

LESSON TWO



ALIEN NATION

Aims

In this lesson we will build on the theme of our identity by looking at one specific part of identity, our gender, using the book “Alien Nation”.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- Have explored gender stereotypes and gender expectations that exist in our society, and whether these “rules” are useful or limiting to a person.
- Considered what it might be like for a person who feels that they are a different gender to the one they were assigned at birth.
- Have an understanding of gender identity, including terms “trans”, “non-binary” and “cis”.

Note: A fun precursor to this session might be to “create” the Alien Nation, by making three planets from cardboard (one pink, one blue and one multi-coloured), and three bridges. These can then be used as interactive props, whilst reading the book.

Resources



Provided: How is This Like Real Life? questions Page 14

Needed: Alien Nation book by Matty Donaldson.
Alien Nation “prop pack” available from www.theproudtrust.org/alien-nation
Box or basket.

Preparation

- 1) Read the entire lesson plan and book, to familiarise yourself with the content.
- 2) This lesson involves storytelling with interaction, so might be best delivered in a hall, or in a classroom with the tables and chairs cleared to the side.
- 3) Print out one copy of the Alien Nation prop pack. Cut out the planet and bridge images, keeping the pack in the right order. Or, gather the props that you have made, if you have chosen to do this.
- 4) Photocopy the “How is This Like Real Life?” question page, and cut up where indicated. Put these in a box or basket for later.

Procedure (total one hour)

Time	Activity	Method
5 mins	Introduction	Have all the children sat on the floor, in a circle. Introduce the topic by reading the aims of the lesson.
35 mins	Alien Nation	Read the book “Alien Nation” in its entirety, asking the questions where prompted and using the props from the printed prop pack (or the ones you have made) to make the reading interactive with the pupils.
15 mins	How is This Like Real Life?	<p>Using the questions you have already cut up and prepared, one-by-one, have the children select the questions from the box or basket, and discuss the topic that gets selected for as long as it feels useful.</p> <p>You could also use the Alien Nation “Exploring Gender” poster included in the pack to continue your discussions.</p>  <p>The poster titled "EXPLORING GENDER" features a central rainbow planet with a ring. It is surrounded by several speech bubbles with questions: "Do you think there should be rules about gender?", "What things do you like?", "What things do you hate?", "Which planet were you sent to as a baby?", "Which planet do your friends prefer?", "What would your ideal planet be like?", "Which planet do you feel closest to today?", "What pig things do you like?", and "Explore gender more...". It also includes labels for "PLANET GIRL", "PLANET BOY", and "NON-BINARY PLANET", along with the logo for "THE PROUD TRUST" and "THEPROUDTRUST.ORG".</p> <p>You might also use the Alien Nation “Trans...” poster included in the pack to discuss the meanings of other words that have the prefix “trans...”</p>  <p>The poster titled "TRANS..." defines the prefix: "A word that can mean: • To cross over • To go through • To change from one thing to another". It features illustrations of a rocket labeled "Transport", a person labeled "Transform", a globe labeled "Transmit", a house labeled "Transparent", a person labeled "Translate", a person labeled "Transfer", and a person labeled "Transgender". It also includes a rainbow flag, a sign that says "WE ARE TRANSGENDER", and a speech bubble that says "Read our story". The logo for "THE PROUD TRUST" and "THEPROUDTRUST.ORG" is at the bottom.</p>
5 mins	Plenary	<p>Bring the discussion to an end.</p> <p>Questions to ask the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have you enjoyed? • What have you learned?

HOW IS THIS LIKE REAL LIFE?



How did the aliens that got sent to the wrong planets when they were born, feel?

What did the aliens do to create a nation where everyone felt happy?

Who can remember what “trans” means?

Which planet would you like to live on? Why?

Who can remember what “cis” means?

Who helped build the bridges?

Who can remember what “non-binary” means?

Should we have rules about what girls and boys can and can't do? Why?

What would you do or say if your friend told you that they were non-binary?

What would you do or say if your friend told you that they were cis?

How is this like what happens to people in real life?

What would you do or say if your friend told you that they were trans?

What was your favourite part of the story?

What have you learned from the story?