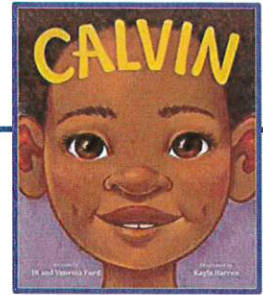


CALVIN

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Authors: JR Ford (he/him) & Vanessa Ford (she/her)

Illustrator: Kayla Harren (she/her)



About the Authors

JR and Vanessa Ford are nationally-known advocates for LGBTQ+ rights, specifically, rights for transgender youth. They were both founding members of the Human Rights Campaign's Parents for Transgender Equality Council. They live with their two children, one of whom is trans, in the Boston, MA area.

About the Book

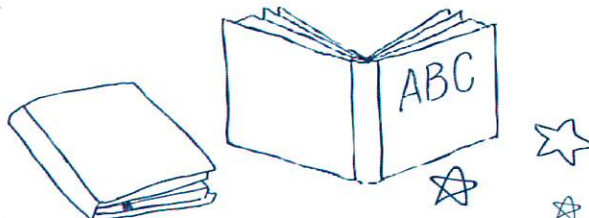
Calvin has always been a boy, even if the world sees him as a girl. He knows who he is in his heart and in his mind, but he hasn't yet told his family. Finally, he can wait no longer: "I'm not a girl," he tells his family. "I'm a boy— a boy in my heart and in my brain." As the first day of school approaches, he's nervous and the "what-ifs" gather up inside him. But as his friends and teachers rally around him and he tells them his name, all his "what-ifs" begin to melt away. Inspired by the authors' own transgender child.

Community Discussion Questions

- + In the book, Calvin's father says that Calvin is transgender. Can you describe what the word transgender means for Calvin in this story?
- + Why do you think Calvin was so happy to be called by his real name, the one he shared with his lion?
- + What pronouns did Calvin want to be called? What other changes did Calvin make to be himself (gender expression--hair, clothes)?
- + Whenever Calvin had to do something scary his dad always said, "take a breath and count down from 5". Are there things that you do or say to yourself when you are feeling scared about something?
- + Do you know or have you ever heard about someone who is transgender?

Activities

- + Draw a picture of you with your favorite stuffed animal. Share with others how you feel when you are snuggling your stuffed animal.
- + Play "Just Like Me!" with one person or a group of people. Have one person read the statements and if the statement applies to you, you can stand up/clap/snap, etc. to show that the statement applies to you. Watch to see what you have in common with others and what makes you unique. Get creative and allow others to share ideas!
 - Starting with some of the things that were important to Calvin in the story...
 - I like waterslides.
 - I like jumping rope.
 - I like popcorn.
 - I like reading comics.
 - I like wearing costumes.
 - I like putting on a fashion show.



Want a more in-depth learning opportunity?

Welcoming Schools has gender lesson plans, including the [Calvin: A Time to Be Me! Lesson Plan](#) available for download at [WelcomingSchools.org](#).