more acceptable for a girl to wear trousers, than it is for a boy to wear a dress? *Why is this? Is it fair?*
- **Girls and boys are equal** – Are boys and girls given the same opportunities as each other?

Highlight and feedback any key points or trends from the class discussions as relevant.



## Activity three: Positive pictures

Ask pupils to think if there has ever been something that they have wanted to do (playing with a toy, wearing an item of clothing, joining a club, having a hairstyle etc) but avoided doing because they think people will be unkind as it is not 'typical' for their gender. Tell pupils not to share the incident, but to share how this made them feel by drawing a face to express their feeling on a post-it note. Collect the feeling faces in and display them on a wall. Invite the class to look at the feeling faces. Discuss the impact of conforming to a gender stereotype when you would prefer not to. Highlight to pupils that the emotions are largely unhappy ones.



**Should someone change the things they want to do to avoid other people being unkind to them, if this makes them unhappy?**

Discuss as a class, highlight and feedback any key points. Reassure pupils that it is always OK to be the person you want to be and that our unique differences should be celebrated.

Tell pupils to draw a picture of themselves in the future with the clothing and hair etc that they might like to have, include writing a job they might do when they are older.



### Extension:

Provide pupils with examples of t-shirt adverts. Tell pupils to design a poster that advertises a t-shirt to be marketed to any child, irrespective of their gender. Encourage pupils to consider their choice of style, colour and words used to promote the t-shirt.

### Finish the lesson by:

Providing pupils with an opportunity to ask questions. Ask pupils to share examples of respectful, healthy relationship behaviours. Reassure pupils that there are a diverse range of relationships, all are valuable if they are important to the people involved in them. Remind pupils that it is important that the people in the relationship love, respect and take care of each other in a healthy, respectful way. Signpost pupils to who they can talk to in school if they have any concerns or questions about what has been taught in the lesson.



## Assessment:

**Activity one:** Pupils considered stereotypical views of people based on their gender, recognising similarities between both genders through a fictional character.

**Activity two:** Pupils considered and challenged their own values and judgements of people based on gender, as well as those of their peers through a spectrum activity.

**Activity three:** Pupils identified positive aspirations for their futures that are not restricted by the stereotypical views of gender.

**Evidence of assessment:** Girl and boy characters, positive pictures; t-shirt design, if extension activity completed.





