OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Discussion Questions

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COMMUNITY SCHOOLS & STUDENT SERVICES

*Julián is a Mermaid & Be Who You Are do not have additional discussion questions, please see recommended discussion guides on book list.

Families, Families, Families!

- ★ How are families different? How are they the same?
- ★ How are these families like our families?
- ★ What makes a family?

Be Who You Are

Be old. Be young. Be a different color.

Pause on this page and have students talk about how we all have different skin colors. • Ask them if people are really purple, green and yellow?

Wear everything you need to be you.

Let them know that at your school, everyone gets to wear what makes them feel happy and comfortable without being teased. • Tell students this can be called gender expression. • Remind students that we cannot assume someone's gender identity (she, he, neither or both) based upon how they look. There are lots of ways to be a girl, boy, both or neither.

Speak your language.

Ask your students how many of them are multilingual. • Emphasize that this is a beautiful example of being who you are and that it is a gift to know many languages.

Suggested Activity: "BE WHO YOU ARE" SELF-PORTRAIT PROJECT – have students draw and share self portraits.

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea

- ★ What did Miu Lan's mother always sing to them? How do you think Miu Lan felt about what their mother said?
- ★ How did Miu Lan feel after their first day of school? Why do you think they felt this way?
- ★ At one point Miu Lan's mother said, "You can only be who you are." Why is it important for you to be who you are? Why is it important for Miu Lan to be who they are?

PugDog

- ★ What changes did Mike make when he found out PugDog was a girl?
- ★ How do PugDog feel about these changes (e.g. wearing a dress…)?
- ★ What happened that caused Mike to say to PugDog, "You're perfect as you are"? What do you think he learned about letting PugDog be herself?
- ★ At the end of the story, why do you think Mike said he has a lot to learn?

When Aidan Became a Brother

- ★ What are the different events that cause frustration for Aidan, and what are the events that cause joy? How can you tell?
- ★ Aidan gets worried when people throughout the book ask if the baby is a boy or girl. Why do you think he doesn't like it when people ask if the baby is a boy or girl? How do you think that makes him feel?
- ★ How does Aiden use his experience as a trans child to help prepare for his new sibling?

★ Aidan teaches us that there are different kinds of girls (pg. 4) and different kinds of boys. Why is difference important? What would it be like if we were all the same (we dressed the same, looked the same, liked the same things)?

★ What kind of *person* are you (e.g. what do you like to do? What do you like to wear? What do you dream about?)?

★ There was a lot of discussion about gender throughout the book, but we never learn the gender of the new baby. Why do you think the author decided to leave it out?

BunnyBear

★ Why did Bunnybear decide to leave the other bears? Was he accepted by the other bunnies he visited? How do you think Bunnybear felt?

★ When Bunnybear met Grizzlybun they said, “You just look one way on the outside and feel another way on the inside. That’s okay.” Why do you think Bunnybear said that?

★ Bunnybear and Grizzlybun were happiest when they could be themselves. Why is it important to be ourselves? Is it ok to be different from others?

★ Can you name one thing that makes you unique (e.g. the things you like to do, like to wear, something about your family...)?

Red: A Crayon’s Story

★ Why do you think the author wrote this story?

★ How do you think the crayon felt when everyone wanted it to color in red?

★ What did the tape, scissors and pencil sharpener do to the crayon? Why do you think they did that? Did it help?

★ After drawing beautiful blue pictures, the crayon exclaims, “I’m blue!” Why? What did the crayon realize? Why is this important?

And Tango Makes Three

★ What makes a family? (think about your own and others you know).

★ Why did the zookeeper, Mr. Gramzay, give Roy and Silo an egg?

★ Neither Roy nor Silo lay Tango's egg, but they both sit on it and keep it warm and take care of Tango after she hatches. This makes them her parents. Do human families ever do anything similar to what Roy and Silo did? What is that called?

★ What is needed to care for a baby? Do Roy and Silo share those qualities?

★ How is the family of Roy, Silo, and Tango the same as your family? How are they different than your family?

★ Why is it important to be an ally to those who have a different family than you? (Ally: Supporting people different than you to be safe and happy).

Julián is a Mermaid

Terms:

Julián (who-lee-ahn); Abuela (ah-bwel-ah) Grandmother; Vámanos (ba-mah-nos) Let’s go; Mijo (me-ho) Affectionate term for a younger boy. A contraction of the words “mi” and

“hijo”—literally “my son”; Latinx (la-teen-ex) A gender inclusive term for someone of Latin American descent.

Why do you think this book is titled, “Julián is a Mermaid?”

Why did Julián want to be a mermaid? How did you think his Abuela felt about that?

Why is it important to allow people to be who they are?

What can we do at our school, and in our classroom, so that people feel comfortable wearing what makes them happy?

Worm Loves Worm

- ★ Why are the worms asked so many questions about their wedding?
- ★ What questions do you have for the worms?
- ★ Why did Worm and Worm decide to, ‘change how things are done’ when Cricket says they need both a bride *and* a groom? What changes did they make?
- ★ If some people are surprised by the couple wearing both groom and bride outfits, what supportive words could you say to make the worms feel better?

Harriet Gets Carried Away

- ★ What does Harriet love wearing? Do her dads support her?
- ★ On her adventure, one of the penguins she meets suggests Harriet should “lose the bow tie,” we’re told Harriet straightens her bowtie instead of taking it off. Why do you think she did that?

★ Do you like to wear costumes like Harriet? If so, do you have any favorites?
★ "What do Harriet's dads mean when they tell her not to get carried away? Does "carried away" have more than one meaning in the story?

★ Is this story about Harriet's family? Why or why not?

Annie's Plaid Shirt

★ How did Annie feel about wearing a dress to her Uncle's wedding? Why do you think she felt this way?

★ What else could Annie's mom have done when she saw how upset Annie was about having to wear a dress? Is there anything she could have said or done to help Annie feel better earlier?

★ Why do people wear different/special clothes for important events like weddings?

★ Annie's mom was concerned about what other people would think if Annie didn't wear a dress, but Annie's brother told her she should let Annie be herself. Why is it important for us to be ourselves?

★ How would you have helped Annie figure out what to wear to her uncle's wedding?

★ What did Annie wear along with her plaid shirt that made her feel ready and excited for her uncle's wedding?

★ What kinds of things do you like wearing that make you happy?

Antonio's Card
La Tarjeta de Antonio

- ★ How did Antonio react when his classmates made comments about his mom's partner, Leslie?
- ★ Why does Antonio's mother say, "Leslie walks and dresses like Leslie, just like Antonio walks and dresses like Antonio?" What do you think she means?
- ★ At first, Antonio didn't want to take Leslie to see the Mother's Day display, then he changed his mind? Why?
- ★ Why does Antonio have trouble spelling 'absolutely' when Leslie, his mom's partner, suggests spelling that word, but can spell it very easily later in the story?
- ★ What does Antonio's family picture look like? Who is in it? What might your family picture look like?

I Am Jazz

- ★ What are some things you have in common with Jazz?
- ★ What are some things that are different?
- ★ Coming out as trans means that you share that you are a different gender than what your family/community thought. What are some examples of Jazz Jennings sharing her gender identity with other people in 'I am Jazz?.
- ★ How does Jazz feel when other kids at school make fun of her because she's transgender?

★ If Jazz went to your school, what could you do to help her feel safe and welcomed?

PRIDE: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag

Note: There are additional resources available at the end of this book.

★ Why did Harvey Milk decide that a Pride flag was needed? What other types of flags show pride?

★ If you were going to create a flag that shows pride in yourself, what would you include?

★ Harvey Milk says, “You have to give them hope. Hope for a better world, hope for a better tomorrow.” Why was this important to Milk and the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community? What are your hopes for a better world?

★ How does knowing this history help us to better understand the importance of the pride celebration in San Francisco every year?

★ What LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning) civil rights issues do you think Harvey Milk would be working on if he was still alive today?

★ What can you do to help your school be safe for all students?

Princess Princess Ever After

★ Why do you think the author entitled the book, “Princess Princess Ever After?”

★ What happened when Princess Sadie, Princess Amira and Prince Vladric encountered the Ogre? Were you surprised by their encounter with him? Why or Why not?

- ★ What kind of a princess did Amira's mama want her to become? What kind of a princess did *Amira* want to be?
- ★ If you could write a letter to Sadie's sister, Claire, what would you say?
- ★ What happened at the end of the story? What do you think will happen next?

Cuando Amamos Cantamos
When We Love Someone We Sing to Them

- ★ What was the character taught about the importance of song, and Serenatas, in his culture? Who taught him this?
- ★ What did his father do when he told him he'd found someone to sing his butterfly song to (pg. 20)?
- ★ On pg. 32, the main character says, "Papi tells me....that gardens like mine have always existed." What do you think he meant by this?
- ★ What important traditions do you have in your family?