

## **Boys and Girls in Movies: Step-by-Step Procedures**

*Note: This lesson works with or without the accompanying video. The video will help visual learners understand what they are being asked to do, but it is not necessary to watch the video before engaging in the discussion and hands-on activity.*

### **Part 1: Thinking About Movies**

1. Ask your student to think of some of their favorite movies. You can list these movies out loud or make a written list.
2. Once your student has chosen 2-3 movies, ask them to think about their favorite character and least favorite character from each movie.
3. Wherever you are taking notes with your student, create a two column chart. Label one side "Boys" and the other "Girls." List each of your student's favorite and least favorite characters under the appropriate headings, being sure to leave plenty of space between each name so that you may take notes.
  - You may want to designate which characters are favorites and which are least favorites using symbols. For instance, you could mark favorite characters with a heart and least favorite characters with an X.
4. Ask your student to think about why they like or dislike each character. One by one, take notes under each character's name noting which traits your students notice.
5. Set this list aside for later use.

*Note: It may seem a little random to separate your student's characters by gender, but this will be revisited in Part 3 of the lesson! For more information on why I included gender in this lesson, see the Note attached to Part 3 or the webpage for the lesson.*

### **Part 2: My Movie Character**

1. Gather your student's art supplies. Now that they've had time to think about what kinds of characters they like and don't like, they have the chance to create any character they want. Ask your student to imagine that they get to make their "perfect" movie. Imagine what one of the characters from that movie would be like.
2. Students can take as much time as they'd like to draw their character. As your student is working, be sure to provide constructive feedback or even ask questions to encourage your student to think deeper.
  - You could ask them whether their character is a boy or a girl, whether they're a good guy or a bad guy, and what kinds of things they want. What do they

normally feel like and how can you tell? What would they talk like? What kinds of things would they do? You should encourage your student to think about their character beyond appearance.

- Some students feel more comfortable being creative if they are not doing it alone, so you may want to do this activity alongside them!

### **Part 3: Boys and Girls in Movies**

*Note: The next part of the exercise will ask your student to specifically think about gender in movies. These questions will help you and your student become more aware of how movies are affecting what they know and believe about boys and girls; knowing what children are learning about gender from movies will help me make movies that are as beneficial and empowering for children of all genders!*

1. As your student finishes up their character, ask them to join you for a conversation. Direct your student's attention back to the list of characters they made and ask them to think about whether the new character is like these characters or different.
  - Example questions: Which of these characters is your new character the most like? The least like? Does your character look like or sometimes act like any of these characters?
  - Is your character more like the boy characters or the girl characters? Do the girls characters have anything in common? Do the boys?
2. Next, ask your student to think in general about the characters they see in movies and the character they imagined.
  - Are there certain things you like about boy characters but don't like about girl characters? Do you tend to like boy characters or girl characters more? What kind of boy characters do you like? What kind of girl characters do you like?
  - If you're a girl, do you like girl characters that you see in movies? If you're a boy, do you like boy characters that you see in movies? What do you wish was different?
3. Feel free to let your student guide this conversation in the ways that come naturally to them. This is a chance for you two to explore their natural curiosities about gender, stories, and the world around them.

*Note: Don't lose your student's drawing of their character! You'll need it for Lesson 2.*