

# DEI THEMED LESSONS



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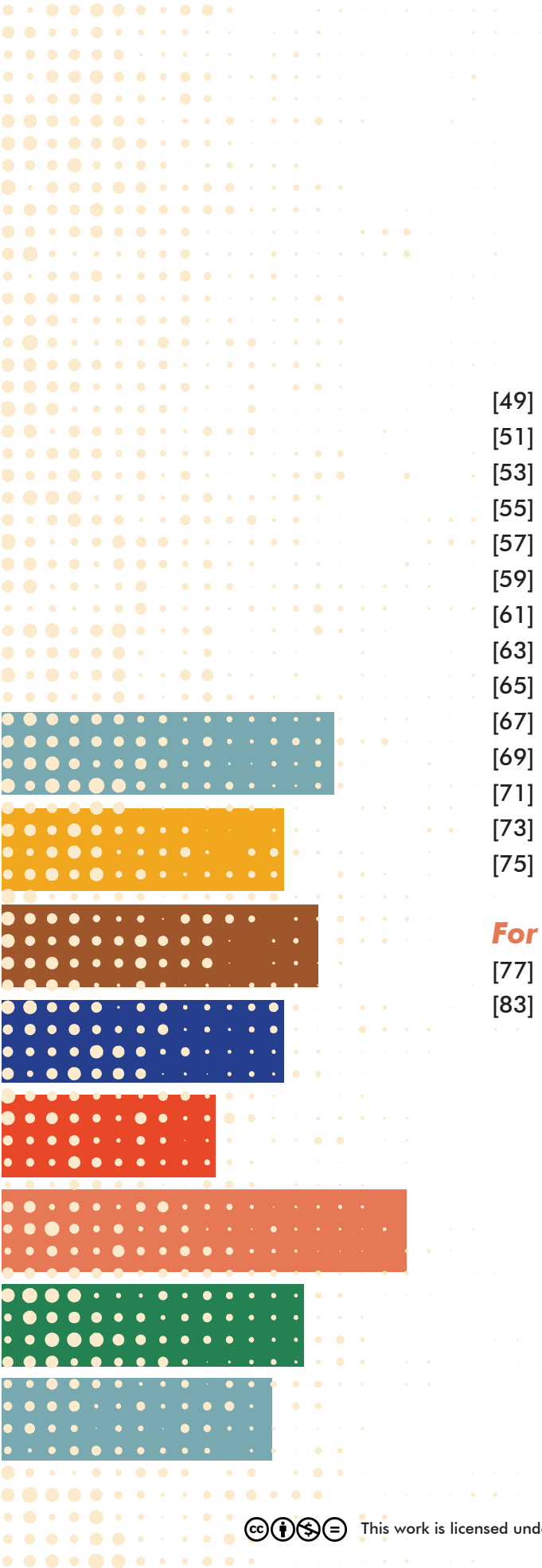
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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT US

Research on child development, racial identity, and family socialization demonstrates that bias formation begins at a young age and that white families tend to discuss race much less frequently than families of color. Based on these findings, Laura Horwitz and Adelaide Lancaster founded We Stories in 2016. We Stories sought to build a more equitable and inclusive future through the creation and implementation of its core offering, the Family Learning Program (FLP). Its grounding framework is in our **Getting Started** document.

The program was designed for white caregivers with young children (ages 8 and under) in the St. Louis region who wanted to start and strengthen conversations about race and racism with their families. In each cohort, or group of participating families, caregivers were provided with diverse children's books as well as strategies for minimizing and deconstructing bias formation. The program endeavored to foster mindsets and build skills toward lifelong learning and advocating for change in spaces where these families lived, worked, and played. This program is now captured in our self-guided **Family Learning Program** document.

At the end of the facilitated 12-week program, the families in the cohort joined an ongoing learning community of a growing group of fellow FLP families. Together they received continued support in extending, processing, and implementing their learnings. Rich collaborations with schools, libraries, community organizations, parent groups, and a robust social media presence quickly followed. We engaged in teacher training opportunities, research partnerships, and curriculum design and development. This document represents many of the resources developed to support these partnerships, as well as our FLP families.

Clear that meaningful change required intentional actions to address root causes of disparities, we developed the Advocacy Builders Project for FLP caregivers to move beyond family conversations to deeper discussions of systemic racism. To support learning, this program focused on four social determinants of health and challenged participants to see how systems are designed to help some groups of people, while simultaneously designed to hurt other groups of people. We Stories piloted this project with FLP families in 2021. This content has been consolidated and now exists as our **Advocacy Builders Project** document.

To increase the accessibility and impact of our programs and resources, our board and staff made the decision to culminate and refine these assets into resources that could be utilized and shared broadly. We hope to bolster changemakers as they lead our collective effort for a more equitable and inclusive future.



## WHAT'S INSIDE

Every **DEI Themed Lesson** includes the following components:

- **Social Justice Standards** developed by the organization Learning for Justice. They serve as “a road map for anti-bias education at every stage of K–12 instruction.” They were developed to reflect age-appropriate learning and to provide a more equitable learning experience. Each lesson corresponds to one or more social justice standards. You can learn more about the standards at the Learning for Justice website.
- A **Summary** to introduce and explain the theme. It sets the stage for you and your children’s or students’ learning.
- A **Booklist** including four or more children’s books. Most stories are geared toward children ages 4 to 8. Some lessons include board books for younger children.
- **Consider This** and **Talk Together** questions to spur reflection and conversation. First, questions for you to consider. Second, questions to consider together with your children or students.
- **Engagement** suggestions, which were primarily designed to extend conversations. However, many of these activities include play, art, and community building, which can complement classroom lessons as well.
- Curated **Explore More** for further exploration. The resources include video, audio, books, and other online options.

The themed lessons are not intended to be sequential nor a comprehensive representation of all of the potential learning out there! Navigate the lessons in any order that you choose. We encourage you to create your own based on your interests, historical and contemporary throughlines, holidays, family events, and more. Use the outlined components and the guiding principles to guide your exploration.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Curiosity, not completeness, is the goal.** Don't worry about how many details you acquire and impart, instead focus on inquiry and conversation.
2. **Starting with the basics doesn't mean you have to shortchange the truth.** For example, Enslavement endured for a long time in the United States, and was abolished more recently than many often credit. Enslavement was brutal. Enslavement was about labor and establishing some people's economic dominance.
3. **Delight in the joy of discovery.** History can be cool and fascinating. Follow your children's questions this month and discover unknown facts, people and stories. This helps to avoid the "boring, but important" sentiment.
4. **Use multimedia.** Where possible supplement your story time conversations with images, videos, and audio recordings. These resources can bring distant times, people, and places alive and make concepts more concrete for kids.
5. **"Be examples of truth and honesty for your children"** (taken from a sign at the entrance of The Griot Museum of Black History). Aspects of American history are heartbreaking and defy easy answers. Sanitizing it doesn't do anyone any favors. Show courage and share your own sadness when you feel it. By doing so you will give your children permission to do the same.
6. **Connect the content to your children.** Ask them to stretch their empathetic imagination...What would it be like to experience the particulars of the stories they are reading? What do we see in our lives today that is packaged as "just the way it is", although we know it is wrong?
7. **Connect the content to today.** If we look for it, we can find remnants of the past throughout contemporary life. It can be tempting to present terrible events in history as divorced from the realities of today – try to resist the "that was then, this is now" approach. Injustice and racial disparities persist and continue to cost our world and its peoples a great deal. Connecting these stories to present day issues helps reinforce the importance and the urgency of our work together.
8. **Connect to the story of hope and help.** As Mister Roger advises, "look for the helpers." There have always been people fighting for equity. The vision and working towards it is something to be proud of, and a terrific legacy to share with your children.







# Lesson 1: Celebrating Your Family!

*"I sustain myself with the love of family." —Maya Angelou*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

## Summary

Families are some of our favorite people in our lives. Just as we look different as individuals, families are uniquely diverse as well. Whether it be a group of people you were born into or a chosen group of friends, our families create stability, a safe space, and unconditional love. The possibilities of what a family can look like are endless, so the importance of this work is understanding that different circumstances can still create the same experiences for families. No matter what a family may look like, they face many similar challenges and experience great joy. The books in this lesson can help us see the many faces of families and reflect on what family means to us.

## Booklist

- *A World for Me and You: Where Everyone is Welcome* by Uju Asika, illustrated by Jennie Poh
- *Families* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
- *ABC: A Family Alphabet Book* by Bobbie Combs, illustrated by Brian and Desiree Rappa
- *The Different Dragon* by Jennifer Bryan, illustrated by Danamarie Hosler
- *Love Makes a Family* by Sophie Beer
- *Who's in a Family* by Robert Skutch, illustrated by Laura Nienhaus
- *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita
- *Mommy, Mama, and Me* by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Carol Thompson
- *Daddy, Papa and Me* by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Carol Thompson

## Consider This

- Who is in your family? Has it changed over time?
- Did you have an understanding of a "traditional family" growing up? How did that influence your own family structure as a child and now as an adult?
- What messaging around family were you given as a child that you feel differently about now as an adult?
- Were you aware of the diversity of families as a kid?

## *Talk Together*

- Who is in your family?
- What is the difference between family and friends?
- Who do you know that has a family that looks different than your own?
- What is your role in your family?
- What do you want your family to look like when you are an adult?

## *Engage*

Let's play!

- You can use dolls, toys, or yourselves to play "family." Encourage children to take on different roles, and switch up what the family dynamic looks like. For example, the kids play adults and the adults play kids.
- Have a family game night. Find a board game, card game, or imaginary game where the whole family can be involved.

## *Explore More*

- Pew Research Center's "The American family today"
- The University of Texas's "Family Diversity is the New Normal for America's Children"
- PBS Kids' "Celebrate Family Diversity"

## Lesson 2: Names

*“Our names are an incredibly important part of our identity. They carry deep personal, cultural, familial, and historical connections. They also give us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong, and our place in the world.” —Iman Baobeid*

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 7**

### Summary

Names are powerful. They can carry with them a lot of meaning, history and culture. A lot of similarities and differences exist across names. Sometimes a name that sounds the same is spelled differently. Sometimes names that look the same are pronounced differently. Many people know others with their exact same name, while others may be used to being the only person with that name in their class or neighborhood.

Many people also have the experience of their name not being pronounced correctly or understood well by others they encounter. Sometimes people report feeling left out when their name isn't well understood by others. Some people and families changed their names when they immigrated to this country. Others had their names taken from them when they were enslaved and brought here. Some people have multiple names and identities that they use in different communities.

In the following lesson, you will find an opportunity to think about the significance of names and the different relationships our friends and fellow citizens might have to their names—and yours.

### Booklist

- *My Name Is Sangoel* by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed, illustrated by Catherine Stock
- *My Name Is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits, illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska
- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi
- *The Favorite Daughter* by Allen Say
- *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal

## *Consider This*

- Who named you? Is there meaning behind your name?
- If you are someone that has ever changed your name, first or last, what were your considerations in changing it?
- What is an interesting story you've learned or heard about someone's name?
- What do you do when faced with a name that is difficult for you to pronounce or remember?

## *Talk Together*

- Use the books to share the meaning behind the names in your own family. What was their significance, and why were they chosen?
- What naming traditions exist in your family and among your ancestors? How might your family or ancestors' names have changed over time?
- What do you love about your name?

## *Engage*

- Play with the names in your family by combining them together to make new names. These can be as silly as you'd like them to be. Example: Simone and Miles can make Smiles =)
- Make a name guessing game. Choose someone and list out information about them. This can be simple like a favorite food, or more specific about their identity. See if someone can guess the name of the person you're talking about from your clues.

## *Explore More*

- "Why Getting A Name Right Matters" by Zulekha Nathoo (BBC, January 11, 2021)
- "Honor Your Students' Heritage by Pronouncing Their Names Correctly" by Françoise Thenoux (PBS SoCal, December 8, 2020)

## Lesson 3: Fatherhood

*“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” —Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 3**

### Summary

For decades, there have been incomplete stories told about absent fathers of color, particularly Black fathers. Prejudiced rationale abounds. These stories aren't told in historical context, nor are they representative of many families and many fathers. The related stereotypes are harmful, and their impact extends beyond gratuitous narratives, resulting in these stereotypes becoming codified into both policy and practice.

As caregivers and educators, you have the opportunity to share an abundance of examples of involved, loving, precious Black fathers with your children and students. While this can never completely shield them from the damaging and pervasive stereotypes that exist, it goes a long way. In the following lesson you will find powerful reflections on father-child bonds in various families of color through warm, poignant, and fun stories.

### Booklist

- *A Beach Tail* by Karen Lynn Williams, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Papá and Me* by Arthur Dorros, illustrated by Rudy Gutierrez
- *Irene's Wish* by Jerdine Nolen, illustrated by AG Ford
- *The Bat Boy and His Violin* by Gavin Curtis, illustrated by E.B. Lewis



## *Consider This*

- What do you know about fathers of color? How do you know it?
- What first-hand experiences do you have with fathers of colors? Fathers of color are one example, but this is an important question to consider with any targeted/stereotyped group.
- Given your own circumstances, what messages do you think your kids are likely to receive about fathers of color? Consider your neighborhood, schools, media consumption, friends, and community.
- What messages and images of fathers of color are you making/can you make available to your children (and yourself)?
- What history and information do you need to better nuance and explain the messages about fathers of color that your children will be exposed to?

## *Talk Together*

- “When I’m with my papá, I can fly like an eagle, an águila.” This quote from Papá and Me shows the special bond and experiences between father and son in the story. What can you do with your father or other male influence in your life?

## *Engage*

- Write a letter or draw a picture to the “papá” in your life telling them what you can do together.

## *Explore More*

- “Debunking the Most Pervasive Myth About Black Fatherhood” by German Lopez (Vox, June 19, 2016)”
- Cbabi Bayoc’s 365 Days with Dad series
- Fathers and Families Support Center

## Lesson 4: Grandparents

*“All the things we could never say come pouring out and we build a new world that even words can’t describe.” —Minh Le*

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 2, 5**

### Summary

Grandparents are special. Using these stories to make connections between the children in your life and the characters is very important, whether those similarities are phenotypic, behavioral, or experiential. It is also important to point out what is different between the children in your life and the experiences captured in these stories. For instance, perhaps you live with your grandparents or visit them often. Or maybe your grandparents are no longer living, far away, or uninvolved in your family’s life. This lesson allows you to explore these very special relationships from a lot of different perspectives. It is an opportunity to reflect on how all families are different but love abides in ways that are the same.

### Booklist

- *Max and the Tag-Along Moon* by Floyd Cooper
- *Two Mrs. Gibsons* by Toyomi Igus, illustrated by Daryl Wells
- *Drawn Together* by Minh Lê, illustrated by Dan Santat
- *Wild Berries* by Julie Flett

### Consider This

- What are the special things you remember about your grandparents? What reminds you of them? How do you remember or connect with them?

## *Talk Together*

- What is special about your grandparents? Do they have a grandparent who draws like the grandfather in *Drawn Together* or who is a quiet teacher like the grandmother in *Wild Berries*? How do you remember your grandparents when you are apart (*Max and the Tag-Along Moon*)?
- Help your child or students think about the ways families spend time together or stay connected. What traditions or patterns do you have? When do you visit and spend time together? How do you stay in touch when you are not together?

## *Engage*

- Grandparents are full of memories and stories. If possible, interview a grandparent or ask them to share some of their favorite memories with you.
- Find a picture of a grandparent and talk about the similarities and differences you see. This can be about the picture itself, the setting of the picture, or the people in the picture. Do you see any similarities between your grandparent and anyone else in the family?

## *Explore More*

- "Cultivating a Close Relationship with Grandparents," by Christina Pay (Utah State University)
- "50 Fun Activities for Grandparents to Do with Kids: For Grandparents' Day and Every Day" by Lauren LaRoche (*Mommy Poppins*, 9/7/21)

## Lesson 5: Marvelous Me!

*"I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect." —Maya Angelou*

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 6**

### Summary

Healthy self-esteem depends on our ability to love and celebrate ourselves for who we are. We need to appreciate all our uniqueness and also see reflections of ourselves in the world around us.

This helps to signal to us that we, too, have many possibilities available. Not all of us have the same opportunity to see our multiple identities reflected in mainstream media and books or in leadership roles. And yet, even those of us who are used to seeing ourselves represented still must contend with continuous messages of conformity and superiority. We can work against this with authentic celebrations and truthful depictions of us: flaws, triumphs, pains, and possibilities.

In the following lesson, you will find opportunities to celebrate one's unique self and the uniqueness of people different from you.

### Booklist

- *I Like Myself* by Karen Beaumont, illustrated by David Catrow
- *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match* by Monica Brown, illustrated by Sara Palacios
- *The Best Part of Me* by Wendy Ewald
- *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles, illustrated by Bryan Collier

### Consider This

- How comfortable are you with the idea of standing out?
- Which ideals do you measure yourself against?
- What parts of you don't fit into those ideals?
- What messages did you receive as children about who was "like us" or "not like us?"
- What does it mean to cut off parts of ourselves because they don't "fit in?"
- What does it feel like to bring your full self forward?
- What becomes possible when we live and act with integrity?

## *Talk Together*

- What is unique about me?
- How do I show love for those parts of myself?
- What parts of me need a little more celebrating?
- What parts of me feel unaccepted? Where are those traits celebrated as strengths?

## *Engage*

- Explore Crayola “Colors of the World” crayons. Notice the different skin tones and create a self portrait using them.
- Create family or class affirmations! These are short, positive statements to say out loud to yourself and to each other. Consider looking in a mirror while you do your affirmations. Examples: “ I am a hard worker.” “I love \_\_\_ about myself!”

## *Explore More*

- Embrace Race’s “I Love Me! Positive Self Identity in Young BIPOC Children”
- Sesame Workshop’s Identity Matters Study



# Lesson 6: Girl Power

"You may think I'm small, but I have a universe inside my mind." —Yoko Ono

Social Justice Standard: Identity 4

## Summary

Girls are awesome! Strong, sweet, brave, thoughtful, bold, and funny. Celebrate these trailblazers and leaders with your children or students, and help them tap into their own potential and power. What does it mean to be the first to do something? What does it mean to see someone who looks like you already doing something you dream of? How does that change what seems possible? Also use the opportunity to explore the power of role models both for your children or students and for some of the characters in the books.

## Booklist

- *Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio, illustrated by LeUyen Pham
- *Firebird* by Misty Copeland, illustrated by Christopher Myers
- *Princess Grace* by Mary Hoffman, Cornelius van Wright, and Ying-Hwa Hu
- *A Dance Like Starlight: One Ballerina's Dream* by Kristy Dempsey, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *The Quickest Kid in Clarksville* by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Frank Morrison
- *Catching the Moon* by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Randy DuBurke
- *Little Melba and her Big Trombone* by Kathryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison

## Consider This

- What messaging did you receive about women and girls as a kid? Were they positive or negative?
- Who are the strong women in your life? How have they influenced you?
- How do you think the roles of women have changed over the years? Are there areas that you feel still need progressive movement?
- How can you be an advocate for women?

## *Talk Together*

- What makes you powerful?
- What do you want to accomplish or attempt?
- How can you challenge yourself this year?
- What changes might you want to see in your house, school, community, or region?

## *Engage*

- Consider having your children or students interview older women they know and ask about a time they felt powerful, made a change, or achieved a goal.
- Have a Girl Power movie night! Grab some snacks, gather with friends and family, and watch a movie together about how amazing girls are!

## *Explore More*

- Career Girls website
- "Girls gear up to be firefighters for a day — and take steps toward a possible career path" by Jordan Perkins (*Chicago Sun-Times*, July 21, 2022)
- "International Women's Day: Female Role Models From Around The World" by Manas Sen Gupta (*Prestige*, March 8, 2021)

# Lesson 7: Celebrating the Skin You're In

*"And like flowers in the fields, that make wonderful views, when we stand side-by-side in our wonderful hues. We all make a beauty so wonderfully true."*  
—Michael Tyler

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 3, Diversity 6**

## Summary

Some people are raised not to talk about skin color, but like all phenotypic characteristics, skin color is something to be talked about and celebrated! In the following lesson, you'll find help in opening up a dialogue with your children or students about all the beautiful and varied shades that people come in as well as explore the physiological purpose of skin and scientific reasons that our hues differ from one another. Reading these books together is a great way to show your wonder and appreciation for the range of human beauty.

## Booklist

- *Shades of People* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
- *We're Different, We're the Same* by Bobbi Jane Kates, illustrated by Joe Mathieu
- *Happy in our Skin* by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Lauren Tobia
- *All the Colors We Are/Todos Los Colores de Nuestra Piel* by Katie Kissinger, photography by Chris Bohnhoff
- *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler, illustrated by David Lee Csicko
- *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children* by Sandra L. Pinkney, photography by Myles C. Pinkney
- *Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race* by Megan Madison, Jessica Ralli, and Isabel Roxas
- *Bodies Are Cool* by Tyler Feder
- *Stella's Stellar Hair* by Yesenia Moises
- *Honeysmoke: A Story of Finding Your Color* by Monique Fields, illustrated by Yesenia Moises

## *Consider This*

- Were you raised to not see color or have “colorblindness”? Has that changed?
- How comfortable do you feel talking about race?
- What would you like to know more about when it comes to race and differences in skin color?
- How was skin color integrated into the culture you grew up in? Think about the positive and negative narratives you heard and how they affected your thinking.

## *Talk Together*

- How would you describe your skin?
- Is everyone’s skin in your family the same? How is it the same and different?
- Other than skin color, what other differences do you see in the people around you?
- What sounds more fun and interesting—being around people that all look the same, or being around people with a lot of differences?

## *Engage*

- When the books call for it, have your child or students create their own skin color using paints, crayons, or play dough. Utilize multicultural crayons to color pictures that reflect the world and the scenes they see in the books.

### **Inclusive Toys:**

- Colorations Color Like Me Dough (Skin color play dough)
- Crayola Colors of the World Crayons
- My Family Builders

## *Explore More*

- “The Benefits of Teaching Children to See Race” by Natalie Seitz (PBS Kids for Parents)
- Embrace Race’s “Reading Race in Picture Books with Children”
- *Bringing Up Race: How to Raise a Kind Child in a Prejudiced World* by Uju Asika (Sourcebooks, 2021)
- “Celebrating Skin Tone: The Science and Poetry of Skin Color” by Katharine Johnson, illustrated by Sheila Hamanaka (Rethinking Schools)

# Lesson 8: Enslavement and Emancipation

*"Throughout the course of slavery there were always people who ran toward freedom... look in your own neighborhood and find where the spirit of the underground remains." —Shane Evans*

Social Justice Standards: Justice 12, 15

## Summary

Anti-racist journeys are not easy. They require us to challenge our thinking, and, in many circumstances, challenge the learning that we may have come to know and understand for a long time. When it comes to stories of enslavement and emancipation, the goal is to broaden our lens and knowledge of what we know to be true and listen to the stories that we may have not heard or been told before. As you read these stories, know that they may show truths about history that you were not aware of. Lean into your discomfort and curiosity to gain perspective and history to take with you on your journey and beyond.

## Booklist

- *The 1619 Project: Born on the Water* by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renée Watson, illustrated by Nikkolos Smith
- *Circle Unbroken* by Margot Thies Raven, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *Brick by Brick* by Charles R. Smith Jr., illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom* by Shane W. Evans
- *Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper

## Consider This

- Think about the distinctions between a proclamation of independence and a proclamation of emancipation. Do they create the same kind of freedom?
- Are there new stories that you have learned over the years about slavery and emancipation that paint a different picture than what you learned growing up?
- It has been said that the prison system of the United States is a modern form of slavery when it comes to free labor, living and working conditions, and the disproportionate number of Black and brown people imprisoned. What do you think about this?
- How do you think the history and reality of slavery in this country still affects us today?



## *Talk Together*

- Many of the children in these stories were not able to go to school and had to work instead. What do you think that life must have been like?
- If you lived during that time, what would you have done to help friends who may have lived a life in enslavement?
- Being enslaved meant not having any freedoms to make your own choices in your life. How would you feel if you had to live with no choices or freedom?

## *Engage*

Many stories around slavery and emancipation are centered around the stories of sadness and sorrow. Although these are important and allow us a window into this time, there were many people advocating for change and standing up for the freedom of slaves. Research and learn more about the many people fighting for justice and change during this time. Think about how this adds to the story and progression of this movement.

## *Explore More*

- Netflix's 2016 documentary 13th
- NMAAHC's "The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth"
- Learning for Justice's "Teaching Hard History: American Slavery"

# Lesson 9: The Great Migration

*“They did what human beings looking for freedom, throughout history, have often done. They left.” —Isabel Wilkerson*

Social Justice Standard: Justice 14

## Summary

The Great Migration gave over six million Black families the chance to experience a new reality. Due to anti-immigration legislation and sentiment running rampant during World War I, the northern labor market had a vacancy that Black people, desperate to leave the South, were only too happy to fill. Black people made the trek north, following a promise of a chance to live where they could be treated as whole people.

Unfortunately, that idealized place never did come to fruition for so many who made the long and dangerous journey. Instead, when they made it to the North, they faced segregation in housing and education and experienced White folks divesting from cities and fleeing to nearby suburbs. These patterns persisted and compounded over time, which brought many Black people to a crossroads—continue to stay in cities that grew more segregated every year, or make a change?

As we continue to live in a time where the migration of brown people into our country is used to stir up anti-immigration attitudes and frenzies, it feels direly important to pay attention and learn from the lessons of the past. The following stories give us the opportunity to better understand the history of our past, as well as help us interpret some of the important trends we are seeing today.

## Booklist

- *The Great Migration: An American Story* by Jacob Lawrence
- *Seeing Into Tomorrow* by Richard Wright, illustrated by Nina Crews
- *The Great Migration: Journey to the North* by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist
- *Land of Milk and Honey* by Joyce Carol Thomas, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Finding Langston* by Lesa Cline-Ransom
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

## *Consider This*

- Did you ever learn about human migration as a child? Whose experience was it centered around?
- Are there stories of migration in your own family history?
- Many cities around the United States still see consequences and evidence of inequality that stems from the migration period—especially when it comes to segregation and unfair housing laws. What examples do you still see where you live?
- What factors did you consider when deciding where you wanted to live? Would there be any changes to those considerations now?

## *Talk Together*

- If you could live anywhere, where would you live and why?
- What makes you happy about the place where you live?
- What are some reasons people might move to a new home or place?
- Who do you see in your community? Who do you not see?

## *Engage*

- Check out the University of Washington's "America's Great Migrations Project."
- Create a map of your family's history of migration over the years. Go back as far as you can in your family history to create a fuller story. Consider and discuss the "why" behind the movement.

## *Explore More*

- National Archives' "The Great Migration (1910 – 1970)"
- "After nearly 100 years, Great Migration begins reversal" by Greg Toppo and Paul Overberg (USA Today, February 2, 2015)

# Lesson 10: The Civil Rights Era

*“There is also the danger in our culture that because a person is called upon to give public statements and is acclaimed by the establishment, such a person gets to the point of believing that he is the movement.” —Ella Baker*

**Social Justice Standards: Justice 12, 15**

## Summary

Many of us are taught that history is a chronicle of events—a record of things that have happened in the past. The truth is far more complicated. History is incomplete. It is biased. It is revisionist and often lost. It can also be present and predictive. Learning lots of “new” history can therefore be disorienting. Civil Rights and African American history, specifically, are not well integrated into American education. It is understandable then that many Americans, especially white Americans, don’t know what they don’t know. We kindly urge you to remember that curiosity, not mastery, is the goal. And that this is an opportunity to catalyze your children’s learning journey as well as reignite your own.

## Booklist

- *Belle, the Last Mule at Gee’s Bend: A Civil Rights Story* by Calvin Alexander Ramsey and Bettye Stroud, illustrated by John Holyfield
- *We March* by Shane W. Evans
- *28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World* by Charles R. Smith Jr., illustrated by Shane W. Evans
- *Seeds of Freedom: The Peaceful Integration of Huntsville, Alabama* by Hester Bass, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *A Sweet Smell of Roses* by Angela Johnson, illustrated by Eric Velasquez

## Consider This

- What do you know about the Civil Rights movement? How do you know it?
- Many educators are looking for a fundamental shift in what history is taught. Do you remember any history that you learned that could be problematic today?
- What perspectives and themes should be included with a more inclusive view of history?

## *Talk Together*

- Have you ever been curious about what it would be like if there were a select group of children that were not allowed to come to your school? How would your school look differently?
- Who do you think should have a say about the schools more—adults or kids? Why?
- Do you think your school or community allows all people to live and succeed?

## *Engage*

There are still many people in our families and communities that lived through the Civil Rights Era. Find someone to talk to about their experiences and how they have seen it play out through history. We encourage you to try and find multiple perspectives. You can also find interviews online if you're not able to find a conversation partner.

## *Explore More*

- The Smithsonian American Art Museum's "The Struggle for Equality"
- National Humanities Center's The Civil Rights Movement: 1919-1960s
- *U.S. Civil Rights Trail: A Traveler's Guide to the People, Places, and Events that Made the Movement* by Deborah D. Douglas



# Lesson 11: Stories of Harlem

*"A dream deferred is a dream denied."  
—Langston Hughes, from poem "Harlem"*

**Social Justice Standards: Diversity 8, 10, Justice 14**

## Summary

Most of us haven't had the opportunity to experience something as magnificent as Harlem in its renaissance. Redlining, restrictive covenants, divestment, and white flight have drained resources from many once-thriving predominantly Black city centers. Yet the story of Harlem serves as a powerful counternarrative for many people—adults and children alike—about the power, potential, and generative nature of Black neighborhoods. Use the books in this lesson to explore what we know is possible and indeed has already happened.

## Booklist

- *Sugar Hill: Harlem's Historic Neighborhood* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
- *Uptown* by Bryan Collier
- *The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
- *Harlem* by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers

## Consider This

- What do you know about Harlem? From what you know, how has Harlem been celebrated?
- Do you know of any Black neighborhoods in your city? What is their story?
- Was there a narrative around Black neighborhoods that you heard growing up? What perspective did you have as a child about neighborhoods like Harlem?
- Were there places or neighborhoods you were told you could not go as a child? What were the reasons for that? Do you feel differently about those reasons now that you are an adult?

## *Talk Together*

These books serve as a rolodex of some of the most powerful and influential people in 20th century America. Which characters are new to you? Who is unfamiliar? Pick one and do a little research! Who are they? Where were they born? How did they come to Harlem and why? Where do we see their legacy today? How did their story intersect with other important historical moments such as the Great Migration, Great Depression, both World Wars and Jim Crow policies?

## *Engage*

- Choose a coloring page from the Studio Museum Harlem
- Grab some magazines, colors, and paper and create a collage! A collage is created by using many pictures and words together and is a style used by many Harlem artists. How can you make a collage that represents you?

## *Explore More*

- Caleb with Curls' YouTube video "Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance video for kids"
- National Gallery of Art's "Harlem Renaissance"
- Poetry Foundation's "The Harlem Renaissance" collection
- NMAAHC's "A New African American Identity: The Harlem Renaissance"

# Lesson 12: Voting Rights and Representation

*"Freedom and justice cannot be parceled out in pieces to suit political convenience. I don't believe you can stand for freedom for one group of people and deny it to others." —Coretta Scott King*

**Social Justice Standards: Justice 14, 15**

## Summary

As children, we're taught a fairly simplistic version of democracy—a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting. This simple framework can, at an early age, help bestow the power of the vote. American children are told, "Your vote counts." But our nation's history is more complicated. The right to vote has never been universal, and unfortunately, it remains that way today. Many people have been, and continue to be, systematically and intentionally denied the ability to participate in our most essential form of government. They have been disqualified and deemed unworthy, incapable and unsuitable as citizens, voters, and even people. All based on the color of their skin, their gender, their ancestry, or their religion. Many people have had to fight to be counted, fight to be included. Many people have died in order to win the right to participate fully and equally in our democracy. This whole truth does not diminish the power, simplicity, or importance of the vote. Instead, it underscores that the vote is, in the words of one of the nation's longest-serving public servants, Representative John Lewis, sacred.

In the following lesson, you will find stories on voting history and hope for voting equality.

## Booklist

- *If I Ran for President* by Catherine Stier, illustrated by Lynne Avril
- *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box* by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein, illustrated by James E. Ransome
- *Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965* by Jonah Winter and Shane W. Evans
- *Vote!* by Eileen Cristelow
- *Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America* by Russell Freedman

## *Consider This*

- What do you know about the history of the vote, and what efforts were undertaken in order to get that right granted to those people groups?
- What do you know about the different rationales used to withhold the vote from groups?
- How were you taught to engage with voting as a young person? How can you include your children in your voting experience this year?
- From election candidates, to those already in office, what people groups are PRESENT and MISSING?

## *Talk Together*

- From your personal family history, discuss how voting rights have impacted the previous generations of your family.
- On the broader, national scale, talk about what it means for our nation that not everyone was given the right to vote; and how for some people today, that right still hangs in the balance or is intentionally denied.

## *Engage*

- What can you vote on as a family or class? Favorite color, what to eat for dinner, or what game to play? Have fun voting while also discussing the importance of voting accessibility for all.
- Create a polling box. Decorate a box with an opening at the top and organize a vote. This can be done as a family, as a class, or with friends.

## *Explore More*

- ACLU's "A History of the Voting Rights Act"
- "Ballot Battles: A Cartoon History of Voting Rights" by Andy Warner (KQED, August 8, 2016)
- Howard University Law Library's "Feminism and Intersectionality"

# Lesson 13: Caregiving in Time of Protest

*“Every single person actually has the power to protest racist and antiracist policies, to advance them, or, in some small way, to stall them.”*

—Ibram X. Kendi

Social Justice Standards: Justice 15, Action 16

## Summary

Local, national, and global injustices can bring protests into the spotlight, and oftentimes, educators and caregivers feel ill-equipped to have nuanced conversations with children. We share these points in hopes that they help to add to the fullness of your classroom and family discussions:

### 1. Protest Is Part of Our National Identity—and Always Has Been

Protest has been a part of our national fabric and national identity from the very beginning. Specific acts of protest, from the Boston Tea Party on, led to the very creation of our nation. Protests have continued to be a part of every single social change and advancement across our national history, including civil rights. Our Founding Fathers protected the act of protest by including these two important rights in our constitution: the right to “peaceably assemble” and the right to “petition the government for a redress of grievances.” Protests have continued to be a part of every single social change and advancement across our national history, including civil rights.

### 2. Protesting Is a Protected Right.

The Bill of Rights, written in 1789, grants Americans many important rights, which have come to define our nation and anchor some of our shared national values. Protesting is a reflection of two of those important rights: the right to “peaceably assemble” and the right to “petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

### 3. Disruption Is Often the Explicit Purpose of Protest.

They can disrupt narratives, processes, the economy, or even traffic. Their disruption is rooted in the principle of nonviolence. The disruption serves not only to garner attention but also to represent accountability when it’s perceived to be missing from the system. It’s a method to share the burden of the injustices being protested when no other consequences are available.

**4. Direct Action is One Form of NonViolent Protest.**

Other forms of nonviolent protest include economic boycotts, organizing collective buying power, awareness and advocacy campaigns, and storytelling through art and dialogue, particularly those that lift up stories that are not often heard. Sometimes an act of protest can be sitting where you're not supposed to or kneeling when you're expected to stand.

**5. There Are Usually MANY Leaders**

Protests are usually part of movements that include many leaders and many, many different people. Often movement leaders are memorialized differently later, usually in a way that supports a "hero" narrative. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X worked together. They also had different approaches. They were not rivals. Martin Luther King was surrounded by other leaders, like John Lewis, Ella Baker, and Fannie Lou Hamer whose participation was essential but who are often left out of the full narrative. Our familiarity with "hero" narratives sometimes causes us to miss the leaders in our midst because they have not been memorialized yet.

**6. How Movements Are Memorialized Often Doesn't Match What Really Happened.**

Our understanding of history also shifts as time progresses and citizens' perspectives change. Martin Luther King Jr. was not popular in his lifetime. Many of us know that he was assassinated and under constant death threat and that his home was bombed. We often attribute that hatred and dislike only to the white supremacists at the time and forget, or don't learn, that the majority of the country didn't hold a favorable view of Martin Luther King Jr. A 1966 Gallup poll showed that only 36% of people had a positive view of him. Yet, in 1999 he was second in a list of Americans that other Americans admired most.

**7. Social Change Movements Take a Very Long Time**

The seeds for Brown vs. Board of Education were planted decades beforehand. There were eight years between the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the March on Washington. The complex nature of social issues and this long-term view can make it difficult to recognize crystallized moments of "success" even if there is movement and shifting happening in many places.

**8. Protest Movements Are Intentional, Purposeful, and Organized**

Sometimes stories about protests push forward a narrative that they are spontaneous or develop organically. While there are certainly moments that are unplanned, protest movements tend to be intentional, purposeful and very organized, even if you can't see it. Sometimes the organization, plans, and decision making is intentionally not made transparent in an effort to protect those in leadership roles. Sustained protest campaigns take a lot of pre-planning and are often a part of larger change strategies. In the following lesson, you'll experience stories with a wide variety of reasons for protests and how they come to fruition. Explore the similarities and differences in the stories, and see if you can find any commonalities in their themes.

## *Booklist*

- We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade
- Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez by Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Yuyi Morales
- Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909 by Michelle Markel, illustrated by Melissa Sweet
- Freedom Summer by Deborah Wiles, illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue
- Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down by Andrea Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney
- Rosa by Nikki Giovanni, illustrated by Bryan Collier

## *Consider This*

- Have you ever participated in a protest? What was the experience like for you?
- What are some things that you feel strongly enough to protest about?
- What protests have you witnessed, near or far, in your lifetime? Is there a trend?
- Is there anything you do regularly that is a form of protest? An example could be not shopping at a certain store because they have a history of being racist or discriminatory against marginalized groups.

## *Talk Together*

- Is there anything you care about that you would be upset or sad if it were taken from you? What would you do with those feelings?
- What do you do when you feel like something is unfair for you or others?
- We have a protected right to speak up about things we believe in. What do you think would happen if that right was taken away?
- Do you think protesting is only for adults?

## *Engage*

- Watch Disney's Ruby Bridges to show how young people can still create big moments.
- Oh no! There are no more cookies allowed in the house! Plan a protest around this or something else that is meaningful to your household. Have conversation about what to do to make the protest meaningful, intentional, and invoke change.

## *Explore More*

- Article Twenty Network's "Parents Guide to Talking with Kids About Protest"
- Learning for Justice's *Mighty Times: The Children's March* (2004)
- Zero to Three's "Racism and Violence: Using Your Power as a Parent to Support Children Aged Two to Five"
- "Talking to My White Kids About Abolition" by Shannon Cofrin Gaggero (Embrace Race)



# Lesson 14: Family Legacy

*"Do you remember?" Someone's always asking and someone else always does." —Jacqueline Woodson*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

## Summary

Exploring race and identity becomes even more complicated work that is only made more nuanced when you center the conversation on family history. It is important, though, to continually connect what we are learning to our own experiences, both past and present, and to consider the role of family legacy.

How are we shaped by the history of our families and country? What role have our families played in our national and regional stories? What evidence do we have of those narratives in our homes, habits, and own self-conception? And, given all that, what traditions do we want to continue and carry on with our children? What pieces may we choose to acknowledge but shed? How might the sense of legacy be more nuanced in blended and adoptive families?

This work can be both joyful and painful and carries with it both pride and loss, perhaps even trauma if we have a family history of enslavement or persecution. We believe that the "both/and" experience is important to embrace and model with our children and communities. The following stories provide a broader perspective of family and family experiences rooted in tradition and history.

## Booklist

- *These Hands* by Margaret H. Mason, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *This Is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by James Ransome
- *Ellen's Broom* by Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by Daniel Minter
- *Two Mrs. Gibsons* by Toyomi Igus, illustrated by Daryl Wells

## *Consider This*

- What are the hallmarks of your family?
- What reminds you of your family—turns of phrase, habits, heirlooms or beloved objects, traditions, do's and don'ts, values and beliefs?
- How do you celebrate and share these hallmarks with your children?
- What are key stories that shaped your family's relationship to American identity? To whiteness?
- What are the losses your family has sustained? What may have been sacrificed in order to be "white?"
- How may past trauma have resulted in legacies of perseverance and survival?
- Are there stories about your family you haven't yet shared with your children but would like to? Are there heirlooms or traditions that have meaning to you?

## *Talk Together*

- What new traditions might you want to consider starting?
- How can your family build upon a new practice or value that is important for your shared story and identity?
- How does your creation of tradition allow for the fullness and uniqueness of your family today?
- What special routines and practices do you see as part of your family legacy?

## *Engage*

- If possible, have a conversation with someone of another generation in your family or close to the family. Be an active listener to their stories and experiences and think about how their past life was different from your own.
- Make a new family tradition! You can start fresh or think about what traditions your family participates in and build on them.
- Create a family portrait. Extend this further and create a family tree.

## *Explore More*

- *All That She Carried* by Tiya Miles
- PBS' *Finding Your Roots*
- A Conversation With Latinos on Race by Joe Brewster, Blair Foster and Michèle Stephenson (The New York Times, February 29, 2016)
- "Our Obsession with Ancestry Has Some Twisted Roots" by Maya Jasanoff (The New Yorker, May 2, 2022)

## Lesson 15: Native Voices

*“Invisibility is the modern form of racism against Native Americans.”*  
—Dr. Stephanie Fryberg (Tulalip)

**Social Justice Standards: Diversity 10, Justice 12**

### Summary

Much of the dialogue and storytelling positions Native American peoples as purely in the past. Crystal Echo Hawk and the First Nations Development Institute embarked on a multi-year project entitled Reclaiming Native Truth. Within their research and data collection, they found that within American school systems, 87% of state’s history standards do not include Native people past the 19th century. Stereotypes, misconceptions, and misinformation are widespread, but importantly Invisibility is the “modern form of racism against Native Americans.” They also found that more than three-quarters of Americans want to learn more, are frustrated and angry that they haven’t accurately learned, and support more representation and inclusion. This lesson encourages reflection of the stories your family or class has learned about Native American peoples and introduces contemporary and truthful narratives by and about Native American lived experiences.

### Booklist

- *Welcome Song for Baby* by Richard Van Camp
- *My Heart Fills With Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith, illustrated by Julie Flett
- *Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness Into Light* by Tim Tingle, illustrated by Karen Clarkson
- *Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Leitich Smith, illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu
- *Berry Song* by Michaela Goade
- *Gaawin Gindaaswin Ndaawsii (I Am Not a Number)* by Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer, illustrated by Gillian Newland, translated by Muriel Sawyer and Geraldine McLeod
- *Nibi’s Water Song* by Sunshine Tenasco, illustrated by Chief Lady Bird

## Consider This

- Can you remember when you first learned about Native American peoples? Are there particular stories that jump to your mind? What are some themes from history class, news headlines, or politicians about Native peoples that you remember?
- After reflecting on these stories, identify what those messages told you about Native peoples from a young age? What new-to-you information can you seek out to combat potentially harmful stories?

## Talk Together

- Together list out:
  - 10 different Native American tribes
  - 10 prominent Native peoples living today
  - 10 books or movies written by Native peoples.
- How hard is it for you to do this? And if you can't, why might that be?

## Engage

- Over a week, check out Native woman-led organization IllumiNative's ChangeMakers at-home daily lessons. They are meant for all ages to learn about contemporary Native American changemakers!
- Project 562 photographs members of federally recognized Native American tribes across the United States. Check out these photos with your family or class!

## Explore More

- *Notable Native People: 50 Indigenous Leaders, Dreamers, and Changemakers from Past and Present* by Adrienne Keene, illustrated by Ciara Sana (Ten Speed Press, 2021)
- Crooked Media's *This Land* podcast
- *All My Relations* podcast
- "Teaching Thanksgiving in a Socially Responsible Way" by Amanda Morris (Learning for Justice, November 10, 2015)
- Rebel Music's *Native America* documentary

## Lesson 16: Gathering

*“Why do we gather? We gather to solve problems we can’t solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, to mourn, and to mark transitions. We gather to make decisions. We gather because we need one another.” —Priya Parker*

**Social Justice Standards: Diversity 8, 10**

### Summary

Our gatherings can be filled with foods and activities passed down generation to generation, eliciting memories of yore. Or our gatherings can be brand-new endeavors, bringing together chosen families and infused with the anticipation of a new tradition being made. As we reflect on the beauty and necessity of gathering with our communities, we learn that exclusionary policies and practices prevented communities of color from gathering with one another to celebrate, organize, mourn, and rest. Slave Codes across the United States and several European countries banned enslaved peoples from gathering for education, celebration, or organizing. These codes continued into Jim Crow laws post-emancipation as well. In the mid-19th century, federal policies banned Native American peoples from gathering in practice of their own traditions. Only in 1978 did the American Indian Religious Freedom Act restore the right to worship and gather. A popular gathering holiday, American Thanksgiving, is also predicated on a sanitized and false story. In contrast the Wampanoag Nation marks American Thanksgiving as a day of mourning, not celebration. How, then, do we balance these nuances of gathering and bring them into our own families and communities?

In the following lesson you’ll find perspectives on how communities gather. From walking in a community marketplace to gathering around a table for a holiday celebration, each book explores a different facet of gathering. We use food customs too, as a way to understand how communities similar to and different from our own build custom and tradition into gatherings. We hope these stories illuminate the beauties and challenges of gathering in community with each other.

## *Booklist*

- *Baby Goes to Market* by Atinuke, illustrated by Angela Brooksbank
- *Dim Sum for Everyone* by Grace Lin
- *Freedom Soup* by Tami Charles, illustrated by Jacqueline Alcántara
- *Dumplings for Lili* by Melissa Iwai
- *Watercress* by Andrea Wang, illustrated by Jason Chin
- *Bowwow Powwow* by Brenda J. Child, illustrated by Jonathan Thunder, translated by Gordon Jourdain

## *Consider This*

- What does it mean to gather in community with one another?
- How can we evaluate our traditions for gatherings? What are potential places in our family calendar to add in new gatherings?

## *Talk Together*

- What would your ideal gathering look like? Who would be there? What would you do?
- Do you have a favorite memory of a gathering? What did you like about it?

## *Engage*

- Plan a gathering! This can be real or imaginary play. Have your child or students plan a gathering with their toys, stuffed animals, or friends. Encourage conversations about why they are gathering and what makes it special. Have them consider what is needed in order to celebrate the event.

## *Explore More*

- NMAAHC's "Community Building"
- NPR podcast Code Switch's A Taste of Freedom (June 16, 2021)
- "The Invention of Thanksgiving" by Philip Deloria (*The New Yorker*, November 18, 2019)
- *I Invite My Parents to a Dinner Party* by Chen Chen

# Lesson 17: Wishing

*“Without new visions, we don’t know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics, but a process that can and must transform us.” —Robin D. G. Kelley*

**Social Justice Standards: Action 16, 17**

## Summary

At the end of the year, seasonal gatherings abound, and holidays from numerous cultural and spiritual traditions dot our calendars. The thread that weaves the holidays, traditions, and resolutions together is of the concepts of wishing, of dreaming, and of imagining.

In the face of continued struggle, wishes for a kind and equitable future for current generations and those yet to come can feel so woefully unfulfilled. And the anger, sorrow, and hurt for these unfulfilled dreams are vital to feel. Even so, in the quest to find ways to sustain hope, we are reminded of the ways wishing propels into bolder futures. To wish is to desire and to yearn, often knowing that what we’re wishing for isn’t easily attainable. How then do we ensure that our wishes are paired with action? That we are not left with silence, pervasive cynicism, and ultimately inaction?

In the following lesson you’ll find diverse perspectives into the power of wishes and how they inspire us to try new things and be a part of change, and comfort us when facing hardship. Our older selections take us a step further, showing the importance of wishing in the face of obstacles.

## Booklist

- Follow Your Dreams, Little One by Vashti Harrison
- Carmela Full of Wishes by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- Wishes by Muon Thi Van, illustrated by Victo Ngai
- Change Sings: A Children’s Anthem by Amanda Gorman, illustrated by Loren Long

## *Consider This*

- What's a wish that you had? How did it make you feel? Did it cause you to change any of your actions?
- How do you build a practice of wishing, dreaming, and imagining in the face of struggle?
- How are activists, organizers, and change makers envisioning what's possible for your community?
- Where and when are places you can wish?

## *Talk Together*

- If you could make a wish for someone other than yourself, who would it be, and what would you wish for?
- Have you ever had a wish that came true? How did it happen? How did it make you feel?
- What is the difference between a wish and a goal? A wish and a dream?
- Do all wishes come true?

## *Engage*

- Make a wish list. Consider dividing the wish list into categories to broaden thinking and considerations. Possible wish lists could include: wishes for me, wishes for my family, wishes for my school, wishes for the world, etc.
- Create a "wishing tree" in your neighborhood, outside your school, or in a park. Find a place near a fence, tree, or bush (make sure you have permission if it is not in your yard) to leave paper, writing utensils, and string for people to write their wishes on and hang them from a common area.

## *Explore More*

- *A People's Future of the United States*, edited by Victor La Valle and Joseph Adams (One World, 2019)
- *This Is Not a Small Voice* by Sonia Sanchez
- NPR podcast *Code Switch's* "Imagining a World Without Prisons or Police" (December 1, 2021)



# Lesson 18: Journeys

*"I promise you nothing . . . I accept your promise . . . of the same we are simply riding . . . a wave . . . that may carry . . . or crash . . . It's a journey . . . and I want . . . to go . . ."* —Nikki Giovanni

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 8**

## Summary

Life has many adventures in store for all of us, and we have so much that we can learn from the stories that others have lived through. Books help show us that not everyone has been or is able to travel in the same ways. Many family histories are marked by stories of important journeys.

In the following lesson, you will find help in starting a conversation about important journeys in your own family.

## Booklist

- *One Big Day* by Anne Wynter, illustrated by Alea Marley
- *The Year We Learned to Fly* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López
- *Bright Star* by Yuyi Morales
- *Powwow Day* by Traci Sorel, illustrated by Madelyn Goodnight

## Consider This

- Talk to those in your family about what important journeys or migrations may have made your family what it is today. How might things be different had your family not made those journeys?
- If you could journey anywhere, where would you go?
- What is the most meaningful or memorable trip you've been on?
- What are some things that may stop you from your journey?

## *Talk Together*

- Image together how the characters in the stories might be feeling. How do you know?
  - Can you think of any times when you felt that way? How could you tell this same story through another character's perspective—one of the adults for example?
- Where was the last place that you took a trip? What did you do on the trip? Who went with you?
- Have you ever made a trip that took you away from all the people and places that are familiar to you for a long time or permanently? What made you excited about that trip? What made you sad? What did you miss?
- There are many reasons to take a trip—what are some of the reasons that people use to explain why they need to travel?

## *Engage*

Use the word JOURNEY to help you imagine different places you'd like to go.

J = jungle or other natural habitat

O = ocean

U = universe

R = roadtrip

N = nation

E = experience

Y = year (past or future)

## *Explore More*

- NPR Code Switch's "They Came, They Saw, They Reckoned?" (January 12, 2022)
- *A Journey* by Nikki Giovanni
- "In Twilight of Life, Civil Rights Activists Feel 'Urgency to Tell Our History'" by Eduardo Medina (New York Times, February 19, 2022)
- "Letting Go of Myths, Embracing Truths" by Shawn Ginwright (Yes! Magazine, February 16, 2022)
- *Harper Bazaar's* "Faith Ringgold Knows She's Ahead of Her Time" (February 17, 2022)

## Lesson 19: Schools

*“Let us remember: One book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world.” —Malala Yousafzai*

Social Justice Standard: Justice 12

### Summary

In many ways, our educational system both reflects and perpetuates our nation’s struggles with racial equity. Because the interplay between education and equity is so complex, and because schooling choices are so deeply resonant and personal for caregivers, we debated (a lot) about how to address this topic in our curriculum. It’s impossibly large and complicated, and yet, the topic is too important to be ignored. So with the awareness of the size of the tangle, we are choosing to illuminate one particular thread: the costs of racism for us all, and particularly, how segregation intersects with that.

The recommended books below will help you dive deeper into the history of “separate but equal,” the transformations integration has undergone from past to present, and the costs of segregation to children now and in the future. In doing so, we hope to avoid a common stuck point in this conversation where individuals feel bad about or obligated to defend their schooling choices. Begin your conversations using the guidelines below.

### Booklist

- *Separate Is Never Equal* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Busing Brewster* by Richard Michelson, illustrated by R. G. Roth
- *As Fast as Words Could Fly* by Pamela Tuck and Eric Velasquez
- *Tomatoes in My Lunchbox* by Costantia Manoli, illustrated by Magdalena Mora
- *Abdul’s Story* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Tiffany Rose
- *A New School Year: Stories in Six Voices* by Sally Derby, illustrated by Mika Song
- *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López

## *Consider This*

- How are we reinforcing notions of schools and students that are “good” and “bad”?
- How do we model and demonstrate what a vibrant learning environment looks like?
- How do the harms of segregation differ for white students and students of color in different school settings? Why does that matter to us all?
- What might be possible if we were to strive to make our learning communities inclusive and equitable, regardless of the demographics of the student population?
- What does a vibrant and rich learning environment look like? Feel like? When have you experienced that? When have you not?

## *Talk Together*

- What does it feel like to be included?
- What does it feel like not being able to share your special self?
- What makes a teacher?

## *Engage*

- What would school look like if you made it exactly the way you wanted it? Maybe the cafeteria would have robots handing out your lunch or the playground would be equipped with a water slide! Dream big! Design a “dream school” in your chosen art form—painting, drawing, writing, etc.

## *Explore More*

- Science Animated’s YouTube video “Why are schools in the U.S. still racially segregated?” (February 14, 2022)
- “School Integration: How It Can Promote Social Cohesion and Combat Racism” by Richard D. Kahlenberg, Halley Potter, and Kimberly Quick (American Federation of Teachers)
- Black History in Two Minutes or So’s YouTube video “School Integration” (December 11, 2020)
- PBS’s video “Ruby Bridges Goes to School”

# Lesson 20: Libraries

"I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library." —Jorge Luis Borges

Social Justice Standard: Diversity 8

## Summary

Libraries are special places: places where you can find access to knowledge via books and other multimedia, but also serve as places of community, connection, and of learning and opportunity. Libraries provide important resources such as literacy initiatives, voting centers, social groups, and a wealth of community resources on health-care, employment, housing, and more. Libraries exist throughout our communities, from rural communities to urban centers. In the following lesson, you will find stories of how libraries provide an important place of refuge and knowledge-building.

## Booklist

- Please, Louise by Toni Morrison and Slade Morrison, illustrated by Shadra Strickland
- Lola at the Library by Anna McQuinn, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw
- Ron's Big Mission by Rose Blue and Corinne J. Naden, illustrated by Don Tate
- Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré by Anika Aldamuy Denise, illustrated by Paola Escobar
- Dreamers by Yuyi Morales
- Everything in Its Place: A Story of Books and Belonging by Pauline David-Sax, illustrated by Charnelle Pinkney Barlow

## Consider This

- What is your first memory of a library? Do you remember receiving your first library card?
- What were the feelings you associated with the library as a kid? Share those experiences with your children before a library visit!

## *Talk Together*

- Does your family regularly visit the library? If so, what are your family's favorite parts of going to the library? If not, look up your nearest library and plan an outing to your local library! Educators, schedule a time for your students to visit the school library or have students take turns visiting your classroom library.

## *Engage*

Along with enjoying these stories with your child or students, we want to give to you FIVE library challenges to help demonstrate all that libraries have to offer!

- 1. Ask For Help!**  
Pick a favorite interest and ask your child's librarian to help you find a book with diverse characters that intersects with that interest!
- 2. Check It Out!**  
Check out a resource available at your library that ISN'T a book! Did you know that many systems have telescopes that you can check out?!
- 3. Take a Trip!**  
Visit a branch or two that you've never been to before. Take a visit and use the opportunity to meet new people and show your children the breadth and vibrancy of our community.
- 4. Learn Something New!**  
Check out the library's list of programs, classes, and events and find an opportunity where you can learn something NEW at your library.
- 5. Interview a Librarian!**  
Librarians are some of our most precious community helpers. Encourage your child or students to ask their librarian about their experience. Why did they choose to become a librarian? What do they love about it? Why are librarians such important community resources?

## *Explore More*

- AASL's "Strong School Libraries Build Strong Students"
- "How Public Libraries Help Build Healthy Communities" by Marcela Cabello and Stuart M. Butler (Brookings Institution, March 30, 2017)

# Lesson 21:

## *Every Day, Everywhere...Babies Are Loved*

*"I loved you before I met you. Before I held you in my arms I sang you down from the stars." —Tasha Spillett Sumner*

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 7**

### *Summary*

Just as there has been under-representations of children of color in books, so has there been in toys and dolls. Many families' playthings don't reflect the full vibrancy and diversity of our communities and region. Children learn a lot of important messages from the toys and books to which they are exposed. Just as it's worthwhile to consider "who is missing?" and "who is present?" when you look at the books your child reads, it is also powerful to do so when thinking about your child's toys and dolls.

In the following lesson , you will find stories that celebrate the beautiful differences in babies and children in many everyday shared experiences.

### *Booklist*

- Little You by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by Julie Flett
- We Sang You Home by Richard Van Camp, illustrated by Julie Flett
- "More, More, More," Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams
- Everywhere Babies by Susan Meyers, illustrated by Marla Frazee
- Homemade Love by bell hooks, illustrated by Shane W. Evans
- Girl of Mine by Jabari Asim, illustrated by LeUyen Pham
- Peekaboo Morning by Rachel Isadora
- I Sang You Down from the Stars by Tasha Spillett-Sumner, illustrated by Michaela Goade

## Consider This

- Did you have diverse dolls, toys, and books as a child? Do you remember it ever being a conversation in your home?
- How have you seen toys and books change over time related to diversity?
- Do you think there are still holes in who or what is represented in children's products?
- If you're a caregiver, how have you been intentional about exposing the children in your life to a wide variety of people?

## Talk Together

- What is your favorite toy? What do you like about it?
- Do you have toys and books with people that look like you? What about ones with people that don't look like you?
- Do you remember anything about being a baby? What stories have you been told about some of your favorite things as a baby?
- Would you want to be a baby again? What is fun, or not fun, about being a baby?

## Engage

Recreate stories with dolls. Here are some ways you can use the books in the lesson

- Have a doll practice walking like the baby in *Everywhere Babies*.
- Try loving the baby the same way they do in *Little You*.
- Enjoy playing peekaboo like in *Peekaboo Mornings*.

## Explore More

- BabyCenter's "How to talk to your child about how babies are made"
- Watch *Babies* on Netflix
- Parents with Confidence's "72 Incredibly Simple Ways to Show Love for Children" (February 10, 2021)
- All About Kids' "5 Ways Kids Express Love"



# Lesson 22: Counting

*“So what can you count in your community? I can count on you and you can count on me!” —Innosanto Nagara*

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 7**

## Summary

Counting is a basic and fundamental skill that every child interacts with from an early age. Counting is fun, so why not add some diverse literature to an already connective activity! This lesson provides resources to learn counting while also providing opportunities for rich conversation about our similarities and differences.

## Booklist

- *Feast for 10* by Cathryn Falwell
- *One Family* by George Shannon, illustrated by Blanca Gomez
- *We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers* by Julie Flett
- *One is a Drummer: A Book of Numbers* by Roseanne Thong, illustrated by Grace Lin
- *Counting on Community* by Innosanto Nagara

## Consider This

- When or in what circumstance do you use counting the most in your life?
- Do you think you count every day?
- Do you use your fingers to count? What other ways do you keep track of your counting?

## Talk Together

- How high can you count?
- Can you count by numbers other than 1?
- Do you count every day? What activities and games do you do that use counting?

## *Engage*

- Practice counting in different languages. You can easily search online for numbers 1 to 10—or beyond!—in various languages. Discuss how the sounds are different but the number values are the same.

## *Explore More*

- Reading Eggs' "5 Fun Counting Activities to Try at Home"
- Knowing & Growing's YouTube video "Learn Counting & Numbers with Nature — for babies, toddlers, infants & preschoolers"

## Lesson 23: Board Books – Fun and Play

*“The imagination is an essential tool of the mind, a fundamental way of thinking, an indispensable means of becoming and remaining human.”*

—Ursula K. LeGuin

Social Justice Standard: Diversity 9

### Summary

Everyone loves to have fun! How you like to play may change from person to person, but at the end of the day, finding ways to experience the world around you is exciting. As you read the books in this lesson, notice all of the ways that these characters like to have fun—you might be surprised to find that you have some play practices in common!

### Booklist

- *Please, Baby, Please* by Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee, illustrated by Kadir Nelson
- *My Friends* by Taro Gomi
- *Making Faces: A First Book of Emotion*
- *Whose Knees Are These* by Jabari Asim, illustrated by LeUyen Pham
- *I Know a Lot!* by Stephen Krensky, illustrated by Sara Gillingham

### Consider This

- What do you remember about playing as a kid?
- Do you still find ways to “play” as an adult? What do you do for fun?
- Have you had any changes of heart around certain activities? Something that was once fun is not fun anymore? Or the other way around?

### Talk Together

- What is your favorite way to play?
- Have you ever had a similar experience to a character in one of these books?
- Do you like to play by yourself or with friends? Does the way you play change whether you are alone or with others?

## *Engage*

Go out and play! Use the books as your inspiration for a morning or afternoon play session, and while you're out, see if you can notice any more similarities along the way!

## *Explore More*

What Do We Do All Day's "Play Activities for Kids"

"The Importance of Play Through Learning" by Heidi Borst (U.S. New and World Report, December 10, 2021)

## Lesson 24: Things that Go

*“Do you need a ride? It’s hotter than peppers out there in the sun! Come in, there’s room for everyone!” —Naaz Khan*

**Social Justice Standard: Diversity 6**

### Summary

A love of things that GO is a staple of childhood for many children. And who can blame them—wheels are pretty magical! This lesson demonstrates an example of how you can look for positive and diverse representation within your child’s area of interest. Buses, planes, car trips, and box cars are pretty awesome. Consider how these books can help you expand your conversations at home or in your classroom by hooking into an existing interest area.

### Booklist

- *The Hallelujah Flight* by Phil Bildner, illustrated by John Holyfield
- *Just Us Women* by Jeannette Caines, illustrated by Pat Cummings
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *Going Places* by Peter H. Reynolds and Paul A. Reynolds
- *Room for Everyone* by Naaz Khan, illustrated by Mercè López

### Consider This

- How does your access to transportation affect your day-to-day life? Reflect on the ease or difficulty of available transportation methods in your life.

### Talk Together

- What modes of transportation have you experienced? What is your favorite?
- How do different types of vehicles make you feel? Do you feel similar or different than the characters in the books when riding that particular transport?
- Which journey do you like the most from the books? What other ways do you connect with that character or story?
- Can you imagine a world that didn’t have things that go? What would that look like? How would your life be different?

## *Engage*

- Make a ramp, and make things go! Explore different vehicles from the books on the booklist to inspire what vehicles play on the ramp. You can also use other materials and objects around the house to investigate how things move differently.
- Plan a trip and discuss how you will get there. Be as creative as you'd like! Talk about what you may need to get around on your trip—whether that be money for a bus or a suitcase for an airplane.

## *Explore More*

- National Museum of American History's "America on the Move"
- "Transportation Protests: 1841 to 1992" by Julian Hipkins III and David Busch (Civil Rights Teaching)
- "The History of Tying Up Traffic for Civil Rights" by David Greenberg (Politico, February 26, 2022)

## Lesson 25: Fairy Tales

*“Her mother said fairy tales didn’t have anything to do with the world, but Ofelia knew better. They had taught her everything about it.”*  
—Pan’s Labyrinth

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 2, Diversity 8**

### Summary

Fairy tales are remnants of times when oral traditions prevailed. The short stories in this lesson share several commonalities and use similar themes despite the fact that they have independently originated within many traditions across the world. They give us a terrific opportunity to use our imagination, be curious, and explore what’s possible!

### Booklist

- *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China* by Ai-Ling Louie, illustrated by Ed Young
- *Adelita: a Mexican Cinderella Story* by Tomie dePaola
- *Sootface: An Ojibwa Cinderella Story* retold by Robert D. San Souci, illustrated by Daniel San Souci
- *Sukey and the Mermaid* by Robert D. San Souci, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

### Consider This

- What were some of your favorite fairy tales as a child? What do you remember liking about them?
- How do you feel some of your favorite fairy tales have aged? Well or not so well? Are there any parts that you used to love that you now see as problematic?

### Talk Together

- What fairy tales do you know? What do you like about them?
- Do you ever wish there were a different ending to a fairy tale you know? What is it?
- Are fairy tales real?

## *Engage*

- How can you use what you know to create your own fairy tale? Or perhaps make up a new ending to a story you already know?

### Elements of a Fairy Tale

- Typically set in the past (might start with “Once upon a time...”)
- Involves a magic or enchanted setting (such as talking animals)
- Usually the good character prevails over bad
- Often the story helps to teaches a lesson
- There is often a happy ending

## *Explore More*

- Literacy Central's “Fairy Tales from Around the World”
- Fairy Tales by Region from FairyTalez



## Lesson 26: Animal Friends

*“Animals are such agreeable friends, they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms.” —George Eliot*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

### Summary

Animals can be powerful friends for all people, young and old. They can be a source of comfort after a hard day, confidence to get you through a difficult situation, or cuddles when you need a hug! In the following lesson, you'll find many different animals and people experiencing life together.

### Booklist

- *Not Norman: A Goldfish Story* by Kelly Bennett, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones
- *The Summer Nick Taught His Cats to Read* by Curtis Manley and Kate Berube
- *Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion* by Alex T. Smith
- *Lizard from the Park* by Mark Pett
- *Raising Dragons* by Jerdine Nolen, illustrated by Elise Primavera

### Consider This

- What is your best memory that involves an animal? And your worst?
- What is your favorite animal? Has that changed since you were young?
- How has your view on animals changed over the years?

### Talk Together

- Do you have animals in your life that are special to you?
- If you could have an imaginary pet, what would it be?
- Do the animals in these stories act more like animals or more like people?

## *Engage*

- Grab a pile of books and explore the animals in them. You can even make a tally of how many animals in each book, or you can keep track of how many of a certain kind of animal is present.
- Play animal charades! Act out an animal for your playmates to guess.
- Take a classic animal song, for example the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" and change the animal in the song. Create a new song to fit that animal but use the same tune.

## *Explore More*

- *Parents' Magazine's* "The Benefits of Pets for Kids"
- AACAP's: "Pets and Children" (January 2019)

## Lesson 27: Rainy Days

*“Let the rain kiss you. Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops.  
Let the rain sing you a lullaby.” —Langston Hughes*

*“Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet.” —Bob Marley*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

### Summary

Who doesn't love a rainy day? It can give us an excuse to slow down and rest. We can cuddle up with a good book, listening to the pitter patter of rain hitting the window. It can also provide a fun opportunity to put on our best rain gear, go outside, jump in puddles, or make a complete mess of ourselves with mud. Regardless of how you like to spend a rainy day, most every person experiences them at some point in their life. How we interact with a rainy day can shift, but one thing remains constant—rain can bring just as much life to a story in a book as it does to the real world around us.

### Booklist

- *Umbrella* by Taro Yashima
- *Come On, Rain!* by Karen Hesse, illustrated by Jon J. Muth
- *Rain!* by Linda Ashman, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *Tap Tap Boom Boom* by Elizabeth Bluemle, illustrated by G. Brian Karas

### Consider This

- How has your experience with rainy days shifted from childhood to adulthood?
- Do you look forward to rain in the forecast? Why or why not?
- What memories do you associate with rain?
- What experiences do you still want to have on a rainy day?

## *Talk Together*

- How do rainy days make you feel?
- What do you do to celebrate the rain?
- What is your best memory of rain?
- Does rain make music?

## *Engage*

- Play in the rain when you can (and when it's safe)! Grab umbrellas, rain boots, and jackets and embrace the experience.
- Watch (or read) the book *Chalk* by Bill Thomson. See what happens when the children in the book find some sidewalk chalk on a rainy day at a playground. Use this book to inspire your own art and play with sidewalk chalk! You can find the book on YouTube!

## *Explore More*

- Chicago Parent's "5 Kid-Friendly Podcasts That Discuss Race and Diversity"
- "Mindfulness for Children — Rain for Emotional Regulation" by Chris Bergstrom (Blissful Kids, March 25, 2016)
- Rain Sounds
- *Our Planet* episode "Jungles"

## Lesson 28: Food

*"I'm just someone who likes cooking and for whom sharing food is a form of expression." —Maya Angelou*

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

### Summary

Food is all around us and can be a great way to express creativity, show someone you care for them, or even make your career. And because food is so versatile, many people interact with it at all of the stops that it takes from the ground to the dinner plate. As you read the books in this lesson, notice all of the people needed to make your favorite dishes happen!

### Booklist

- *Bring Me Some Apples and I'll Make You a Pie: A Story About Edna Lewis* by Robbin Gourley
- *The Ugly Vegetables* by Grace Lin
- *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi, illustrated by Thi Bui
- *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal
- *Freedom Soup* by Tami Charles, illustrated by Jacqueline Alcántara
- *Tea Cakes for Tosh* by Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by E. B. Lewis

### Consider This

- How has your relationship with food evolved throughout your life?
- Do you have any special memories that involve food?
- Do you prefer to make food or have it made for you?
- What organizations in your area are trying to help or combat food insecurity?

## *Talk Together*

- What is your most favorite meal?
- What food is special to your family? Do you have good memories of it?
- Have you ever grown any food?
- Did you recognize any foods in the books?

## *Engage*

### Get Cooking!

Did you get hungry reading about all of that food in these books? Well you're in luck, because *Bring Me Some Apples* and *I'll Make You a Pie* has a handful of recipes at the back of the book for you to choose your favorite to make!

## *Explore More*

- USDA's Children's Nutrition resources
- Cooking with Kids website
- Bon Voyage with Kids' "101+ Kid-Friendly Recipes from Around the World"

# Lesson 29: Being Friends

*"And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter." —Kahlil Gibran*

**Social Justice Standards: Diversity 6, 9**

## Summary

Books featuring diverse characters are a small slice of the children's book market. Books featuring friends from different racial groups are an even smaller slice. But these books are really special and important in helping shape our children's perceptions of friendship. An important research study demonstrated that as few as six books that depicted cross-race friendship encourage interaction and building friendship with those different than oneself. This lesson provides opportunities for you and your child or students to explore the importance of being friends.

## Booklist

- *More-igami* by Dori Kleber, illustrated by G. Brian Karas
- *Jamaica and Brianna* by Juanita Havill, illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien
- *My Friend, Jamal* by Anna McQuinn and Ben Frey
- *My Two Blankets* by Irena Kobald, illustrated by Freya Blackwood
- *Yo! Yes?* by Chris Raschka
- *A Friend for Henry* by Jenn Bailey, illustrated by Mika Song
- *My Two Border Towns* by David Bowles, illustrated by Erika Meza
- *Sam & Eva* by Debbie Ridpath Ohi
- *I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien

## Consider This

- What is the longest friendship you have? What has kept the friendship going over the years?
- Do you have cross-race friendships? What circumstances have influenced the diversity of your friendship circle?
- What is the characteristic that is most common among your friends? Are there any character traits that are essential in maintaining friendships?
- Do you have friends that you can grow with in your anti-racist work? Who do you lean on to process and delve into this work?

## *Talk Together*

- Ask your child or students to think about what it means to be a good friend. What do they look for in a friend? Is it always the same thing? Or do different friends have different strengths?
- What is similar in some of these stories of friendship? What is different?

## *Engage*

- Plan a playdate with one (or more) of your friends!
- Go to a library or park that you do not usually visit to play and interact with new friends and experiences.

## *Explore More*

- Embrace Race's "Encouraging Cross-Racial Friendships among Children"
- PBS Kids' Life Little Lessons: Friendship



# Lesson 30: Fostering Empathy

*“All I ever wanted was to reach out and touch another human being not just with my hands but with my heart.” —Tahereh Mafi*

**Social Justice Standards: Diversity 9, Justice 12**

## Summary

As caregivers, we hope for a strong foundation of care, kindness, and understanding in our children. Empathy gives us the capacity to take on another experience or perspective and is at the heart of this work. We can do this by modeling empathy, keeping our messages and conversation clear, and allowing our children to practice empathy through various opportunities. We want our children to practice compassion by zooming out beyond their perspective and leaning in to their curiosity with respect and dignity. As educators, you can model empathy in your classroom and encourage your students to practice compassion. Since young children are naturally egocentric, it is up to the adults in their lives to nurture their other natural capacity—empathy.

## Booklist

- *Milo Imagines the World* by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *Fishing Day* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Shane W. Evans
- *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by Noah Z. Jones
- *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch
- *Big Red Lollipop* by Rukhsana Khan, illustrated by Sophie Blackall
- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali, illustrated by Hatem Aly

## Consider This

- What is your earliest memory of experiencing empathy? Has it had an impact on you through life?
- Why is empathy important to you? How do you find yourself keeping up with this practice and mindset?
- Can you think of a time in your life, whether it be at home or outside of the home, when empathy was needed but absent? How could the situation have changed if empathy was a part of the narrative?
- Knowing that we cannot empathize with every experience, how does empathy show up in your anti-racist journey?

## *Talk Together*

- Have you ever felt sad for someone? What did you do?
- We try to treat others with kindness and respect, how would it feel if someone did not treat you that way? What about if someone else was not treated that way?
- Can you think of a time when you made a connection to someone's experience? Has anything happened to a friend that has also happened to you?

## *Engage*

- Identify feelings. While looking at books or other media (television, games, etc.) name the different feelings that the characters are experiencing. Encourage conversation around why they may be feeling that way. You can also make a personal connection naming a time you have felt that same feeling.
- Role play. One way to help children practice empathy is by giving them opportunities to react and engage. Learning empathy takes guidance and practice, so create scenarios where children can practice taking on your perspective and tuning in to your feelings by responding to your problems.

## *Explore More*

- "How to Help Your Child Develop Empathy" by Rebecca Parlakian (Zero to Three, February 1, 2016)
- "How Children Develop Empathy" by Erin Walsh and David Walsh (Psychology Today, May 9, 2019)
- Very Special Tales' "Empathy Activities for Kids" (February 27, 2022)

# Lesson 31: Rhythm

*“As you begin to realize that every different type of music, everybody's individual music, has its own rhythm, life, language and heritage, you realize how life changes, and you learn how to be more open and adaptive to what is around us.” —Yo-Yo Ma*

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 7**

## Summary

Music is magical! These stories feature children who LOVE music and also find music and rhythm in unexpected places. Use this lesson as a springboard to explore a variety of musical traditions and also the rhythms of the world around us.

## Booklist

- *I Got the Rhythm* by Connie Schofield-Morrison, illustrated by Frank Morrison
- *Squeak, Rumble, Whomp! Whomp! Whomp!: A Sonic Adventure* by Wynton Marsalis, illustrated by Paul Rogers
- *Little Melba and Her Big Trombone* by Katheryn Russell-Brown, illustrated by Frank Morrison
- *The Bat Boy & His Violin* by Gavin Curtis, illustrated by E. B. Lewis
- *Paletero Man* by Lucky Diaz, illustrated by Micah Player, translated by Dr. Carmen Tafolla
- *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Luisa Uribe

## Consider This

- Have your preferences for rhythm changed over time?
- Does the rhythm in your music ever correlate with your mood? Why do you think we find comfort in music that way?
- Do you consider yourself to have a good sense of rhythm? What about those in your family?

## *Talk Together*

- What kind of rhythms do you like? Slow? Fast? Loud? Soft?
- Can you find 5 unexpected musical instruments in your home? What about 10? How do they sound together? Can you make up a song to accompany them?

## *Engage*

- Take turns creating and repeating a rhythm. Rhythms can be made with your body or objects. Test your memory and creativity. An example is “clap, stomp, clap, clap, snap.” Then have your child or students repeat the rhythm. Switch turns and have them create a rhythm and you repeat.
- Grab a set of markers, colored pencils, or crayons. Either arrange them in a row or make dots on a piece of paper. Create a rhythm by putting the colors in any order and perform the rhythm aloud together. For example, a rhythm might be “blue, red, yel-low, yel-low, green, yel-low, blue, pur-ple.” Don’t forget to keep your beat steady.

## *Explore More*

- “Rhythm might be hardwired in humans” by Catherine Maticic (*Science Magazine*, December 19, 2016)
- All Around This World’s “Everything Is a Drum”

## Lesson 32: Artists

*"I don't think about art when I'm working. I try to think about life."*

—Jean-Michel Basquiat

**Social Justice Standard: Identity 5**

### Summary

Art has continued to inspire and evolve over centuries. It can take on many forms and be interpreted in so many different ways. Like so many other mediums, the world of art has historically centered around the white experience and perspective. Art is a universal form of expression in all corners of the world, and especially now with the internet, we are fortunate enough to be able to experience different forms of art created by an almost limitless number of artists. It is exciting to broaden our view and understanding of what art is and why it is made. The books in this lesson allow us a window into experiences that have inspired many artists, and hopefully they will also inspire you.

### Booklist

- *It Jes' Happened* by Don Tate, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
- *Gordon Parks: Segregation Story* by Gordon Parks
- *How to Draw What You See* by Rudy De Reyna
- *A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin* by Jen Bryant, illustrated by Melissa Sweet

### Consider This

- Do you like art? What kind?
- What art did you study in school? What was their significance and story?
- Has there been any art that has left an impression on you? What about it do you remember the most?
- Do you have any art in your home? How is this art a reflection of you and/or your family?

## *Talk Together*

- Many artists are influenced by their life experiences. When you make art, is it usually inspired by your imagination or your real life?
- If you drew a picture of how you feel right now, what would it include?

## *Engage*

- Using a camera or a phone, take a picture of something that makes you happy or represents something that makes you happy. Then take a picture of something that makes you feel frustrated, and finally, take one of something that feels unfair.

## *Explore More*

- Artist Network
- Art Hub for Kids

## Lesson 33: Poetry

*"Poetry is the way we give name to the nameless so it can be thought."*  
—Audre Lorde

Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 6

### Summary

Reading has always been a way to explore imagination, storytelling, and creativity. Poetry takes these aspects of literature, with the author's specific sound and rhythm, to show meaning and emotion. One of the oldest literary genres, poetry has a wide variety of styles including chants, songs, folk tales, and written form. Poetry can be an exciting way for children to understand different perspectives and comprehend complex stories and experiences. The poets in this lesson each have their own style and form of expression that fosters readers' curiosity and enjoyment.

### Booklist

- *Poetry for Young People* by Langston Hughes, edited by David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad, illustrated by Benny Andrews
- *The Blacker the Berry* by Wallace Thurman
- *Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist
- *Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Sweet Words So Brave: The Story of African American Literature* by Barbara K. Curry and James Michael Brodie, illustrated by Jerry Butler

### Consider This

- Were you exposed to poetry as a child? What do you remember about it?
- Is there a certain tone or mood that you prefer when reading poems? Why do you think that is?
- Poetry often tells stories with emotion and rhythm. How do you think the cadence of a poem affects its story? Do you see a difference in a poem's rhythm based on its mood?

## *Talk Together*

- What do you love about poetry?
- Can you find a phrase or couple of sentences that you really liked from one of these books? Why did you pick this one? What do you feel when you read it?
- Did any of the poetry help you “see” or picture something clearly in your mind?

## *Engage*

Choose a favorite toy, book, or any item around the house, and create similes and metaphors about that object. This helps children to “see” through language and play with a figure of speech often used in poetry.

- “My strawberries are as red as a rose.” (simile—comparing using “like” or “as”)
- “Strawberries are a spotted, red flower” (metaphor—comparing without using “like” or “as”)

Check out different “Poetry Slams” online. Talk about how the performer feels and what they want their audience to feel.

## *Explore More*

- Reading Is Fundamental's “Explore Poetry Around the World”
- GLSEN's “These Queer and Trans Students of Color Use Poetry to Put #KindnessInAction”
- Amanda Gorman Reciting Her Poem “Talking Gets Us There” on the PBS Kids YouTube Channel



## Lesson 34: Jazz

*"Jazz is not just music, it's a way of life, it's a way of being, a way of thinking."*  
—Nina Simone

Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 7

### Summary

Originating from African American traditions, jazz is a unique blend of many different music styles, with deep roots in blues and ragtime. Popular jazz instruments include the piano, saxophone, double bass, and the drums, giving the sound a unique and emotional rhythm. The books in this lesson provide perspectives on jazz and its influence on African American culture.

### Booklist

- *Jazz Day: The Making of a Famous Photograph* by Roxane Orgill, illustrated by Francis Vallejo
- *Jazz* by Walter Dean Myers, illustrated by Christopher Myers
- *When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, illustrated by Brian Selznick
- *Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat: Ella Fitzgerald* by Roxanne Orgill, illustrated by Sean Qualls
- *Trombone Shorty* by Troy Andrews, illustrated by Bryan Collier
- *This Jazz Man* by Karen Ehrhardt, illustrated by R. G. Roth

### Consider This

- What are some aspects of jazz music that you enjoy?
- What instrument makes you think about jazz the most? How would the feel of the music differ if that instrument was no present?

### Talk Together

- Does jazz music influence you to move your body?
- In jazz music, it is said that the instruments have a conversation together. While listening to a jazz song, what do you think the instruments are talking about?

## *Engage*

Many of the books in this lesson profile real, famous jazz musicians. Search online for some of their recordings and listen and dance! How do you feel when you hear the music?

## *Explore More*

- Phylicia Hollis Butler's YouTube video "What is Jazz Music?"
- Mr. Boom Boom's Music's YouTube video "Jazz for Kids with Mr. Boom Boom"

# Lesson 35: Dancing

*“Dance is for everybody. I believe that dance came from the people and should always be delivered back to the people.” —Alvin Ailey*

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 9**

## Summary

Similar to food, art, and traditions, dancing is important and uniquely different in many cultures around the world. Seeing a wide range of what dancers can look like, and a variety of dance styles opens our minds to the limitless boundaries in the world of dance.

The books in this lesson explore the love of dance and how dance is a personal and cultural expression filled with storytelling, music, and movement.

## Booklist

- *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker* by Patricia Hruby Powell, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *My Friend Maya Loves to Dance* by Cheryl Willis Hudson, illustrated by Eric Velasquez
- *Alvin Ailey* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney
- *Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—Think of That!* by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon
- *The Electric Slide and Kai* by Kelly J. Baptist, illustrated by Darnell Johnson
- *Finding My Dance* by Ria Thundercloud, illustrated by Kalila J. Fuller

## Consider This

- Is there a specific song that makes you want to dance?
- Was dancing a part of your family culture growing up?
- Did you learn any dances in school? What do you remember about that experience?

## Talk Together

- Do you think that “dancing is for everyone,” as Alvin Ailey said?
- Can dancing help your body talk?
- When do you feel most like dancing?

## *Engage*

- Have a dance party! Turn up the music, get your body moving, and let the movement take over. Choose different genres of music, including traditional dance music from countries and cultures around the world. Have a discussion about how different music styles influence the type of movement and dance we create.

## *Explore More*

- Duende by Madam Zozo's "Dance Around the World"
- KET Education's "Dances from Many Cultures"

# EXPLORE MORE

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*365 days with dad.* Cbabi Bayoc Originals. (n.d.).

*562 Gallery.* Project 562. (n.d.).

*5 Fun Counting Activities to Try at Home.* Reading Eggs. (n.d.).

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*Black History in Two Minutes or So.* (2020, December 11). *School Integration.* [Video]. YouTube.

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Brewster, J., Foster, B., & Stephenson, M. (2016) *A Conversation with Latinos on Race*. [Film] *The New York Times*.

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Caleb With Curls. (2021, February 9). *Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance video for kids | Black History Heroes | Caleb With Curls*. [Video]. YouTube.

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*Fairy tales from around the world.* FairyTalez. (n.d.).

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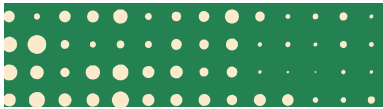
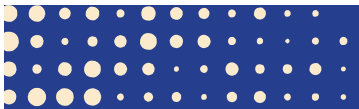
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