

Day of PiNK

Celebrate Diversity

February 24, 2016

PiNK Shirt Day

The original **Pink Shirt Day** was organized by David Shepherd and Travis Price of Berwick, Nova Scotia, who in 2007 bought and distributed 50 pink shirts after male Grade 9 student, Charles McNeill, was bullied for wearing a pink shirt during the first day of school.

April 13, 2016

International DAY of PiNK

International Day of Pink is a day against **homophobic, transphobic,** and all forms of **bullying.** Celebrate diversity by **wearing pink** and **challenge stereotypes** with special activities on that day.

Be creative!

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DAY of PiNK—Elementary actions

Ideas for teaching about gender role stereotypes and homophobia

Primary grades

1. Use toy advertisements from magazines and flyers and have students cut them out to make collages. Ask them to decide what sort of toys are for girls and which ones are for boys as they create their collages. Ask, *Is it possible that some girls or boys would be interested in the other's toys? Would it be OK to play with them? What might happen?* Get them to appreciate that toys don't have a gender. For Kindergarten/Grade 1 classes: extend this to conversations about who might be able to play in the house centre, block centre, dress up centre. Work to debunk rigid ideas about gender.
2. Read *The Sissy Duckling* by Harvey Fierstein to your class. Follow it up with a discussion of boy's and girl's hobbies. Make a T-chart of their interests. (Have students generate ideas in groups to get more participation.) Highlight some of the common answers. Ask, *Do ALL boys like _____? Or, Do ALL girls like _____?* Help them to understand that personal interests cut across gender lines. Explain that making assumptions about all girls or boys is an example of gender role stereotyping and that it boxes people in rather than freeing them to follow their own interests.
3. Read *We Share Everything* by Robert Munsch to your class. Discuss the teacher's negative reaction to the boy who wears pink. Ask students if her reaction was justified or reasonable. Work to debunk the stereotype that pink is a girl's colour and blue is a boy's colour. Uncover some other things or interests that students might believe are for girls only.

Intermediate grades

1. Start a poster contest for Day of Pink posters. Designate certain locations in the school as the sites for the winning posters. Also, create a poster gallery and invite other classes to come and view them. Explain that the posters are not about wearing pink, but about ending gender-based bullying. (Use videos like *It's Elementary* or *Sticks and Stones* to help them understand how gender bullying is connected to homophobia and transphobia. Show antiracism posters as models for ideas. Draw analogies between racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression with students.)
2. Play songs and show images of famous LGBTQ people, for example, Tegan and Sara, Clay Aiken, Queen, Tchaikovsky, Cole Porter, k.d. lang, George Michael, Leonard Bernstein. Many students know *The Circle of Life* by Elton John. Does it change their feeling about the song to know that the person who wrote it is gay? Create a PowerPoint (or bring in clippings) of famous LGBTQ people like Ellen DeGeneres, Laverne Cox, Neil Patrick Harris, and David Sedaris. Ask students to think about why many stars still stay closeted. For lists of

famous or historical LGBTQ people, see bilerico.com/2011/08/the_top_20_most_important_lgbt_figures_in_history.php or huffingtonpost.ca/2013/06/28/pride-2013_n_3516530.html. Order Queer Across Canada Musical-Education kit www.katereid.net/queer_across_canada/.

3. Word association activities and written reflections: Ask students to come up with all the taunts they hear about a girl or boy who does something like the opposite sex (e.g., You throw like a girl! Jamie is a sissy, Don't be such a gaylord!, etc.). You may want to read *Oliver Button is a Sissy* to introduce this topic.

Ask students, *Are these words that help or hurt others?* Next, ask them to work in groups to brainstorm everything they think of when they hear the words *lesbian and gay*. Circle how many things they generate which are negative. Ask students, *How would lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people (and/or children from same-gender families) feel if they heard these words used in a negative way?* Have older students write about the power of language to reflect upon the words they use/hear and their direct or indirect impacts upon other people.

4. Use videos: Watch the classroom version of *It's Elementary* or *Sticks and Stones* or a short YouTube clip called *The Pink Shirt* depicting the incident that started the Day of Pink. http://youtu.be/gjmf3I1_ZhU

Build discussions on scenes from the videos. Have students make their own short videos interviewing each other about things they would like to do irrespective of their gender. Students may also discuss how access to some activities might be limited due to reinforcement of traditional gender roles.

Create a Day of Pink play. See example here <http://bctf.ca/DayOfPink/>.

To borrow videos from the BCTF Information Services Department, email video@bctf.ca, or call Lesley Harrington at 604-871-2241, toll-free 1-800-663-9163.

Contact the International Day of Pink Mentorship and Resource Team

Feel free to contact volunteers at the International Day of Pink (info@dayofpink.org) to get help with your activities. The team can help you organize events, create customized activities, share with you what other schools are doing internationally, and send you resources (T-shirts, buttons, stickers, posters, films, and more). Free resources can be downloaded here—dayofpink.org/resources. Day of Pink also runs monthly campaigns that provide all the resources in an email.

Go to www.pridenet.ca to find an annotated bibliography of books and lesson plans. Contact the BCTF at 604-871-1857 for free classroom posters, or go to bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106 for more resources on LGBTQ issues.