

“I am Jazz” Read Aloud

By Dani McCormick

Objective: Students will be able to define the words “transgender” and “nonbinary” and give examples of ways to support people of all gender identities.

Key Vocabulary:

Transgender: having a gender identity that is different from the one you were assigned at birth

Nonbinary: having a gender identity that is neither “boy” or “girl”

Ways to support people of all gender identities:

1. Believe people when they tell us who they are
2. Use the correct words (including names and pronouns) and reminding others to do the same
3. Stand up or get help when we see someone being unkind

Hook:

Begin by reminding students of any norms regarding respect, active listening and kindness before beginning the conversation.

Teacher: “When you’re walking down the street how can you tell if someone is a boy or a girl?”

When students share ideas such as hair length, voice, clothes, etc respond with, “but can girls have short hair?” “Can boys wear dresses?” and work with students to establish that there’s “no such thing as boy things or girl things”. “Boy” or “girl” are examples of gender. Today we’re going to talk about gender and talk about how we can help everyone feel safe and respected in our community.

T: The only way to really know if someone is a boy or a girl is to ask them! But how about when we’re first born? Can we tell people who we are then? How do doctors and parents guess if we’re a boy or girl?

A student will likely share “our bodies” or “private parts”.

T: Right, the doctors use our bodies to guess what our gender is. For a long time scientists thought that there were just two types of body parts- boy parts and girl parts- but every day they’re learning that there’s way more diversity or difference not just between our body parts but also in the hormones that might make our voices deeper or higher, give us facial or body hair, or make us taller or shorter, AND there’s a lot of difference between our DNA that determines the color of our eyes, hair and skin, what our faces look like, etc. This is making it so scientists are finding that only having two choices, boy or girl, doesn’t really make a lot sense.

Even so, doctors and parents still use what they can see to guess what our gender is when we're born. Some of us find that as we grow up and learn to talk that the gender we were assigned or given is a good fit for us. Others find that our gender is actually different than the doctors thought when we were born. Folks who's gender is different than the one they were assigned at birth are called transgender.

Some folks also find that the words "boy" or "girl" don't make sense for them at all and they are called nonbinary. Nonbinary folks might prefer to be called, "they" or "ze" instead of "him" or "her".

We're going to listen to a book written by a transgender girl. When she was born the doctors thought she was a boy. Let's listen to find out what happened after that...

If you don't have a copy of "I am Jazz" you can use the youtube video of her reading it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BF5D2lsPfsU> Note: When Jazz says, "I have a boy body but a girl brain" I would recommend stopping the video and reminding kids that there's no such things as "boy bodies" but instead that the doctors thought she was a boy by using what they could see.

Debrief questions:

How did people respond when Jazz said she was a girl?

How did this make Jazz feel?

How did others make Jazz feel accepted and respected?

What can we do to support transgender and nonbinary folks in our community?

