

# DEI THEMED LESSONS

## 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.