

29 STEREOTYPING (Part 2 – People)

INTRODUCTION

Encourage the children to think back to ideas they had about houses last time and how their first ideas were not the only ones. There is often more than one story!

ACTIVITY

Ask children to draw a quick sketch of some of the following professions: a doctor; an astronaut; a dancer; a nurse; a fire-fighter; a hairdresser; a scientist; an airline pilot.

When the children have done a few of these (4 or 5 perhaps) ask the children to show their pictures. (You could also ask the children to name the people.) Are all the doctors men? Are all the nurses women?

Ask them about their ideas:

- Why do we often think of some professions as men and others as women?

Explain that it could be because for a long time, doctors were nearly always men and nurses were nearly always women. This is no longer the case but the *stereotype* remains. Make sure that children understand that our stereotypes do come from real life – many doctors are men and often the scientists we know from the media are also men. However, the important point to remember is that it doesn't have to be this way. Anyone can be a doctor if they have the right skills. Women can be scientists, engineers and footballers and men can be dancers, nurses and house-parents.

ACTIVITY

Now read the story of *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman (see review below). Stop at various points and ask children if they think Grace can be Peter Pan or not. Encourage them to begin their ideas with such words as:

'Some people might think...' rather than 'I think...'

Explain that this should help them to air their ideas more freely without fear of being criticised and the idea can then be openly discussed.

CONCLUSION

Ask children to think about places where it is still unusual but not impossible for stereotypes to change. For example, a women's football match on prime time TV is still unusual but it's becoming possible. Female lorry drivers... Male make-up artists...

Ask the children to look out for stereotypes and times that go counter to the stereotype. Also, they could try to challenge stereotypes when they come across them. For example, is it always the boys who are asked to move tables or stack chairs in the classroom?

Review of Amazing Grace

Grace loves to act out stories. Sometimes she plays the leading part; sometimes she is 'a cast of thousands.' When her school decides to perform Peter Pan, Grace is longing to play Peter, but her classmates say that Peter was a boy, and besides, he wasn't black... But Grace's Ma and Nana tell her she can be anything she wants if she puts her mind to it...

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Amazing-Grace-Mary-Hoffman/dp/1845077490>