



LESSON PLAN: WHEN AIDAN BECAME A BROTHER

AUTHOR:
Kyle Lukoff

ILLUSTRATIONS:
Kaylani Juanita

PUBLISHER:
Lee and Low

TOPICS COVERED:

LGBTQ stories
Trans experience
Gender neutral parenting

OBJECTIVE:

- To introduce young children to the interior life, strengths and choices of a transgender child.
- To provide a compelling and realistic narrative that prompt young children to learn about and examine gender stereotypes.

SUMMARY

THIS IS A BOOK THAT BELONGS IN EVERY CLASSROOM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO THE AUTHOR AND INCREDIBLY TALENTED ILLUSTRATOR FOR BRINGING THIS STORY TO LIFE.

This book tackles several issues all at once, and each is incredibly well-done and easy for young readers to understand. Everyone thought that Aidan was a girl when he was born, and when he was young it was frustrating to be so misunderstood. Eventually, he figured out a way to express himself and his parents helped make the adjustments he wanted so he could feel more comfortable in what he wore and what his bedroom looked like. Now that Aidan's mother is pregnant again, Aidan wants to make sure he's the best big brother possible and this includes making sure that the new baby isn't misunderstood like he was. The book goes through a lot of the preparations a family makes when getting ready for a new addition, with special care taken not to gender the new baby or put any stereotypes in place in terms of a name or room color. A particularly adorable illustration shows Aidan researching names in a baby name book, but he has changed the title from "boys and girls" to "babies and babies", specifically wanting a neutral name. The care that Aidan takes shows an immense amount of empathy for his new sibling, wanting them to feel wholly loved and cared for without any of the pressures that gender stereotyping places on a new life. In the back of the story is an author's note about Kyle Lukoff's own journey to be his authentic self, and it adds another level of tenderness to the story.

VOCABULARY

Transgender: An individual whose gender is misaligned with their assigned sex at birth.

Gender neutral: A term for not affixing any gendered meaning to an activity, clothing piece, or color while instead encouraging the person to pursue their own interests and personal expression.

Gender stereotype: These are traits associated with a specific sex, put in place by societal beliefs at large.



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REFLECTION QUESTIONS WHILE READING:

- How do you feel when there are expectations placed on you just because of who you are?
- Do you think there are these expectations for non-binary children too?
- Why might Aidan go to all this trouble for his younger sibling?
- How can we support our friend's choices?
- What can you tell about Aidan's family from the story?

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION ACTIVITY:

- Distribute a blank paper and encourage everyone to design their own bedrooms. Ask child to think back to the pages where Aidan's room changed to make him more comfortable (and have the book available to flip through again).
- Now, ask your little ones to think about their own bedroom, and what they would change about it.
- What would be in it? Would the wall color change? What would decorate it? Baseballs, Legos, flowers, all of the above?
- Encourage everyone to think outside the box and design exactly what they would want to see when they wake up everyday.
- Talk about the differences between their current bedroom and their dream bedroom. What has changed?

OTHER BOOKS YOU MIGHT ENJOY:

What Riley Wore

Written by Elana K. Arnold, Illustrated by Linda Davick

Neither

Written & Illustrated by Airlie Anderson

I'm Jay, Let's Play

Written by Beth Reichmuth, Illustrated by Nomy Lamm