



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

Suggested Grade Level: K-3

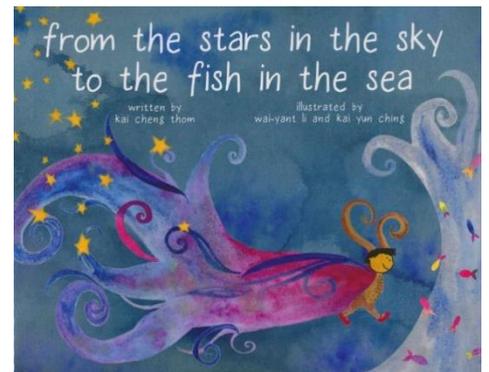
Length of Time: 35-40 Minutes

Goals

- + To expand students' perceptions and understanding of gender.
- + To help students understand what it can mean to be non-binary, using developmentally appropriate language for younger students.
- + To increase student understanding of ally behaviors.

Objectives

- + Students will read and discuss a story about a non-binary child named Miu Lin.
- + Students will learn new vocabulary words related to gender.
- + Students will learn about differences and being an ally.



Academic Standards

- + CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (Also RL.K.1,1.1,2.1, 4.1 and 5.1)
- + CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. (Also RL.K.3,1.3, 2.3, 4.3 and 5.3)

Educators' Notes

About the Book

In the magical time between night and day, when both the sun and the moon are in the sky, a child is born in a little blue house on a hill. And Miu Lan is not just any child, but one who can change into any shape they can imagine. The only problem is they can't decide what to be: A boy or a girl? A bird or a fish? A flower or a shooting star?

In this captivating, beautifully imagined picture book about gender, identity, and the acceptance of the differences between us, Miu Lan faces many questions about who they are and who they may be. But one thing's for sure: no matter what this child becomes, their mother will love them just the same.

"I really wanted to write a book where there [is] a kid who isn't a boy or girl, but is many things at once, and is being supported by a loving parent.... I think that's really all that we need to get through some of the most difficult times... we need to know that someone loves us and believes in our magic." — Kai Cheng Thom, author of *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea*.

Before Reading *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea to Your Students*

- + Review the book and think about what questions your students may have. Practice how you want to respond. Being prepared will help you to be comfortable with a topic that you may be unfamiliar discussing.
 - » Review [Defining LGBTQ+ Words for Elementary School Students](#) to prepare to define words for students.
 - » [Be Prepared for Questions and Put-Downs Around Gender](#) will help guide your answers to common questions that can arise around gender stereotypes and norms.
 - » If a student asks you a question and you're unsure of the answer, it's OK to say that you don't know! You could say you'll find out more information and get back to them.
- + When having discussions about gender, it is often important to review classroom rules about respect, given that gender is a common way that children can participate in identity-based bullying.
- + Ensure that every child in your classroom is empowered to share and express any aspect of their identities that may be considered by other students to be "different."
- + Remember student privacy. If you have students in your school or classroom who are transgender or non-binary, it can jeopardize a student's safety and well-being if they are outed to their peers or non-affirming adults.
- + Be mindful to not put transgender or non-binary students in the position of teaching other children about their identities. That is the job of the educator, not the student.

- + You may want to reference the [Gender Snowperson](#), a simple tool to break down the concepts of how you feel and know yourself to be (gender identity), who you love (sexual orientation), boy/girl assigned at birth (sex assigned at birth) and gender expression. Many people do not realize that gender identity and sexual orientation are two very different concepts and that all of us have both a gender identity and sexual orientation. There are lots of different ways to be a boy, girl, both or neither.

Materials

- + *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* by Kai Cheng Thom (she/her)
- + Paper, coloring supplies, paint supplies

Prompts for Discussion

- + What do we learn about Miu Lin in the story? What do they like?
- + How did other kids treat Miu Lin? How did that make Miu Lin feel?
- + If you were in their class, what could you do to be an ally (be kind to) to Miu Lin?
- + What did Miu Lin's mom do to always remind them that they were loved? What makes you feel special and loved?
- + What is the author's message to us?

Activity

- + In the story Miu Lin was a “strange, magical child who was always changing”.
- » Ask your students, “If you could be anything, wear anything, do anything you wanted, with no rules, what would you choose to be, do or wear?”
- » Have students draw and/or paint a picture of what they see in their minds.
- » Ask your students, “What could you say to encourage others to follow their heart and be who they want to be?”
- » Have students share their pictures with others and practice sharing words of support.

Extension

- + Continue the discussion about gender identity with some of books from the Welcoming Schools booklist [Diverse Children's Books with Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Expansive Children](#).
- + These lessons pair well with this book:
 - » [Red: A Crayon's Story –There's More To Me Than You Can See](#)
 - » [They, She, He easy as ABC: Understanding Names, Pronouns and Gender Expression](#)
- + These books are based on the real experiences of transgender, non-binary and gender expansive children.

- » *Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope*, Jodie Patterson
- » *My Rainbow*, Trinity and DeShanna Neal
- » *Sam is my Sister*, Ashley Rhodes-Courter
- » *I am Jazz*, Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings
- » *Jacob's New Dress*, Sarah and Ian Hoffman

Assessment and Evaluation

- + Ongoing teacher observation of gender-based teasing, and if it is recognized more often or becomes less frequent.
- + Ongoing teacher observation of whether or not students feel comfortable making choices outside the gender binary.

[Resources from Welcoming Schools](#)

- + [LGBTQ+ and Gender Inclusive Professional Development Training](#)
- + [Diverse Children's Books with Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Expansive Children](#)
- + [Lesson Plans to Help Students Understand Gender](#)
- + [Defining LGBTQ Words for Elementary School Students](#)
- + [Be Prepared for Questions and Put-Downs Around Gender](#)
- + [Transgender Children: Books to Help Adults Understand](#)