



INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMANE EDUCATION

# WHEN I GROW UP

by Ashley Miller

## PURPOSE

Help students think critically about gender stereotyping in jobs and careers and consider non-traditional gender roles.

## GRADES

Pre-K-3

## TIME

30-45 minutes

## MATERIALS

- paper, writing and drawing utensils (markers, crayons, etc.)
- pictures showing men and women in traditional and non-traditional gendered careers

## SUBJECT AREAS

Art, Language Arts and Social Studies/History

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Forthcoming

## PROCEDURE

1. Have students seated in small groups at their tables or desks.
2. Tell students they are going to draw pictures of people doing their jobs (emphasize that they are NOT drawing themselves in these jobs, but rather adults).



3. Give each student a large piece of paper folded into fourths and ask each child to draw four of the professions that you name.

**Alternative:** Assign groups different professions and have each student in that group draw only that one profession.

4. Choose an equal mix of jobs traditionally thought of as “male” and “female” (e.g., fire fighter, nurse, doctor, police officer, construction worker, secretary, teacher, professional athlete) and name them for your students to draw (depending on the format you've chosen). Note: Be sure not to say “man” in the names (i.e., use fire fighter instead of fireman).
5. When students have completed their drawings (or time is up) have students gather in a circle together and share their drawings.
6. First compliment their pictures or notice things they did, to set a positive tone.

7. Then lead a discussion. First, begin to point out/ have them point out if they notice anything about whether the workers for certain professions are mostly/all men or women. For example:
  - I notice that everyone who drew a firefighter drew a man. Why do you suppose that is?
  - Have you ever seen fire fighters who are not men? (e.g., remember that the fire fighter who talked to us at the last fire drill/who was in last week's story was a woman!)
  - When we see fire fighters in movies/ cartoons/ toys (you can find examples for them to look at), are they men or women? Why do you think that is?
8. Discuss: Do men have to be x (use examples from their drawings) and women have to be y? Show pictures of women and men engaged in non-traditional job roles and encourage students to talk about them.
9. Ask students what jobs/careers they might like to have when they grow up. If time allows, encourage them to draw themselves engaged in the job(s) they mentioned, and share these (you may wish to post them on the wall with a heading such as "When I Grow Up I Can Be Anything I Want to Be").

## EXTENSION

Have students be stereotype detectives and check books, Lego sets, toys, etc., for gender stereotyping.