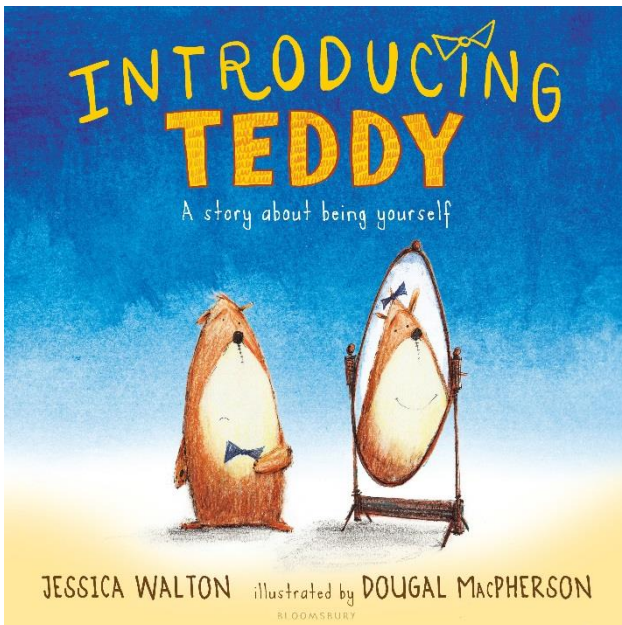


## Teachers Guide *Introducing Teddy*

By Jessica Walton

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### SYNOPSIS

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Errol and his teddy, Thomas, are best friends who do everything together. Whether it's riding a bike, playing in the tree house, having a tea party or all of the above; every day holds something fun to do together.

One sunny day, Errol finds that Thomas the Teddy is sad, and Errol can't figure out why. Then Thomas the Teddy finally tells Errol what Teddy has been afraid to say: 'In my heart, I've always known that I'm a girl Teddy, not a boy Teddy. I wish my name was Tilly.' And Errol says, 'I don't care if you're a girl teddy or a boy teddy! What matters is that you are my friend.'

A sweet and gentle story about being true to yourself and being a good friend, *Introducing Teddy* can also help children understand gender identity.

### AUTHOR BACKGROUND

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**Jessica Walton** lives with her wife, son and cats in Melbourne, Australia. She was inspired to write *Introducing Teddy* after her dad transitioned into the woman she had always been on the inside. Jess wanted a simple, positive story with a transgender character that she could read to her young son. She hopes her book may help other parents, adults and educators to start conversations with their kids about diversity, gender identity, and the importance of being yourself and being a good friend. A former secondary teacher, Jess is passionate about literature, board games, the ukulele, and funky prosthetic legs (her current one features green dragon scales). This is her first book.

### ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND

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**Dougal MacPherson** once drew a truck on a rainy Sunday afternoon to entertain his young son. Since then, he has illustrated for tech websites and conferences, and now *Introducing Teddy*. Dougal lives with his wife, son, daughter and a cat called Monster, in Australia. He documents the antics of his family through fifteen-minute drawings in his popular Instagram account: @15mindrawings.

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## UNDERSTANDING GENDER IDENTITY IN PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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*Introducing Teddy* can be used to prompt conversations about the importance of being yourself and being a good friend. This section contains activities focusing on the elements of a picture book. As students learn about front covers, blurbs and the direction of text, they'll also be introduced to the idea that it's important to be true to yourself and kind to others. You'll notice that these activities don't focus on gender or gender identity as specific themes, though students will of course still be introduced to these ideas gently by reading and discussing the book.

- What is a picture book? Let's take a look at *Introducing Teddy*!
- Activity 1: *Introducing Teddy*, the Cover
- Activity 2: Being Yourself
- Activity 3: Show Us Your Bows!
- Activity 4: Friendship
- Activity 5: Perspective Shift
- Activity 6: Picnics Inside When It's Raining

*Introducing Teddy* can be used to discuss gender in general. Children get a lot of messages from society about what boys and girls should like, wear, play with, do and say. These messages, expectations and stereotypes may make children feel limited and prevent them from expressing themselves fully and happily. By unpacking and challenging gender expectations and stereotypes, we can help young people to be themselves.

- Activity 7: Sorting Out Gender
- Activity 8: Shopping for Gender
- Activity 9: Finding the 'Both' Column
- Activity 10: When I Grow Up

*Introducing Teddy* can also be used to discuss gender identity more specifically. Note that children will initially get different things from reading this book, depending on their age and experiences. Children will be gently introduced to the idea by reading the story; they can then ask questions and discuss it in language they understand. You can introduce words like 'transgender' in the conversation following the reading, if you wish to.

- Activity 11: Discussing Gender Identity With Children

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## THEMES

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### Gender Identity

- Discussion Point: Why doesn't Tilly the Teddy want to go to the park? Why is she sad?

### Friendship

- Discussion Point: How does Errol react when Tilly tells him that she is a girl teddy? What does he say? Is Errol being a good friend to Tilly the Teddy? How does that make Tilly feel?
- Discussion Point: How does Ava react when Errol tells her that Tilly has a new name? What does she say? Is Ava being a good friend to Tilly the Teddy? How does that make Tilly feel?
- Discussion Point: What four activities do Errol and Teddy always do together *before* Teddy tells Errol she is a girl? What four activities do Errol and Teddy always do together *after* Teddy tells Errol she is a girl? Is there something important about Errol and Tilly doing the same activities together at the beginning and end of the story? What do you think the author is trying to tell us?

### Gender Expectations and Stereotypes

- Discussion Point: Tilly decides she wants to wear her bow on her head instead of wearing it as a bowtie. Ava is wearing a bow in her hair, but decides she doesn't want to wear it anymore. Errol isn't wearing a bow in his hair or a bowtie on his neck, but he could if he wanted to! Should boys wear one thing and girls wear another? Why should you wear what you want to wear?

### Being Yourself

- Discussion Point: If you had a bow, how would you wear it? You could wear it on your wrist, or clip bows on to your shoes or hat! What clothes do you love to wear? Why do they make you happy? Why is it important for us to wear what makes us happy?

## NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

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*Introducing Teddy* is written by Jessica Walton and illustrated by Dougal MacPherson. Jess' dad came out as transgender later in life, when Jess and her siblings were all adults. A few years after Tina came out, Jess and her wife had their first child. Jess wrote this book so her children would have books on their shelf that reflected the diversity in the community and in their family. She wanted something simple, positive and appropriate for a child of any age. She hopes her book may help other parents, adults and educators to start conversations with their kids about being yourself, being accepting of diversity, thinking about gender stereotypes and expectations, and understanding that some people have a gender identity different to the one they were assigned at birth.

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## Before Reading *Introducing Teddy* to Young People

- Read *Introducing Teddy* first yourself, and think about the questions that your child or students might ask. Think about how you would answer these questions. Preparation will help you become comfortable and familiar with a topic that may be new to you. Remember that if you don't know the answer to a child's question, it's alright to be honest about that. You can always let them know you'll find out the answer for them.
- Take a look at the definitions and vocabulary below, and become familiar with them before you read this book with your child or class.

## DEFINITIONS AND VOCABULARY FOR THE PARENT/TEACHER

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When babies are born, they are assigned a **sex** based on their genitalia. Sometimes a person's gender identity is different to the sex they were assigned at birth. Our **gender identity** is the strong feeling inside that we are male, female, or somewhere in between. It can be helpful to think of male and female as being at either end of a line, with a diverse spectrum of gender identities between them.

Our ideas about gender can be influenced by **gender stereotypes**, expectations that have developed over time about what boys and girls should wear, what activities and toys they should like, and what jobs they should grow up to do. It's important that children know there is no one right way to be a boy or a girl. What we like to wear and play with doesn't define our gender identity. Only we can know what our gender identity is, and we can express our gender identity any way we want to.

A cisgender person's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

For transgender people, their gender identity is different to the one they were assigned at birth. Some people's gender identity falls between male and female; they may identify as **genderqueer**, **genderfluid**, **gender expansive**, **gender non-conforming** or **non-binary**. Some people will identify as **agender** or **genderless**. It can be helpful to use '**Transgender and Gender Diverse**' (**TGD**) as an umbrella term for these gender identities.

If a person is not able to express their gender identity in a way that makes them happy, or if others do not recognise and respect their gender identity and use their pronouns and chosen name, it can be incredibly distressing for that person.

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## WHAT IS A PICTURE BOOK? LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT *INTRODUCING TEDDY!*

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Below are some examples of guided discussion with students about the nature, purpose and elements of a picture book. You may not have time to go through all of these, so choose the ones that are most useful to your students:

- **What sort of book is this?** Is it a big thick book with hundreds of pages that only have words on them? No! This book has 32 pages, and pictures on every page! **This looks like a PICTURE BOOK.**
- **Would we find this book in the fiction section of the library? Or the nonfiction section?** Nonfiction books give us information. Sometimes they are written as stories, but the stories are about REAL LIFE. They are not made up. Fiction books are stories that someone made up. They thought of a good IDEA for a story, and they wrote it down and turned it into a book! **This book is a FICTION book.**
- To reinforce the above discussion points, show students a few examples of chapter books vs picture books, and a few examples of nonfiction books for children vs fiction books for children.

Now, help the students take a look at *Introducing Teddy's* cover closely:

- We're going to read the story **INSIDE** this book, but first let's take a look at the **OUTSIDE** of the book.
- Which side is the **FRONT** cover and which side is the **BACK** cover?
- This is the **LEFT** side of the front cover, and this is the **RIGHT** side of the front cover. The words go from the left side to the right side! Some books are written in a different language, and their words might go in a different direction. If we read a book in Arabic, the words would go from right to left! (Show an example if you have one)
- Can you see a name on the front cover? The **AUTHOR** is the person that wrote the words in the book. The **ILLUSTRATOR** is the person that drew the pictures. Sometimes the author and illustrator are the same person, but there are two names here so we know the author and illustrator are two different people.
- On the front cover we have a **TITLE**. That's the name of the book! What is the name of this book?
- Sometimes picture books also have a **SUBTITLE**. It is usually in smaller writing underneath the title. What is the subtitle of this book?
- Picture books also have a **PICTURE** on the cover. Where is the picture on this front cover?
- The title, subtitle and picture on the front cover all tell us what the story will be about. Look at the picture again. Let's read the title and subtitle again. What do you think this book is about?
- Now let's turn the book over and find the **BLURB**. The blurb tells us a bit more about the story. Sometimes if people are looking at a book in the library or a bookshop they'll read the blurb to see what the book is about, so they'll know if it's something they'll like.

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## ACTIVITIES

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### **ACTIVITY 1: INTRODUCING TEDDY, THE COVER**

Have a pile of picture books ready. After the guided discussion above, give students cut-out words on paper with blue tack on the back. FRONT COVER, BACK COVER, TITLE, SUBTITLE, AUTHOR, ILLUSTRATOR, BLURB, PICTURE. Choose one picture book and, as a class, stick the words into the right spot on the front and back cover of the book. Put students into groups, and then ask them to complete the activity in their group with a picture book of their choice.

### **ACTIVITY 2: BEING YOURSELF**

Get students to discuss/brainstorm what 'be yourself' means. Give students the FRONT COVER HANDOUT (next page). This is the front cover of *Introducing Teddy*, with space for a students' name under the word Introducing and next to the words Illustrated by. There's a space for students to draw themselves. Encourage them to do a self-portrait that shows who they really are. If you are doing this activity with older students, they can add a 'blurb', a few sentences about what makes them who they are, on the back of the page.

If you have time, make copies of the students' covers, and get them bound into a book. You can use this book celebrating the students to revisit the topic of diversity and 'being yourself' in future discussions. For example, you could read through the 'class picture book' together and talk about how everyone in the book is individually different but part of a class, a community.

B L O O M S B U R Y

# INTRODUCING

A story about being yourself

Illustrated by

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## **ACTIVITY 3: SHOW US YOUR BOWS!**

Get students to reread the sections of *Introducing Teddy* dealing with bowties and bows.

Discuss the following with students:

Tilly decides she wants to wear her bow on her head instead of wearing it as a bow-tie. Ava is wearing a bow in her hair, but decides she doesn't want to wear it anymore. Errol isn't wearing a bow in his hair or a bowtie on his neck, but he could if he wanted to! If you had a bow, how would you wear it? Why is it important for us to wear what makes us happy?

Get students to complete the DESIGN A HAIR BOW OR BOW-TIE FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIEND! Handout in the FRIENDSHIP ACTIVITY PACK (found at the end of these notes). Older students may like to construct their own bow or bow-tie out of different materials. You could use the bows on the handout to help them trace a bow shape on to fabric or special paper.

## **ACTIVITY 4: FRIENDSHIP**

Once you've read the book, talk about what friends like to do together. What do Errol, Ava, Tilly and Robot like doing together? There are lots of examples in the book! One thing they do together is have picnics inside when it's raining.

Imagine that it's your friend's birthday, and you're planning a picnic for them. You are in charge of organising everything – a cake, a present, picnic food and some toys or activities. What would make them happy? Get students to use the PLAN A BIRTHDAY PICNIC! handout in the FRIENDSHIP ACTIVITY PACK (found at the end of these notes). Once students have planned their picnic and drawn themselves and their friends on the handout along with the food, toys and present, have a discussion about whether these objects are what make friendships strong.

What else happens in the book? Point out times where Errol, Ava and Tilly are *kind* to one another, times where they *accept and encourage* each other, times where they *spend time* with one another. Are these the things that really make up a friendship? How could we illustrate these ideas?

## **ACTIVITY 5: PERSPECTIVE SHIFT**

Get students to read the book again, with these questions in mind:

- Who is Ava?
- What is the first page where Ava appears? What is happening on this page? What is Ava doing? Who calls her? What does Ava say?

Have a go, as a class, at retelling the story from Ava's perspective. For example:

I was having a GREAT time building a robot in my bedroom, when I got a call from my friend Errol on the special walkie talkie phone I built last week. He was inviting me to the park! 'Sure, Errol!' I said. 'Let me just finish building my robot.' I jumped on my scooter and...

How does it change the story, telling it from Ava's point of view? Is the original version written from anyone's perspective? Could you try this activity with the other characters in the story?



# B L O O M S B U R Y

## **ACTIVITY 6: PICNICS INSIDE WHEN IT'S RAINING**

Take a look at the last scene, where Errol, Ava, Tilly and Robot are sitting together having a picnic inside. What do you think they're talking about? Can your class write a conversation between the four of them? What are their feelings, facial expressions, gestures? Notice all of the 'props' in the room on that page: teapot, cups, plates, biscuits, the 'phone' Ava built. Notice also the weather outside the window. Do the characters eat and drink during the scene? Do they mention the weather? What, looking at the rest of the book, do you think they could or would talk about?

Create a few short scripts from what the class writes, each of which will need Tilly, Errol, Ava and Robot, and potentially also a narrator. Get them to practise it in groups, before performing it in front of the class.

## **ACTIVITY 7: SORTING OUT GENDER**

**MATERIALS:** A selection of clothing, jewellery, hair accessories, hats, toys, sporting items and books.

Ask the children to sort the items into 'stuff for boys' on one side of the room, and 'stuff for girls' on the other side of the room. If they feel it can be for both boys and girls, they should put it in the middle of the room. Don't guide them in any way; let them work it out amongst themselves, but listen to the kinds of things that are said relating to gender to guide your discussions after the activity.

Ask the children what they thought of this activity. Did they all agree on which item belonged on which side of the room? Pick up the items one by one, and discuss why the children chose to put it on a particular side of the room, or in the middle. If the children have decided to allocate it to a particular gender, ask them what was behind that decision. Was it the colour? Was it associated with an activity they think only girls or boys can do? Is it an item of clothing or accessory that they think only girls or boys can wear? In *Introducing Teddy*, Ava and Tilly talk about wearing whatever makes you happy. How important do your students think it is to wear whatever makes you happy? To play with whatever toys make you happy?

If the item was placed in the boys' section, ask the girls if they sometimes use/wear/enjoy that item, and vice versa. How were they treated when they used or wore it? How do they think they would treat others who used or wore it? Where did the idea that this item was gendered come from? Can we 'de-gender' this item? Really challenge the kids to see the item as having no gender, so that everyone can enjoy using it. Encourage the idea that even if we wouldn't wear or use it, we should be kind and accepting of others who choose to, because it's good to be yourself!

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## **ACTIVITY 8: SHOPPING FOR GENDER**

Take the students to a department store where the clothing is sorted into 'girls' and 'boys'. Alternatively you could show them photos or a video of you walking through these sections, or use a clothing catalogue if you can't organise an excursion. However, there's nothing like walking through the sea of pink glitter and the sea of blue and grey dinosaur jumpers to make this point have the greatest impact. What are the differences between the two sections? What are the colours used in these two sections? What are the patterns? The textures? The items of clothing? What pictures are on the clothes? What characters from TV and movies?

Take them into the toys area. Is this sorted into 'girls' and 'boys' too? Alternatively, you could use a toy catalogue. If so, what are the differences between the two sections? What are the colours used in each section? What type of toy? What pictures are on them? Which TV and movie characters are represented in each section?

Come back to the classroom. Show students images of both boys and girls wearing a variety of clothes, patterns, styles etc. Have a discussion about why boys can wear pink sparkly leggings, and why girls can wear blue dinosaur jumpers etc. Show students a range of images showing girls and boys playing with a variety of toys. Have a discussion about why boys can play with dolls and prams, and why girls can play with footballs and lego sets that aren't pink.

If you have time, you could try repeating Activity 7, where students sort items into girls/boys/both. Have their opinions changed at all? If so, why?

## **ACTIVITY 9: FINDING THE 'BOTH' COLUMN**

In *Introducing Teddy*, Ava likes making and building things (walkie talkie phone thingies, robots), taking photos with her camera, riding her scooter, and swinging on the swings. She doesn't like wearing a bow in her hair.

Tilly likes riding her bike, gardening, playing in the tree house, having tea parties, and swinging on the swing. She likes wearing a bow on her head.

Errol likes drawing, tennis and soccer (see bedroom picture), riding his bike, gardening, playing in the tree house, having tea parties, and going to the park.

What do you like to do? Sometimes we call things we like to do 'hobbies'.

What job do you want to have one day?

Print out a list of jobs and hobbies and cut them out so they can be stuck to a whiteboard/wall. Make three columns: male, female, both. Get students to sort the jobs and hobbies into the columns. Remind them that they don't *have* to have ANY jobs in the 'male' or 'female' columns, they are welcome to put them all into 'both' if they want to.

Allow the children to sort the jobs and hobbies, then unpack why they chose to put them where they did. Show students a range of images showing men and women engaging in a range of jobs and hobbies. Have a discussion about why women can be football players and men can be professional dancers, for example.

# B L O O M S B U R Y

## **ACTIVITY 10: WHEN I GROW UP**

Get a range of speakers to come to the school and speak to students about their job, hobbies etc. Parents of your students could be a good place to start. See if you can find people who defy stereotypes in particular, such as a dad who enjoys knitting, or a mum who works in construction. This links these activities to real life people, something that can be more powerful than an activity or handout. Make sure you fill the parents in on the discussions you've been having prior to their talk.

## **ACTIVITY 11: DISCUSSING GENDER IDENTITY WITH CHILDREN**

If you plan to use the book to discuss gender identity specifically with your class, here are some prompts for discussion (these are expanded on in the 'themes' section):

- Why didn't Tilly the Teddy want to go to the park? Why was she so sad?
- How does Errol react when Tilly tells him that she is a girl teddy? What does he say? Is Errol being a good friend to Tilly the Teddy? How does that make Tilly feel?
- How does Ava react when Errol tells her that Tilly has a new name? What does she say? Is Ava being a good friend to Tilly the Teddy? How does that make Tilly feel?
- What four activities do Errol and Teddy always do together *before* Tilly tells Errol she is a girl? What four activities do Errol and Teddy always do together *after* Tilly tells Errol she is a girl? Is there something important about Errol and Tilly doing the same activities together at the beginning and end of the story? What do you think the author is trying to tell us?

Complete some of the activities on gender stereotypes and expectations before providing a basic explanation of gender identity and what it means to be transgender. For example:

When babies are born, the doctor says 'Congratulations, it's a boy!' or 'Congratulations, it's a girl!' Many of us will be happy growing up as a boy or girl. The way we feel inside about being a boy or girl (our 'gender identity') will match up with what the doctor said when we were babies.

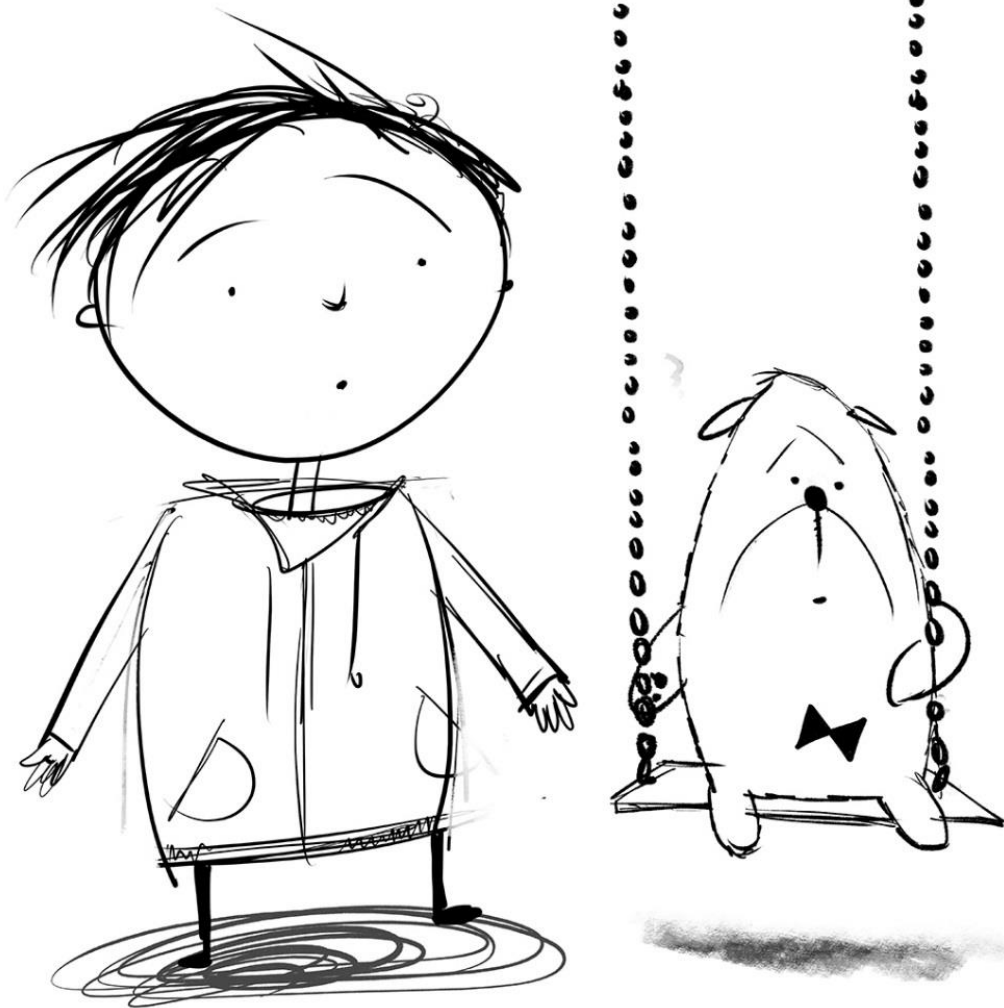
This isn't true for everyone, though. Remember at the beginning of *Introducing Teddy*, when everyone thought Tilly the Teddy was a boy teddy even though she knew in her heart that she was a girl teddy? Some people will feel the same way that Tilly did. They might choose a new name like Tilly, and they might decide to wear different clothes or change their hair if that's what makes them happy. Hopefully they have some friends like Errol and Ava! We all need friends who accept us for who we really are. Some people who feel the same way Tilly did use the word 'transgender' to describe themselves. A *transgender* person is someone who has a different *gender identity* to the one they were *assigned* (given by the doctor) at birth. Some people might use other words to describe their gender identity (gender expansive or gender diverse, for example). The important thing is that we are kind and understanding toward each other, whatever our gender identities are!

## **FURTHER ACTIVITIES**

Below you will find:

- Colouring-in exercises. There are two different pictures students can colour in.
- The Friendship Activity Pack (mentioned in Activities 3 and 4). This pack also contains further arts and craft activities for students to complete in their own time

B L O O M S B U R Y



# B L O O M S B U R Y



# INTRODUCING TEDDY

Friendship Activity Pack



JESSICA WALTON  
DOUGAL MACPHERSON

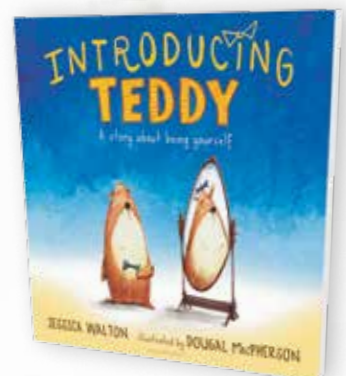
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# Plan a birthday picnic!

It's your best friend's birthday and you want to plan them a special picnic to share together. Draw all of the things they love to eat and drink on the picnic blanket below!



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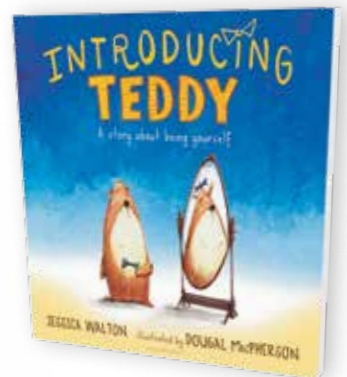


# Design a hair bow or a bow tie for you and your friend!

You and your best friend are off to a party! Colour in and decorate the bow tie and hair bow below for you both to wear. Remember, you can wear whichever you like!



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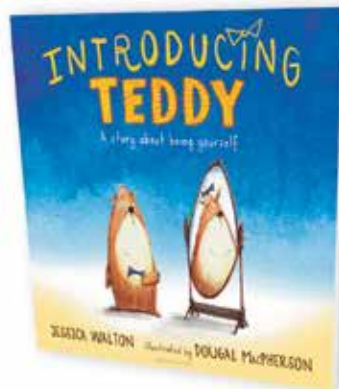




# Reading is fun with a friend!

Sharing a book with a friend can be so much fun! Ask an adult to help you print and cut out the bookmark below and give one to someone who means a lot to you.

Be the bear  
you are inside!



A sweet, gentle story about  
friendship, gender and being yourself

By Australian author Jessica Walton

[@JessHealyWalton](#)

Illustrated by Dougal MacPherson

[@5mindrawings](#)

Coming June 2016

ISBN 9781408877623

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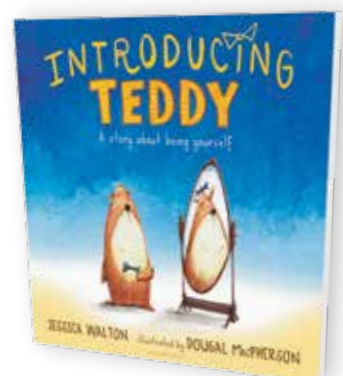
Jessica Walton was inspired to write *Introducing Teddy* after her dad transitioned into the woman she had always been on the inside. When Jessica's son was born, she wasn't able to find any books featuring transgender characters for young children. So she decided to write the book she wanted to be able to read to her son.

Jessica Walton and Dougal MacPherson both live in Melbourne, Australia. They are available for interviews and events.

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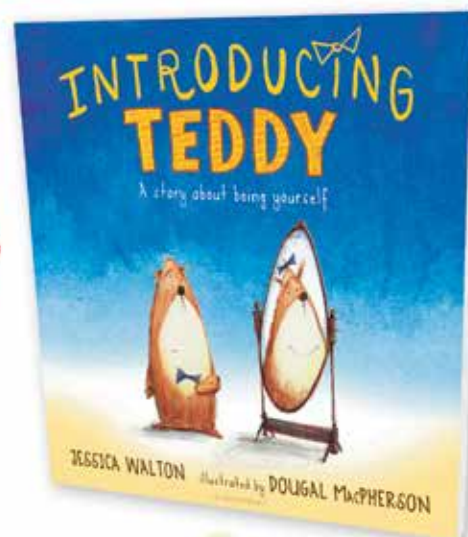
# Decorate your room!

Ask an adult to help you print out the poster below so that you can decorate your room. You can always be reminded of the importance of friendship and being kind to each other, just like Errol and Tilly!

Be the bear you are inside!  
A story about being yourself



A gentle story about friendship and gender, starring a very courageous teddy



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