



Grace for President

Kelly DiPucchio , LeUyen Pham (illustrator)

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Where are the girls? When Grace's teacher reveals that the United States has never had a female president, Grace decides to be the first. And she immediately starts off her political career as a candidate the school's mock election. But soon, she realizes that she has entered a tough race. Her popular opponent claims to be the best man for the job--and seems to have captured all the male votes--while Grace concentrates on being the best person. In this timely story, author Kelly DiPucchio not only gives readers a fun introduction to the American electoral system, but also teaches them the value of hard work, courage, and independent thought--and offers an inspiring example of how to choose our leaders.

Grace for President Details

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ISBN : 9780786839193

Author : Kelly DiPucchio , LeUyen Pham (illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Realistic Fiction

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From Reader Review Grace for President for online ebook

Leslie says

We talk a lot about publishing books and films with strong female protagonists (and feminist themes) for the sake of our daughters. But how about publishing these works for the sake of our sons as well? Often portrayals of female heroes create a more masculine-than-thou figure, with the woman and/or girl out performing their male cast members in exhibiting “masculine traits” more successfully than anyone else and therefore they are a most powerful and enviable figure. The situation mimics those of a man emasculating another man in our culturally observed hierarchies. This device becomes difficult in how it still favors one gender over another; and while it may be an empowering moment for the girl, it becomes inaccessible to any other. Now I am not opposed to focused libraries, or empowering young people. I just think that there must be room to portray an empowered girl (and feminist sentiment like equality) that is accessible to and not at the expense of our young males.

"One Monday morning in September, Mrs. Barrington rolled out a big poster with all of the presidents' pictures on it. Grace Campbell could not believe her eyes. Where are the GIRLS?"

Wearing a tank top that makes me think Wonder Woman, Grace stews on the fact that the United States has never had a female president. She decides to run for office. And the wonderful Mrs. Barrington decides they should hold an election and invites another class to join in. Thomas Cobb is nominated as their candidate and this is worrisome to Grace. Thomas was a winner.

This is where I must tell you that this book is great in an election year. Each of the non-running students drew a state and thus controlled that state's electoral college. This is explained to the students and readers, and expanded upon in an “Author's Note” at the end of the book. Each candidate campaigns and models the popular ways of doing so. They create slogans and posters, list campaign promises, meet with constituents, and hold polls. Grace gives speeches, hands out free treats, and holds rallies. You see her go the extra mile. And we find that Thomas doesn't necessarily need to. “He had cleverly calculated that the boys held slightly more electoral votes than the girls.”

It is a nice addition the story to see how sincere Grace is about creating change and becoming a true leader. “Even before the election, Grace made good on her promises.” She models a good civic leader.

We come to the election day and each student, costumed to represent their state publicly cast their electoral votes. With Thomas at 268 and Grace at 267 there is only one more state and this 3 electoral vote will decide the election. The state is “The Equality State” of Wyoming and the student is a boy. It is a tense double-page spread wondering how Sam was going to vote. And then—he votes for “the best person for the job” (emphasis mine).

The election had transcended gender expectations and voting along strict party gender lines. The story became about our ideals: voting for the right person for the job as well as being the right person for the job.

“When deciding on how Grace should look, I thought an African American girl sounded ideal, and gave her as much spunk as I could. This, of course, was before Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton decided to run for president — how timely that my candidate is both female and African American!” LeUyen Pham (interview w/ “7 Impossible Things before Breakfast.”)

Grace is a bold figure who would encourage the female and minority reader to not be daunted by the way things are, envisioning a way things could be. DiPucchio creates realistic obstacles for Grace—at least in the proposed age bracket. The election process is not easy on Grace, and there is a lovely moment of her slumped in a winged-back chair exhausted. So the story isn't a motherly pat followed by an “of course you can, sweetie.” The book is more of a “please do,” with the reassurance that even a little blonde boy from Wyoming is a probable voter.

The book ends with a final image. A page depicting a grown-up Grace Campbell taking her oath of presidential office (from a more diminutive elderly white man). The opening and closing end pages? The first are framed portraits of presidents with Grace standing there holding her own frame, inserting herself into the gallery. The closing is a depiction of the Mount Rushmore with a carving of Grace's visage beside Abe Lincoln's.

LeUyen Pham's images go a long way toward the dramatization and impact of the story. It is vibrant with youthful energy, patterns and color. The main characters are given a lot of personality and share much of the characterization with the author. You will likely notice when Sam with his body facing Thomas during the double-page “meeting with constituents,” has his head turned toward Grace. But did you notice in the following pages how he is at every one of Grace's activities (minus the rally) as well as Thomas'? Grace is not the only powerful figure at work in the book. Both Grace and Sam are fighting for opportunity, for equality, and for the best person for the job.

You may think Grace for President is a good book for the girls in your life reader or no, but this is an informative and inspiring picture book for the boys in your life as well!

recommendations: Grades K-4; though Natalya (at grade 7 found it enjoyable, too). Great for explaining the election process from campaigning to how votes are tallied.

L (omphaloskepsis)
<http://contemplatrix.wordpress.com/20...>

Grace Bittle says

Of course I've read this book. . .

Emily Drake says

Title: Grace for President
Author: Kelly Dipucchio
Illustrator: Leuyen Pham
GR Level: L
Lexile: 570
Grade Level: 2nd and up
Publisher: Disney- Hyperion
Date: 2012

Genre: Hybrid

Pages: 40

Summary:

When Grace learns that there has never been a female president, she promises to one day change that and become the President of the United States. Her teacher takes her promise seriously and decides to prepare her by having a school election. Grace runs for president against one other boy in the school. The book gets into all the details of the election including campaign speeches and electoral votes. This story has a great plot line that will keep students interested along with great facts about how elections work.

Teaching Ideas:

After reading this book, I would have the class do its own election. I would have two students run for president and the rest of the class would be states (like they did it in the book). I would encourage the students to think about what the classroom needs in a president and use those factors in their speech or in their process of voting. The students would complete a writing piece that talks about either what they are going to change if they are president or what they want the president to do for the classroom.

I would use this project in a fourth- grade classroom.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.A

Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.B

Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1.C

Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).

Elizabeth S says

The book starts with the question, "Where are the girls?" In other words, why are there no girls as president in the history of the USA? When the other kid running for president turned out to be a white boy, I was worried that the book would end up being about voting for someone because he or she is the "right" race or gender. But race wasn't even mentioned.

What is mentioned are the electoral votes and how the electoral college works. Some of the kids vote based on staying true to their own gender, but some vote based on who they think will do a good job. (view spoiler)

This book is well written and well illustrated. It is a simple way for kids to learn about the electoral college. (There is a page of explanation with more details about the system at the end of the book.) The story is fun on its own. (Meaning that my preschooler enjoyed it.) But it would be a good vehicle for discussing all sorts of issues about politics, elections, tortoise and the hare, making a difference, etc.

Darcy says

Superb and inspirational! This book taught me that, although we have never had a woman president, if you are a girl who just tries really hard and is very qualified you can win and that will all be fixed! Huzzah! Don't know why it made my mom do her nose-wrinkle frowny face. -M

Amy Rae says

Probably most useful in a classroom, where teachers can help kids process all the info DiPucchio brings up about the electoral college. However, the surrounding story is genuinely sweet and very relatable--as a little girl, I remember asking in Sunday school if there had ever been any popes who were women, and the response I got disappointed me. Grace's drive and determination to correct a gender imbalance in another kind of election--and her ultimate reward, on the page after the end of the prose--made me really happy.

Desiree says

Grace for President explains the election process in easy to understand terms. This book would be a great title to add to a president, or election book bundle.

Brina says

Grace for President is a charming book relevant this year about class elections which teaches kids how the electoral college works. We have gotten this many times. The story is about a girl named Grace who innocently asks her teacher why there have never been any female presidents. This spurs her teacher to have a grade-wide class election with Grace as one candidate and a boy named Thomas as the other candidate. The rest of the students each represent a state and their electoral votes and naturally the girls all want to vote for Grace while the boys back Thomas. In the end a boy is Wyoming and the deciding vote and he votes for _____. My kids have really enjoyed this book and I recommended it to my daughter's first grade teacher to read in class. I think it is a good learning tool and can generate a lot of discussion amongst the kids so I would definitely recommend it to all.

Ashley says

So glad I have this book in my classroom for my students to read!

Sarah says

This is always a favorite with my daughter.

Julie Hafner says

Cast my vote for Grace for president! "Where are the girls?" Grace asked after seeing all of the men presidents. This inspires Grace to become the first Female president. Her first step is to win the election at Woodrow Wilson Elementary. This book teaches about campaigns, elections and the electoral college, a confusing topic even for adults. Through Grace, DiPucchio provides lessons in dedication, hard work and leadership.

Carolyn Hembree says

Rating this based sheerly on my child's response. Kid's books except for one or two make me want to dig a grave in the backyard and climb in. Anyhow, this one my kid sleeps with. Nice dramatic tension at the end (no spoilers), and there's some teaching on electoral college and that. Plus, it's a book on a girl noticing that, you know, the world is a boy's playground and that shit should change. Grace pretty much rules. So, it's a go for the kid.

extraordinary ordinary whimsy says

Engaging and covers the electoral college. By far the best children's book regarding election we've read.

Heather says

This is a really cute and inspiring book for children, but I feel it may go over their heads once the electoral college is brought in.

I think Grace was a cute character and she really showed how putting in the effort to get to know the voters was more important than just assuming people will vote for you. I also really liked how the book started off with a simple question: "Where are the girls?" The illustrations were beautiful and I really liked how you could almost imagine yourself as Grace as she was very expressive, which was cute.

I didn't like that even though this book is meant for young kids, her opponent is seen as almost a villain, along with the other classmates who "vote" for him. And I think at such a young age, it's important that at the end, we could have showed them shaking hands, or something to that effect.

Margaret says

This is an infuriating little picture book, and let me tell you why I'm saying that instead of 'cute,' like all the other reviews.

In class Grace notices all the presidents are men, so she decides she wants to be president when she grows up. Women deserve to be president too. The class laughs at her, but her teacher doesn't. Instead, her teacher decides that this is a great learning opportunity, and she'll set up a mock election with another class. But who should she run up against? A white boy is chosen. Because these teachers just don't get it, apparently.

So Grace is running against this white boy--the exact type of candidate every president ever has been. She works extra hard on her campaign, and does lots of volunteering so everyone sees she truly cares. Meanwhile, the white boy does a little campaigning, and then does his normal stuff. He notices that if all the boys vote for him, he'll have enough electoral college votes to win, so why work very hard on winning the election, when he can be doing other stuff?

It comes time to vote. Despite all her hard work while white boy has done almost nothing, he's winning by a small amount. It comes to the student representing Wyoming to decide whether Grace or the boy wins. And yep, he's another white boy. But in a big upset, he votes for Grace! Yay, a white boy makes a good decision. (Note, Wyoming was either the first state or one of the first states to grant women the right to vote, so this was a pretty cool easter egg for those who know).

Okay, doesn't this sound infuriating!?!? Grace literally does EVERYTHING she possibly can, and it's still only barely good enough to win her the election, and it still came down to a white boy's decision. This is a pretty good example of how privilege works. Girls have to work twice as hard as boys to get ahead, is the moral I got from this. If I were reading this book to my child, we'd have a discussion about privilege and how it shows up in this book. Well, I actually did read this to my child, but at 9-months she didn't quite understand my perspective.

It's a great book to explain how the electoral college works. I like the diversity, the illustrations are cute. It's still an upsetting book for this mommy to read.
