

AMVZE works



Resources for Caregivers Navigating Conversations with Children on Race, Racism, and Discrimination For ages 3 - 12

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Dear Caregivers,

This collection of lessons on Race, Racism, and Discrimination serves as a resource to help guide conversations with children. Our young people are frequently impacted by these things, whether implicitly or explicitly. At AMAZEworks, we believe that building a healthy identity, learning to show respect across differences, and naming and taking action against instances of injustice all begin from honest, intentional conversations. We thank you for engaging in this difficult, yet invaluable work.

We also know the power of sharing stories. When we listen to each other's stories, we build empathy. This empathy is necessary if we want to shift our thinking from "their issue" to "our issue." When we take time to understand racism and discrimination in all its forms, we are better equipped to stand up to it.

This work requires time and dedication. These books and lessons are a starting point. If you have additional questions or want more resources, we encourage you to visit our website:
www.amazeworks.org.

In solidarity with all who strive for justice,
AMAZEworks

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers

Book Title

All the Colors We Are, by Katie Kissinger, Photography by Chris Bohnhoff



Recommended Ages

3 - 7 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

Today we're going to read a story about how people get their skin color. When you think about your friends and neighbors, do you notice that all of us have different skin colors? Some of us might have skin colors that are pretty similar, but everyone's skin is at least a little different from everyone else's. What do you think makes our skin different colors? Let's read the story and see if we can find out more about that.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- When did you first notice that people had skin colors different from your own?
- How were those differences perceived and/or discussed in your family, school, community?
- What have you noticed about the way young children talk about differences in skin tone with each other?

Reader's Note

Read the background information on page 28 before reading the book to students. There are also several good activities at the back of the book to extend learning.

This book provides children with language to discuss differences in skin color. Children are not colorblind. They see differences. It's the messages they get about the value society places on these differences that lead to bias, prejudice and stereotypes. Unpacking skin color and how/why we all have different skin colors help children notice and appreciate their own as well as other people's uniqueness. A shared vocabulary and being empowered to ask questions, make connections, and discuss differences can help build a strong sense of self and respect for others.

Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

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Self-Management

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

ABE

Empathy and Understanding

Healthy Complex Identities

Respect Across Differences

Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

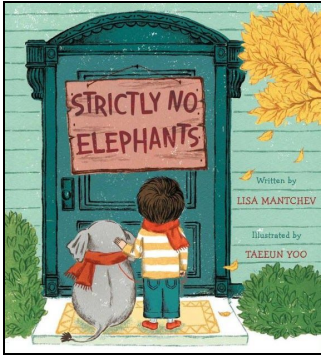
Discussion Questions

1. The author talked about three different ways we get our skin color. Can you remember what those three ways are?
2. Who can remember the word for our long ago relatives? (ancestors) What do you know about your ancestors? Where did they come from?
3. What makes our skin different colors? Who can remember the word for that?
4. What does melanin do for us?
5. Why do some people have lighter or darker skin than others?
6. There were lots of pictures of people in the book. What was the same about all of those people? What was different?
7. Look at the skin colors on page 4. What would you call this color (point to one)? What about this color? Which color best matches your own skin? What color would you call your skin?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Try one of the activities in the back of the book, particularly the paint swatch activity on page 30.

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



Book Title

Strictly No Elephants by Lisa Mantchev, illustrated by Taeun Yoo

Recommended Ages

3 - 8 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

Today is Pet Club Day, but the Pet Club doesn't understand that pets come in all shapes and sizes, just like friends. This story shows what true friendship really means and the joys of having a pet.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Think back to when you were a child. What messages did you receive about people who were different from you and how you were expected to relate to those differences?
- Think about a time when you were a child and felt left out? How is that similar to or different from feeling left out as an adult?
- How can you help your child find their voice and speak up for themselves and others in the face of exclusion and mistreatment?

Reader's Note

Talking about what a real friendship looks like can help children understand that sometimes being a friend requires action, especially when your friend is being excluded. When a friend is excluded or mistreated by others, it just might be time to find new friends who welcome everyone. Celebrating the differences among us can open us up to making new friends and building community.

This book is also a useful resource to begin conversations with younger children on bias, prejudice, and discrimination and how to notice, name, and reject bias around differences.

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Discussion Questions

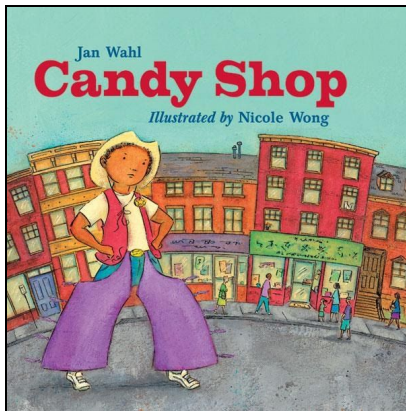
1. What is this story about?
2. What are some of the things that friends do for each other in the book?
3. How do you think the boy and his elephant felt when they couldn't join the Pet Club because elephants weren't allowed?
4. How would you have felt? How would you have responded?

5. Why do you think elephants (and skunks and some of the other animals) were not allowed in the Pet Club?
6. Look at the page with all the different animals and their people. What do you think is happening? How do the kids and animals in this book make community?
7. How does this story relate to people?
 - a. Do you think sometimes people are left out or are treated in mean ways by others because of their differences?
 - b. Can you think of examples?
 - c. Why do you think this happens?
8. If you see someone being left out or being treated meanly what could you do?

Journal Questions/Activities

- The boy in this book says, “That’s what friends do.” Draw or write about some things you think friends could do for each other or that you do for your friends.
- Draw a picture showing what you would say or do to help a friend who was being left out.

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



Book Title

Candy Shop by Jan Wohl, illustrated by Nicole Wong

Recommended Ages

4 - 8 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

Hurtful words are written on the sidewalk in front of Daniel's favorite candy shop. The owner, Miz Chu, is scared and upset, but Daniel figures out a way to help.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Looking back at your childhood, when did you realize that language and words could be used to hurt people, especially in regards to their identities? What impacts have hurtful words had on you and your sense of identity, safety, and belonging?
- How can you help your child understand the impact of their words and remember to choose kindness when they address and interact with others?

Reader's Note

Although we never learn what was written on the sidewalk, there is an opportunity for children to discuss how language can be used to hurt people. Even if children don't understand the historical or cultural context behind hurtful language, they recognize the pain these words can cause. They can see Daniel's positive impact through the helpful and supportive actions he and his aunt take. Daniel's empathy demonstrates how we can take action when someone is harmed.

This book is also a useful resource to begin conversations with younger children on bias, prejudice, and discrimination, how to notice, name, and reject bias around differences, and how to take action in the face of injustice.

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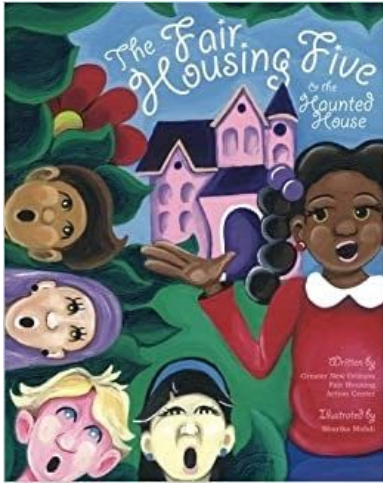
1. What errands did Daniel and Aunt Thelma do before they went to the Candy Shop?
2. What are some emotions that Daniel has as he goes through his day as he waits to get to the Candy Shop?
3. Why are people crowded around Miz Chu's Candy Shop, and why is she crying?

4. What do you think the people gathered outside the store could have been feeling or talking about?
5. How do Daniel and his aunt Thelma comfort Miz Chu when everyone else just stands around? Why do you think no one else stepped in to help before they arrived?
6. Do you think the person or people who wrote the mean words on the sidewalk knew Miz Chu? Why or why not?
7. Neither the author nor the illustrator share the hateful message with readers. What are the pros and cons of their decision?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Daniel was excited to buy candy, but then realized that helping Miz Chu was more important. Tell about a time when you knew it was more important to put someone else before yourself.
- Explain what helps people move towards empathy and away from being mean to each other.
- We know that words can be just as powerful as actions in hurting or helping someone. How did the author use examples of both in this story?

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



Book Title

Fair Housing Five by the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center, illustrated by Sharika Mahdi

Recommended Ages

8 - 12 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

Samaria and her mother are looking for a new apartment. They've found the perfect place in their neighborhood, but the landlord refuses to rent it to them. This sets Samaria on a path to learn more about the issue of housing discrimination and how to get fair housing justice for herself and her mom. Activate prior knowledge by asking: What is discrimination? What are examples? Let's read to find out more.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- In reflecting on your childhood, when did you first become aware of examples of discrimination in your community or the larger world? How did you feel as your awareness and understanding of discrimination towards various identities grew?
- What did you learn about how you could and/or should stand up to discrimination when you experience and/or witness it?
- Why is it important to teach children about social justice issues like fair housing? In what ways can you empower them to critically think about the world through a social justice lens so they can find ways to create positive change in big and small ways?
- Are you identifying how institutional "isms" advantage or disadvantage you and others? Are you reflecting on the biases, stereotypes, and prejudices you may hold about yourself and others?

Reader's Note

The back of the book provides a Glossary and Thought Questions for your reference.

Many children can relate to having to move and the stress of looking for a place to live that meets the needs of all family members. As children get older, they start to notice more quickly and pick up on the things that adults are concerned with or worried about. With empathy and respect across differences, children develop a stronger social awareness, and they look for ways to support the adults in their lives. They can more easily notice and name discrimination when they see it. This book addresses all five Anti-Bias Education tenets. Samaria and her friends consider the well-being of others, take action against discrimination together, and even make a change to their own clubhouse to show how one can truly be responsive and take action.

This book provides an opportunity delve into issues of housing discrimination, the history of racial covenants in nearby cities, and housing insecurity and homelessness. It would be good to provide some

real life historical and recent examples of housing discrimination in your area to help your child understand this as a real issue that many people with marginalized identities face.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the Fair Housing Five were such good friends, even though they were so different from each other? What do you look for in a friend?
2. What are some factors that Samaria and her mother considered when looking for a new apartment?
3. What might be some other factors people consider when looking for a place to live? What are grown-up considerations? What are kid considerations?
4. Why didn't the landlord rent the apartment to Samaria and her mother? Do you think that is a fair reason? Why or why not?
5. What is discrimination? What were examples of discrimination in the book?
6. How did you feel about the examples of discrimination in the book?
7. What did Samaria do to fight against the landlord's discrimination? How did the Fair Housing Center help?
8. What would you have done if you were in Samaria's situation?
9. Why is fair housing important?
10. How did the lesson about fair housing apply to Samaria's life and her clubhouse? How might it apply to your own life?

* Most questions have been adapted from the back of the book.

Journal Questions/Activities

- Have you ever experienced discrimination? How did it feel? If you have not experienced discrimination, what do you imagine it would feel like?
- Why do you think it's important to create a welcoming environment in a neighborhood? What can you do so everyone feels welcome in your neighborhood (or school community)?
- The book is written by the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC). Children can research this organization (<https://lafairhousing.org/>) and find other fair housing organizations in their own communities to learn about the issue and how it affects people in their own city/community.
- Geography connection: Children can look up their demographic data of the neighborhoods where they live and where the school is located to see who lives in the community. They can research the types of housing available in their community and map where students live in relation to the school.

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



Book Title

Something Happened In Our Town by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard, illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin

Recommended Ages

4 - 12 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

This book looks at how two families, one White and one Black, talk about and process a police shooting of a Black man in their community. The families have different perspectives, emotions, and responses because of their racial identities, but they all learn important lessons about treating people fairly and with kindness.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- In reflecting on your childhood, when did you first become aware of examples of race and racism in your community or the larger world? How did you feel as your awareness and understanding of racism, particularly against Black/African Americans grew as you got older?
- What did you learn about how you could and/or should stand up to discrimination when you experience and/or witness it?
- Are you identifying how institutional “isms” advantage or disadvantage you and others? Are you reflecting on the biases, stereotypes, and prejudices you may hold about yourself and others?

Reader's Note

Read the Note to Parents and Caregivers in back of the book before you read this book to your child.

This book provides an opportunity to talk frankly with younger children about police violence against Black/African Americans. Discussing race in America and the impact of racism on communities of color is something that ALL families must do and something that many families of color must do in order to protect their children from racial bias and injustice. White families need to have these conversations, too. To stay silent teaches children that racism doesn't exist and that they, therefore, have no part to play in perpetuating racial oppression and injustice or eradicating it.

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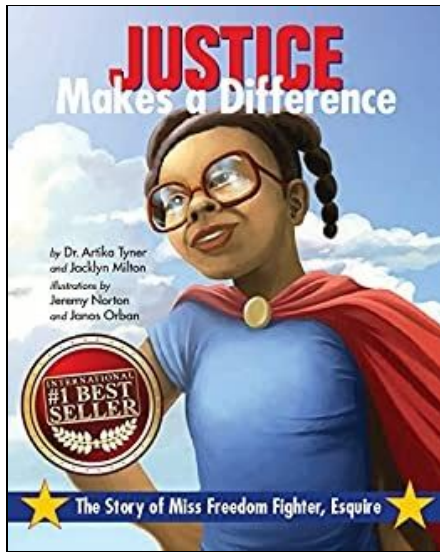
Discussion Questions

1. How did Emma's parents explain why the police shot the Black man?
2. How did Emma's sister, Liz, explain it? Why do you think the explanations were slightly different?
3. What did Emma learn about slavery and the way White people have treated Black people in the past and present?
4. What is an example of a pattern? According to Emma's mom, what is the pattern of how White and Black people are treated?
5. Emma's parents call the police officer's actions a mistake. Josh's parents call the actions wrong. Is there a difference between making a mistake and being wrong? If so, what is the difference in this instance? Why do you think the two families had slightly different explanations of what the police officer did?
6. Why does Josh's father say that the police officer won't go to jail for shooting the Black man?
7. What are some examples in the book of how Black people are treated unfairly compared to White people?
8. How do you think Josh's family feels about what happened to the Black man compared to how Emma's family feels? Why might there be different emotions?
9. What do you think Josh's dad means when he says that he can use his anger to make things better?
10. What lessons did Emma and Josh learn about how to treat people?

Journal Questions/Activities

- What lesson did you learn about how to treat people from this book? Write or draw a picture that shows what you learned in action.
- Stress and trauma can get stuck in our bodies. This is one way to decompress after discussing current events, reading this book, or after a personal conflict when emotions run hot and get big. The nervous system needs to release, and this is a great way to bring the body to a neutral place.
 - Invite your child to sit on the floor. They may sit on a pillow if they like.
 - While sitting with their feet flat on the floor and their knees tucked into their chest, ask them to wrap their arms around their knees and squeeze as hard as they can. They should imagine that their knees are lemons and begin to squeeze them tight, as if they were squeezing the juice out.
 - Encourage them to do this 5 times, breathing in and opening their arms out and away and then exhaling while wrapping their arms in and squeezing as tight as they can.
 - Narrate the inhale and exhale for them so they take in the air and exhale the air.
 - For the last 2 counts of 5, you can also encourage them to squish their face up as though they were sucking on lemons as they inhale and then as they exhale they can stick their tongue out and shout blaaah!
 - Adults modeling self care is always helpful, you can do this with them.

Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



Book Title

Justice Makes a Difference: The Story of Miss Freedom Fighter, Esquire by Dr. Artika Tyner and Jacklyn Milton, illustrated by Jeremy Norton and Janos Orban

Recommended Ages

8 - 12 years old

Book Summary to Share With Children

In this book, the main character, Justice, watches her grandmother serve the community, and she wonders if she is too young to make a difference. Her grandmother teaches her about men and women who have made a difference in many different ways (Ella Baker, Shirley Chisholm, Charles Hamilton Houston, Dr. Wangari Maathai, Paul Robeson, and Ida B. Wells). Justice becomes inspired and dreams of becoming a change-maker, too.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Think about a time when your words or the words of others in your life held power (in either good or harmful ways). What impact did those words have?
- How often do you talk with your child about examples of people who have taken action in order to make a difference?
- What other diverse examples can you offer to show them the many ways people can take action and make a difference?

Reader's Note

It is important to know about the various leaders (Ella Baker, Shirley Chisholm, Charles Hamilton Houston, Dr. Wangari Maathai, Paul Robeson, and Ida B. Wells) mentioned in the book. It will help you guide discussion, and your child is likely to have questions about them. There are short biographies in the back of the book, but if you are unfamiliar with these names, you may want to do your own quick research as well. It is also important to do the work of understanding the larger context of the book. Knowledge of the historical figures in this book and awareness of how their work connects to present day will be key to engaging your child in this discussion, inviting individual motivation and inquiry.

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Discussion Questions

1. Think about the following quote from the book. “Words are powerful,” Grandma told Justice. “They can be used in powerful ways to do good or to do harm. That’s why it’s important to always be careful with your words.” Tell about a time when your words or the words of others in your life held power (in either good or harmful ways). What impact did those words have?
2. Have you ever felt like Justice did at the beginning of the book, like you wanted to do something to make a difference but didn’t know how?
 - a. How did that feel?
 - b. What did you do?
3. In the book, Justice learns about different ways to make a difference. What are some examples from the book?
 - a. What other examples can you think of?
4. How can creating poetry or music (or other art forms) be examples of taking action against injustice? How can they make a difference?
5. What issues are you interested in taking action on? (At home, at school, in your neighborhood) What are some ways you can take action?
6. What support do you need from people in your life in order to take action? Who can best support you?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Listen to and show the lyrics/words for the following. Discuss the social issues of the time periods they were sung and how the songs are examples of taking action.
 - “We Shall Overcome”
 - “A Change is Gonna Come” by Sam Cooke
 - “This Little Light of Mine”
 - Paul Robeson songs
 - “Ella’s Song (We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest Until it Comes)”
- Find and collect poems, speeches, writings, or songs that are examples of taking action for the issues your child is interested in taking action on.