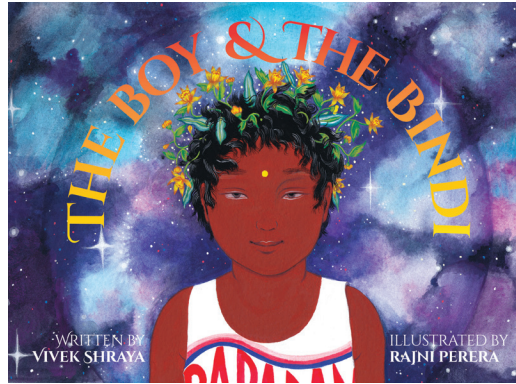


THE BOY & THE BINDI



TEACHER'S GUIDE

Created by
Robin Phillips and Meghan Park

UNIT PLAN

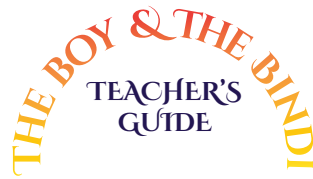
This teacher's guide is an adaptable resource to support students and teachers as they explore and engage with *The Boy & the Bindi*. The lessons were piloted with a group of Grade 2 students; however, they can be adapted to suit the learning needs and interest of students ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Learning Intentions and Outcomes:

- explore the concepts of identity and culture
- challenge dominant expectations about gender expression
- explore non-conventional gender expression

Key Questions:

- Does what we wear define who we are? If so, how?
- How do cultural dress and symbols influence how we are read by others?
- Is being "different" a good thing or a bad thing?
- Do objects/clothes express our identity? If so, how?



BEFORE READING

Minds On: Agree/Disagree Game

Post signs at the front of the classroom that say “yes” and “no.”

Students listen to a sentence/statement and decide if they agree or disagree with it. If they agree, they go to the “yes” sign, if they disagree, the “no” sign, and if they are unsure they go in the middle.

Sample statements:

Students should go to school in the summer.

Grade I students should not have recess.

Dogs are the best pets.

All boys are good at sports.

Only girls can be nurses.

It’s okay for boys to play with dolls.

It’s okay for boys to wear pink.

Discussion/Debrief:

Can be ongoing, following each statement. You may ask students to share why they agree or disagree.

Teacher may comment on the variety of responses from the class. For example, you may say, “We learned a lot about how boys and girls are expected to behave/look/dress ... Are all people with blond hair the same, do they all act the same way?” ... etc.

Character Introduction: Image Gallery Walk

Post images around the room of characters from literature, celebrities, cartoon characters, and a variety of “everyday” people, as well as an image of the main character from *The Boy & the Bindi*.

Play music and have students walk around the room and look at the images. Have them stand beside the picture that they are most drawn to or have the most questions about. Have a scribe in each group record the comments and questions.

Have each group share. Teacher consolidates student thinking by looking for common themes and ideas shared among groups. Teacher asks students to expand on their ideas and explain their thinking. This conversation is guided by the teacher. Teacher assesses if gender biases are present in student comments and if so, works to challenge student thinking and build new learning.

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GETTING STARTED

Building on Prior Knowledge:

KWL Chart

K= know

W= want to know

L = learned

(readwritethink.org)

Show the students the cover of the book. Read the title to the students. Tell them, we are going to read this book: *The Boy & the Bindi*. Pose the question to the students: What is a bindi? Record student answers in the “K” column of a K-W-L Chart (what they already know about bindis).

If required, additional prompting questions can be used to tap into students’ background knowledge. For example: “Who wears a bindi?” Continue to record student answers in the K column (what the students already know about bindis).

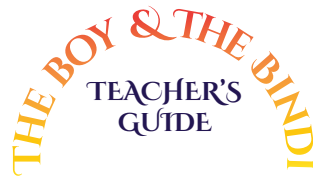
If students have limited background knowledge about what a bindi is, show a picture of a woman who is wearing a bindi. Ask the students if there is anything else we should add to our K column based on this picture.

Move to the W column. Pose the questions: “What would we like to learn about bindis?” and “Are there any other questions about the text we are about to read?”

Record all student questions in the W column (what the students want to find out about bindis).

At the completion of the text, work collaboratively to add information to the L column (what the students have learned about the bindi from reading the text).





Making Predictions and Inferences: A Picture Walk

In preparation for reading the book aloud to the students, activate their interest and curiosity by engaging them in a “picture walk.”

Before opening the book, show the children the cover and read the title. Ask them what they think the story will be about. Then slowly flip through the book, page by page, without reading a single word. Ask them questions about each picture they see and encourage them to make inferences based upon the images.

“**What** is going on here?” “**Who** is this?” “**Why** does the character look so excited?” “**When** is this story taking place?” “**Where** did the character just come from?” “**How** do you think the story is going to end?”

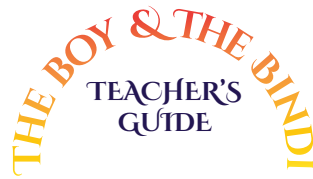
(readingtokids.org)

Exploring Individuality: Theme Concept Chart

Work with students collaboratively to build a definition of individuality. You can then reference a dictionary to add to your definition, to confer, or to modify the definition.

Next, ask students to think of both examples and non-examples of individuality from their lived experiences. After that, you can ask them to think about examples and non-examples of individuality from texts (including movies). In building your collaborative definition of individuality, you may also want to introduce the concept of conformity. Add these ideas to support your definition. The students will share their own experiences, allowing for opportunities to tap into background knowledge and engage student voices.

This is a working document. Post it on a chart paper and add to it as the unit progresses. Consider asking students: Is individuality important? If yes, why? If no, why not?



Exploring Emotion: Tableau

Stop at the line: “*But when I’m outside, people stare.*”

Teach students the elements of tableau. Tableau is a group of silent, motionless figures used to represent a scene, theme, or abstract idea, or an important moment in a narrative. Tableaux (plural) may be presented as stand-alone images to communicate one specific message or may be used to achieve particular effects in a longer dramatic work. Important features of a tableau include character, space, gesture, facial expressions, and levels. (Taken from the 2009 Ontario Arts Curriculum. For more instructional information on teaching tableau visit: code.on.ca/resource/tableau)

In groups of 3-4, have students create a tableau that captures the line of text, “*But when I’m outside, people stare.*”

Present tableaux in the round. While each group is holding the tableau, the teacher will tap each student and have them share what the character they are playing is feeling/thinking at that moment in time, e.g., “I feel nervous” or “Why are they staring?”

It is possible for this activity to support a discussion about bullying. It lends itself to a conversation about how we respond to people who are different from us. It enables us to ask the question of our students, how do we respond to difference? Do we judge people for their uniqueness or do we celebrate individuality? Before concluding the conversation revisit the following lines from the text in order to emphasize that the boy’s choice to wear a bindi makes him feel brave and safe:

*“My bindi turns into a star, and then
My forehead turns into the sky, that’s when
All my fears fade out of sight ...”*

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DURING READING

To Feel Safe: A Simile Lesson

After reading the section: *“What’s a bindi, what does it do? My bindi keeps me safe and true ... I look at her bindi with this new view. I too would like to be safe and true.”*

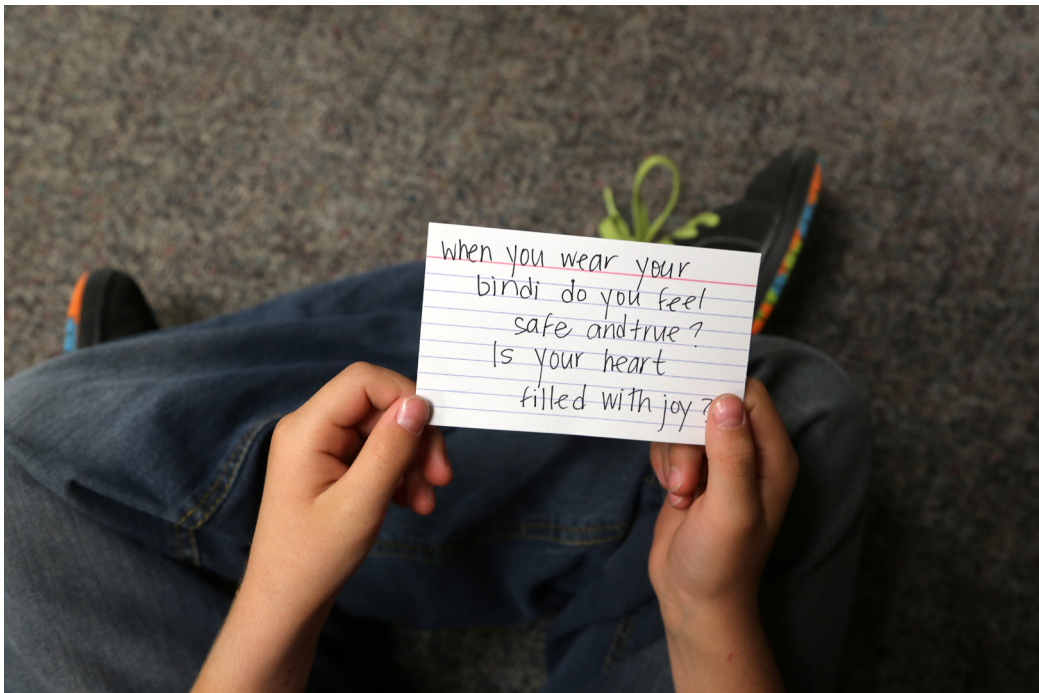
Ask the students what the words “safe” and “true” mean. Write their ideas on the board.
Ask: “Why is it important to feel safe? Why is it important to be true to ourselves?”

If necessary, teach what a simile is and what it is used for. Consider using the idea that similes are used to paint a picture in the reader’s mind or to bring an emotion to life.

Encourage the students to brainstorm and unpack their thinking by asking questions: “What does being true to ourselves feel like?” or “What does safety feel like?”

Next, have the students write their ideas in the form of a simile. For example: “Being true to myself is like a warm summer day” or “Safety feels like a big cup of hot chocolate and a hug from my mom.”

Art extension: Have the students illustrate their simile.



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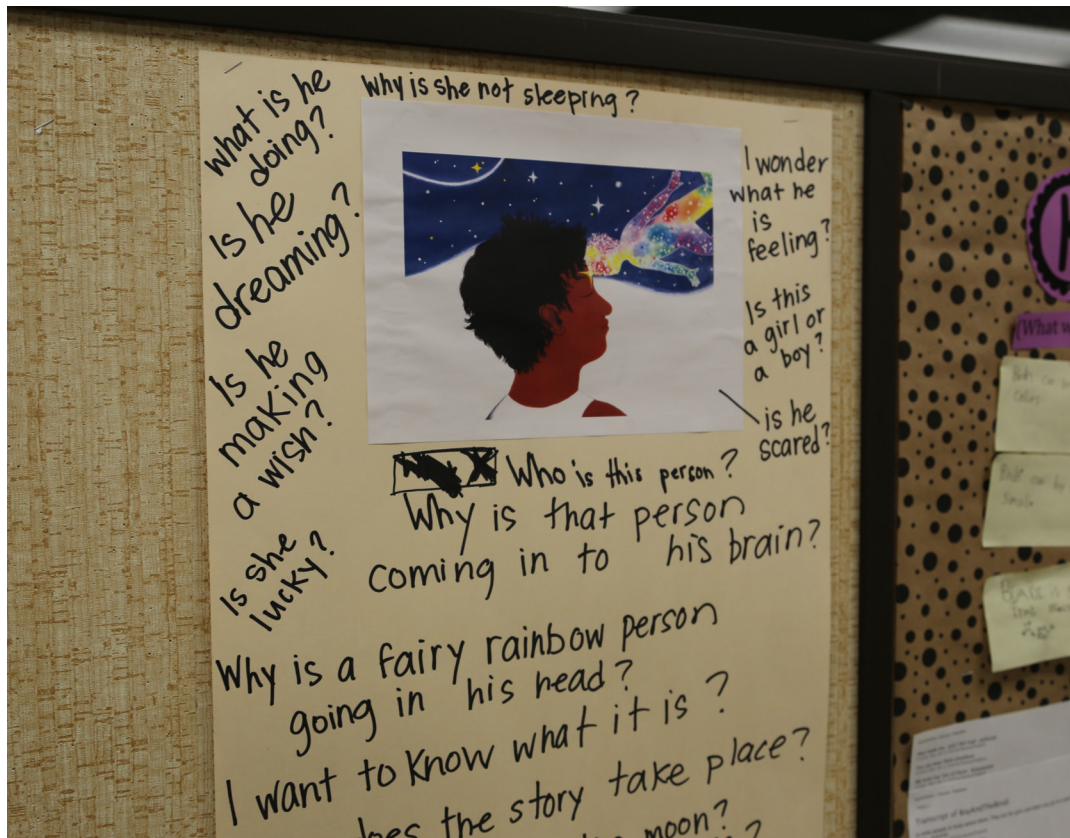
Mother and Son: An Exercise in Role

Stop when the boy asks his mother, “*Can I have a bindi to wear?*” Have the students take on the role of the mother and respond to the boy. This can be done in pairs: one student as the mother, one student in the role of the boy. Have the students share in the conversation between mother and son. Then come back as a whole group and have students share their “in role” interaction. What do the students predict the mother will say?

Finish reading the text and discuss how the students’ drama responses were both similar to and different from the text.

Writing extension: As a class or individually, students write a letter from mother to son (i.e., *Dear Son,*).

Review the conventions of letter writing. Have the students imagine what the mother would say to the son. Students can use the ideas from the previous drama activity to support their writing.



AFTER READING

Compare and Contrast: Tableau

Review the principals of tableau (code.on.ca/resource/tableau)

Tableau prompts:

The boy without the bindi

The boy with the bindi

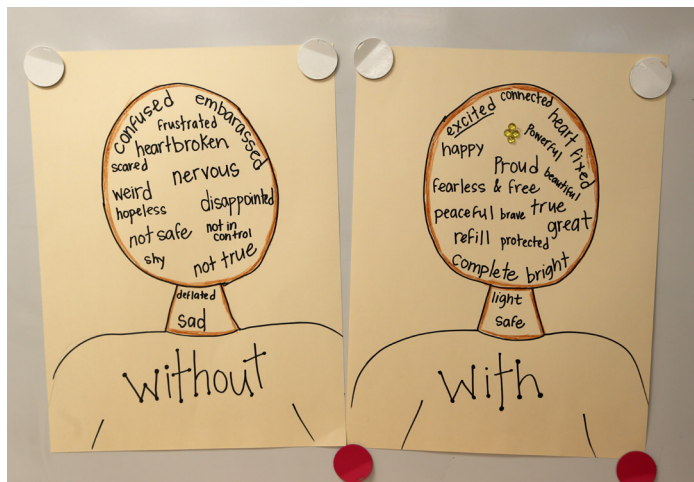
With My Bindi: Role on the Wall

Have students work in small groups. Have one student lie down on a large piece of paper and have the other students trace the outline of their body. (Have them draw a bindi the colour of their choosing.) Make several outlines using different students.

Next, using the information gathered from the text, have the students write **inside** the outline words or short sentences that describe how the boy feels when he wears his bindi.

Post the outlines around the room and have students walk around the room to view and read the outlines created by their peers. Teacher then facilitates a whole group consolidation. What words do they notice are repeated? What words do they think are most powerful? Why?

For more information on this teaching strategy, visit: dramaresource.com/role-on-the-wall/



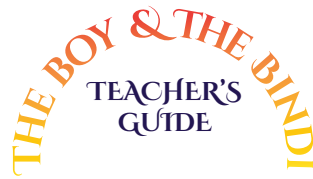
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Museum of Us: Celebration of Learning

Have each student pick an object that makes them feel “safe and true.” Encourage students to think about their families and cultures when brainstorming possible items for this task. Is there something that has been passed down to them from a grandparent? Is there something unique to their culture or religion? Is there something so special to them that if someone took it from them they would feel lost?

Have students write about their object and the connection they have to it. Display this work alongside the object or a photograph/illustration of the object. Invite other classes, administrators, parents, etc., to view the museum.





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Photos courtesy of Guy Weadick School

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