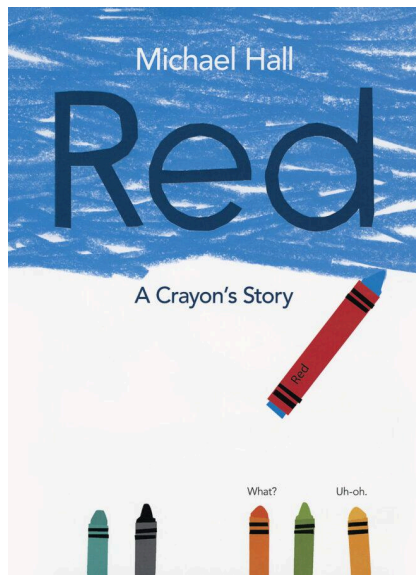


Elementary Book Lesson



Book Title

Red, A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall

Recommended Ages

4 - 8 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

A blue crayon is mistakenly labeled as red and struggles to find his sense of identity. Those around him try to help him become successful at being red, but to no avail. Red becomes miserable. He can't be Red no matter how hard he tries. Finally, another crayon helps Red discover that he has been blue all along and Red learns to embrace his identity.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver/Educator

- What do you know about how your students perceive their own or others' social identities?
- What were you taught by your family about your various social identities? What were you taught in school or your community?
- As an anti-bias educator, where else in your curriculum and practice can you include more discussion around social identities?

Reader's Note

Personal identities are the things that make us unique (likes/dislikes, personality type, skills, peculiarities, talents, etc). Social identities relate to the social categories that society puts people in, often without their consent or control (race, gender, age, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, ability, race, religion, etc.). These social categories are constructed to keep some groups on top and others on the bottom. These social identities are often what society judges us on, and for our students, these are the identities that are targeted for teasing or mistreatment.

Often schools focus on developing children's personal identities. Discussion and positive representations of social identities are also necessary and important to healthy, complex identity development as is learning to respect and appreciate all of each other's differences in order to prevent bias-based teasing and mistreatment.

This story can be a metaphor for how we assign labels for social identities to people and the bias that comes with these labels. When people don't fit the schema associated with

a social identity, it triggers bias. Labels and bias associated with social identity have a great impact on how we feel about ourselves. In order to reduce bias levels, discussions around identity differences need to be shared.

Discussion Questions

1. In this story, Red seemed to fail at everything he tried. Why?
2. **What do you think it would have been like to walk in Red's shoes when everyone was trying to help him? How about when everyone judged him?**
3. **This story is about assumptions. Everyone assumed they knew what the problem was and how to solve it. When this happens, what do we miss?**
4. How did Berry's fresh perspective change things for Red? Have you ever experienced anything like that? Have you ever been in Berry's shoes and been able to do something that helped someone see themselves differently? How did that feel?
5. **Prejudice and stereotypes can happen when people make misinformed assumptions about others based on their outward appearance or the social groups to which they belong. Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever made an assumption about someone else and then learned you were wrong?**
6. **What can we learn from Red's story of struggle and discovery that can make our classroom a place where everyone can be themselves?**

Journal Questions/Extension Activity

1. Everyone seemed to think that Red needed to be fixed. This affected how he saw himself. When Berry asked Red to try something new, he said he couldn't. Tell about a time when you thought you couldn't do something but were encouraged to try. How did this change how you saw yourself?
2. Each character's views about what they thought was wrong with Red shaped how they interacted with him. Tell about a time when this happened to you or someone else. What could have made the situation better?
3. Each of us has complex, multiple identities that influence how we see ourselves and the world. Share what makes you a unique human being, then list the groups that you belong to: i.e. ,gender, race/ethnicity, religion, urban/rural, social groups, etc. How have assumptions about any of these groups or social identities impacted you?

Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

SEL

Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

ABE

Empathy and Understanding

Healthy, Complex Identities

Respect Across Differences

Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

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