

The story of Ferdinand - Self-acceptance

EXPLANATION:

The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf is a book about a bull who would rather smell flowers than fight and is happy to embrace his differences. Ferdinand is caught between staying true to his nature and living up to others' expectations and stereotypes. The book provides momentum for discussions about conformity and individualism and self-acceptance. Students can explore their uniqueness whilst acknowledging other's diversities.

YEAR LEVELS: Years 4–6

STUDENT GROUPING: Whole group discussion and pair activities

ACTIVITY LENGTH: 40–60 mins

LINK TO CURRICULUM:

English: Sequence of content F–6

Strand: Literacy

- Listening and speaking interactions-interacting with others sub-strand (Skills students use when engaging in listening and speaking interactions?)

Strand: Language

- Punctuation: How punctuation works to perform different functions in a text.

See also Personal and Social Capability learning continuum sub elements:

- Recognise personal qualities and achievements
- Become confident, resilient and adaptable
- Communicate effectively
- Appreciate diverse perspectives.

SCOPE OF TASK:

1. Activate students' prior knowledge by asking students what they know about bulls.
 - What do they look like?
 - Are they pets? Why? Why not?

Create a table and in one column list attributes associated with bulls writing them on the whiteboard. These could include: big, fierce, wild, farm animal – what new vocabulary words can be included?

2. Introduce the book *The Story of Ferdinand* and tell the students that they are to pay attention to the character's personality and nature and whether he is a typical bull.
3. Read aloud *The Story of Ferdinand* or click on the link to hear the story narrated:



4. Ask the students to recap the story and encourage them to share opinions:

- What happened to Ferdinand?
- Why was Ferdinand different?
- What is bull fighting in Spain?

5. Create another column in the table and list all the words that the students use to describe Ferdinand. Discuss the differences that can be noted between the two lists.

Bulls	Ferdinand

6. Ferdinand can be described as a sweet and peaceful bull which is not normally how bulls are described. Introduce the word *stereotype* and how sometimes we presume things about people. Highlight the importance of not assuming things about someone until you get to know them.
7. Question the students about how they feel when they are different to others:
 - What makes people unique?
 - What are the characteristics that make them individuals?
8. Tell the students that we are going to explore the characteristics that make each one of us a unique individual.

9. Organise the students into pairs and set them questions which help them explore similarities and differences. Questions can be created for the specific group of students but could include:
- What is your favourite colour?
 - What is your favourite food?
 - What sport do you like to play?
 - Do you live in a house or apartment?
 - Who do you live with?
 - Where have you travelled?
 - What do you think is your most special feature?
 - What is your favourite book?
 - What makes you unique and different?
10. Ask students to report back to the group identifying the unique characteristics they have discovered about each other.
11. Complete the activity by reflecting on how important it is to accept our and others' differences highlighting that it is important to be yourself and celebrate uniqueness.

**This book also has themes about Animal Rights; violence; and respect for others.
Some of these themes may be more suitable for older students.**

RESOURCES:

Leaf, M. (1936). **The story of Ferdinand the bull**. Puffin.

Online video: The Kindness Curriculum- The Story of Ferdinand, Read by Tahnee Clark sourced from https://youtu.be/_1EEFHd8D_s

