

# King and the Dragonflies

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Description: discussion-based program using [King and the Dragonflies](#)

Materials: a stack of multi-colored paper, scissors, tape

Estimated Cost: \$750 for the author, \$100 for the facilitator

Prep Time: unknown time to secure funds for an author visit and a skilled facilitator for diversity-related conversations, half an hour to cut the shapes out and set up the discussion/activity area

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Instructions: Get the teens settled around a big table and give them the usual intro:

“Welcome; thanks for coming! This is going to mostly be a discussion, so we’ll do a go-round. Give us your name and anything that will help you feel comfortable in the space or—if you have a headache, have to leave early, have a pronoun preference—anything you think it’s helpful for us to know.”

Introduce the opening activity: (from [Include-empower.com’s Tag Game](#) which is adapted from Fowler (2006)) In this exercise, the teens will stick badges, in a variety of shapes, colors, and sizes, somewhere between their waist and neck.

Instruct teens to form groups without talking. There are no instructions given as to what criteria to use to form the groups. Once formed, they are instructed to break up and form into new groups. This is repeated at least four times. Ask teens to make mental notes about each round of grouping.

Get folks seated again and talk about the point of the exercise—specifically, that participants in this exercise will normally form groups based on shapes, colors, or sizes. They rarely look beyond the badges, and even less rarely do they intentionally form diverse groups in which many shapes, colors, and sizes are represented. Introduce the facilitator and the author, and let teens know that we’re trying to talk about social categorization processes, the automaticity of “us” vs. “them” categorizations, and in-group bias using both the exercise and a book set a few hours away in rural Louisiana.

The author, Kacen Callender, will give a brief book talk on [King and the Dragonflies](#). They will read selected passages from the book that highlight the complexities involved in being black and queer, as well as the similarities and differences in how black and queer people are treated. The facilitator will then lead a group discussion with Kacen that explores these aspects of identity, how they relate to the initial exercise, and prompts teens to suggest ways to improve the recognition, support, and the value of diverse perspectives and experiences.

Learning Objective: Use contemporary literature to help teens explore concepts related to identity, bias, and intersectional experiences.



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