

# ROLE-PLAY SWITCHEROO

Time Allotted: **15 min**

## Materials

- Sticky notes, each with a large red or blue dot, one of each for each girl

## Steps

Without realizing it, the girls may be playing out stereotypical gender roles in their own lives. This activity will help make the girls more conscious of stereotypes by giving them a chance to take turns role-playing girls and boys in a classroom situation.

The roles to play: one teacher and an even number of girl and boy students.

Let girls choose whether they want to be girl students and wear sticky notes with blue dots, or boy students and wear red dots.

Ask for a volunteer to play the teacher (who can be male or female), then ask all the girls to decide what subject she should teach (such as math, science, history, or English).

## SAY:

- *Now you're going to pretend you're in a classroom. The teacher will be in front of the class, leading the lesson by asking questions and encouraging a discussion.*
- *As you play your parts, remember that your character is either a boy or a girl.*
- *There's no right or wrong way to play this game--you're just acting out what you've seen in your own lives.*

After the girls have done this role-play for a few minutes, ask girls to switch their blue and red dots so that the girl and boy roles are reversed. Continue the role-play for several more minutes.

When the role-play is over, guide a discussion among the girls. **SAY:**

- *Who put their hands up the most, boys or girls?*
- *Who offered their opinions the most?*
- *Who disrupted the most, boys or girls?*
- *Did you feel or act differently when you played a boy rather than a girl?*
- *Is there anything you now want to change about how you act in class? If yes, what? Why?*

After the girls have had time to share their ideas, **SAY:**

- *When we think about people in only one way, it's an easy shortcut for our brains--but it's not necessarily the right thing to do!*
- *After all, you wouldn't want others to think about you in only one way, would you? That might limit the roles you could play and the ways you could be in the world. That wouldn't tell your whole story!*

- *It's easy to fall into the trap of limiting the roles we think people can play. For example, you might not think of your dad as someone who would help you choose a party dress. Or you might not think that your mom would be the one to teach you how to ride a bike.*
- *When we limit what people can do based on their gender, age, physical looks, or heritage--even if it's only in our minds--that's called stereotyping*
- *Have you ever heard the word stereotype before? How have you heard it used? When and in what ways have you noticed people stereotyping others?*
- *What's a stereotype you just noticed about being in the classroom, and what can you do about it?*