Pink Shirt Day Toolkit

Origins of Pink Shirt Day in Canada

The first Pink Shirt Day was organized in 2007 by David Shepherd and Travis Price of Berwick, Nova Scotia. After a male Grade 9 student, Charles McNeill, was threatened and harassed for wearing a pink shirt during the first day of school, the two students took a stand against homophobic bullying when they bought and distributed 50 pink shirts at their school. In Canada, Pink Shirt Day is recognized annually on the last Wednesday of February. Find out more on the **Pink Shirt Day website.**

International Day of Pink

The International Day of Pink is a day against homophobic, transphobic, and all forms of bullying, recognized annually on the second Wednesday of April. Celebrate diversity by wearing pink and challenge stereotypes with special activities on this day. Find out more on the **International Day of Pink website.**

Making The Day Meaningful

Whichever of these days your district or school chooses to celebrate, be creative, have fun, and most importantly make the day meaningful by exploring the origin of the day, how gender stereotypes affect us all, and to speak up when we hear name-calling or discrimination. Pink Day reminds students that they can:

- Play any sport, game or with any toy
- Play with children of any gender
- Wear any colour and style of clothes or hair
- Be who they are and help others to do the same
- Stand up to name-calling and discrimination and make a difference

Leading a Pink Day Discussion

After reading or summarizing the **CBC News Article - Bullied Student Tickled Pink by Schoolmates T-shirt Campaign**, ask students these questions to help create awareness of gender stereotypes and homophobia, make connections to other forms of bullying, and emphasize the importance of being an "upstander". They can be adapted to suit the age of your students.

1. Why do you think the older students picked on the boy in the pink shirt?
2. What names do you think they called him? What name do we give to this kind of name-calling?
3. Are there certain colours, activities, or even jobs that are only for people of a certain gender?
4. Do boys at our school usually wear pink? Why not? Are girls teased for wearing certain colours or doing certain things?
5. Can it be hard for kids who stand out at our school? What are some of the differences that people at our school are teased about?
6. What can we do as a school to help kids who are being teased? What would you do if you saw someone being teased for being different?

Ideas and Activities to Honour Pink Shirt Day:

- Organize a *rainbow chalk-in* (draw chalk rainbows and write Pink Day messages).
- Ask students to lead a *Pink Day assembly* to share the history of Pink Shirt Day and the role students can play in challenging homophobia, transphobia and all forms of discrimination.
- Distribute *pink slips of paper in the shape of a T-shirt* where students can write something they learned on Pink Day and/or their Pink Day Pledge. Post these around the school or hang from a clothesline.
- Write *positive messages on colourful post-it notes* and put them on bathroom mirrors and doors.
- Create a *"tree of kindness"* using pink leaf cut-outs for staff and students to write positive and encouraging messages on and attach.
- Ask students to make *Pink Day messages* on the morning announcements and/or for the daily bulletin.
- Ask your librarian to display *books that challenge gender stereotypes*.
- Bring in a *speaker, such as Out in Schools or Skipping Stone*, to talk about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).
- Put up *posters and resources* such as *The Gender Unicorn* from **Trans Student Educational Resources**.

Lesson plans to create meaningful learning on Pink Shirt Day:

- **SOGIeducation.org BC Curriculum Lessons K-12**
- *Gender Doesn't Limit You* **Lesson Series Gr K-5**
- *Girls and Boys on Television* **Lesson Plan Gr 3-7**
- *Challenging Gender Stereotyping and Homophobia in Sports* **Lessons Gr 6-12**

Suggested Videos for Pink Shirt Day

Primary:

Expressing Myself, My Way

(3:36 min, Grades K-3)

This fun song reminds younger students that they can dress and express themselves in any way they choose.

Intermediate:

Why was pink for boys and blue for girls?

(9:33 min, Grades 4+)

This video explains how until the 1940s, the norm was "Pink for Boys" and "Blue for Girls" and explores how strictly gendered colours came to be.
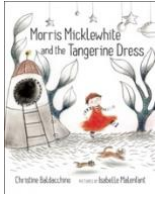
Secondary:

Travis Price - Creating Pink Shirt Day

(4:00 min, Grades 4+)

In this video, Pink Shirt Day founder Travis Price explains the origins of the first PSD in Canada in 2007.

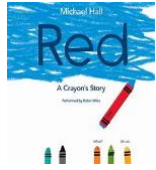# Suggested Book Choices for Pink Shirt Day

Picture Books on Gender Diversity and Identity

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress by Christine Bladacchino (Grades Pre-K-1)
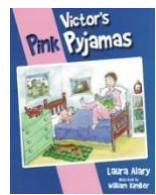
Download Lesson Plan

Morris paints amazing pictures and he loves his classroom's dress-up center, especially the tangerine dress. The other children don't understand--dresses, they say, are for girls. And Morris certainly isn't welcome in the spaceship his classmates are building--astronauts, they say, don't wear dresses. Inspired by his dream, Morris paints a fantastic picture, and everything begins to change when he takes it to school.

Red – A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall (Grades K-2)

Download Lesson Plan

A blue crayon mistakenly labeled as "red" suffers an identity crisis. Almost everyone tries to "help" him be red until a friend offers a new perspective. He's blue! About finding the courage to be true to your inner self, this can be read on multiple levels.

Victor's Pink Pyjamas by Laura Alary (Grades 1-3)

Searchable Lesson Plan

Victor loves his pink (accident-in-the-washing-machine) pyjamas. But not everyone does. But Victor knows that lots of wonderful things are pink – like strawberry ice cream, bubble gum, and walruses basking in the sun – and they're not just for girls. In gentle ways, the story examines how people in Victor's life react to something "different" and shows how he remains undaunted and empowered in the face of various responses.

Fiction Books for Intermediate Grades & Beyond

Melissa's Story previously known as *George* by Alex Gino (Grades 3-8)
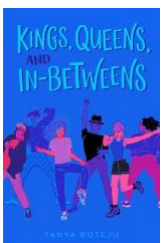
Download Lesson Plan

When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy: she knows she's a girl. When her teacher announces that their class play is going to be Charlotte's Web, George really, REALLY wants to play Charlotte. But the teacher says she can't even try out for the part . . . because she's a boy. With the help of her best friend, George comes up with a plan so that everyone can know who she is, once and for all.

One True Way by Shannon Hitchcock (Grades 4-7)

Download Lesson Plan

Welcome to Daniel Boone Middle School in the 1970s, where teachers and coaches must hide who they are, and girls who like girls are forced to question their own choices. A story of two girls who discover their friendship is something more, set against the backdrop of history and politics that surrounded gay rights in the 1970s South, this novel is a thoughtful, eye-opening, look at tolerance, acceptance, and change, and will widen the hearts of all readers.

Kings, Queens and In-Betweens by Tanya Boteju (Grades 9-12)

Download Related Lesson Plan

Nima is bored with her insular community of Bridgeton, in love with her straight girlfriend, and trying to move past her mother's unexpected departure. After a bewildering encounter at a local festival, Nima finds herself suddenly immersed in the drag scene on the other side of town. Macho drag kings, magical queens, new love interests, and surprising allies propel Nima both painfully and hilariously closer to a self she never knew she could be -- one that can confidently express and accept love. But she'll have to learn to accept lost love to get there.

For more secondary titles, please refer to the **SOGI 1 2 3 Top Books for SOGI Education**