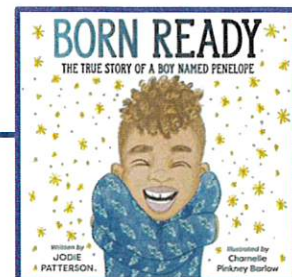


BORN READY: THE TRUE STORY OF A BOY NAMED PENELOPE

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Authors: Jodie Patterson (she/her)

Illustrator: Charnelle Pinkney Barlow (she/her)



About the Author

Jodie Patterson, activist and Chair of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation Board, shares her transgender son's experience in this important picture book about identity and acceptance.

Jodie Patterson is a social activist and author, who's been lauded for her work globally. She holds the position of Chair of the Board of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, as well as Advisor to the Ackerman Institute's Gender & Family Project, and to Mount Sinai Hospital's transgender health center. She was appointed by the United Nations as a Champion of Change and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she raises her five children with love, education, and family solidarity.

About the Book

Penelope knows that he's a boy. (And a ninja.) The problem is getting everyone else to realize it. In this story, Patterson shares her son Penelope's frustrations and triumphs on his journey to share himself with the world. Penelope's experiences show children that it always makes you stronger when you are true to yourself and who you really are.

Community Discussion Questions

- + Everyone thinks that Penelope is a girl and treats him like a girl. How does Penelope respond to this?
- + When Penelope was born, the doctor or midwife said that he was a girl. Now that he is older, he can tell people who he knows himself to be, that he is a boy. What is the word that Penelope uses to describe himself in the book? (Transgender).
- + How does Penelope let people know that he is a boy? Does he change something about himself? Are there some things that he does not change?

Activities

- + Play "Switch It Up!" - Set up just enough seats/spots in a circle for everyone but one person. This person starts in the center of the circle and says, "Switch places if you ..." and then finishes the sentence. Everyone who fits the description must get up and change seats; in the general commotion, the person in the center tries to get a seat/spot also. Whoever is left standing there, gets to be in the center.
 - Examples: "Switch places if you..."
 - Like ninjas.
 - Like skateboarding.
 - Like wearing high-tops.
 - Like math.
 - Like science.
- + In the story, Penelope says he doesn't know everything, but he knows what he likes. "Skateboards and high-tops, baggy blue jeans, button-front shirts, math, science, and getting straight A's." Draw a picture of you and the things you like.

Want a more in-depth learning opportunity?

Welcoming Schools has gender lesson plans, including the [Born Ready Lesson Plan](#) available for download at WelcomingSchools.org.