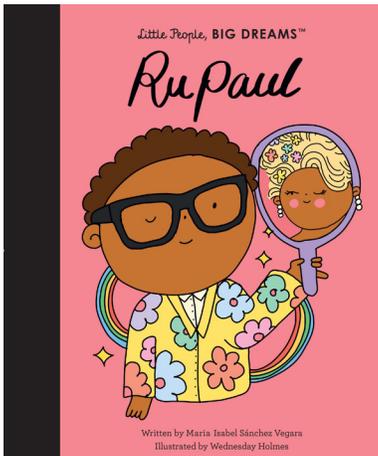


# Little People, BIG DREAMS™

## TEACHERS' GUIDE



RuPaul

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

RuPaul Charles grew up in California with his mom and three sisters. They encouraged him to be himself and dress however made him happy, even if other people thought it was too different. After struggling in school, Ru discovered the outfits and excitement of drag culture and eventually moved to New York City. He acted, sang, and created a successful TV show. RuPaul continues to inspire people to be true to themselves.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. How did RuPaul inspire others by living out his dream?
2. What important lesson did RuPaul's mom teach him?
3. What are some of the ways Ru showcased his performing talents?
4. What is *RuPaul's Drag Race* and why did Ru create it?
5. How did Ru express himself as an artist?
6. Why is RuPaul's message still important today?

### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Growing up in a family with his mom and three sisters was a big part of what helped RuPaul discover who he was and how he wanted to live his life. Ask the students to share about their families and any important family members who help them.
2. Ru felt like he didn't fit in because there were rules about how boys and girls should dress that he didn't want to follow (p.5). Show the class different images that are typically tied to gender like princesses, footballs, pink hearts, blue cars, etc., and ask the students to share which ones they like and why. If no one makes the connection, point out that what they like has nothing to do with

whether they are boys or girls and that anyone is welcome to like whatever they want.

3. Ru promised his mom that he would never stop doing the things that made him happy (p. 6). Pair up the students and have them each share something that makes them happy as individuals. Bring the class back together and have partners share what they learned about each other's likes and any commonalities they discovered.

4. Ru is famous for dressing in drag, which means he was born a boy but enjoys dressing up as a girl. The book says he was just as comfortable in high heels as he was in slippers (p. 10). Have the students share about their favorite item of clothing and why they feel most comfortable in it.

5. The book mentions RuPaul's friend and fellow drag queen, Lady Bunny (p. 8). Let the students know that drag queens often choose names that are different from their birth names. Lead a discussion on the importance of names. Ask students whether they like their name or if they would like to change it to something else. For an optional way to answer that incorporates movement, have students wishing to do the former go stand on one side of the room and students in the latter category stand on the other. Ask students to share why they made the choice they did.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Dress-Up Day - RuPaul discovered that he could create magic by playing his favorite game: dress up (p. 4)! Invite the students to dress up in a way that makes them feel the most magical, unique, and special. Ensure there are a variety of materials at school that can be used to put together a quick costume if students are unable to gather materials from home.

2. On p. 6, Ru's mom teaches him to love himself for who he is. Provide students with a large heart cut-out and have them draw or write what they love about themselves and what makes them special. Anyone who feels comfortable can share with the class.

3. Ru loved clothes and when he was designing his outfits, he would mix "a spoonful of everything he loved and admired" (p. 9) into whatever he wore. Provide a variety of art materials to students along with a paper doll and have them design an outfit that represents all that they love and admire. Students can create more than one fabulous outfit if they'd like!

4. On p. 15, the author shares RuPaul's valuable tip on how to make the most out of life with readers: "Don't ever think we are born just to fit in a box, we are born to stand out." Help students create their own inspirational posters with a line they create or one they choose from a provided list.

