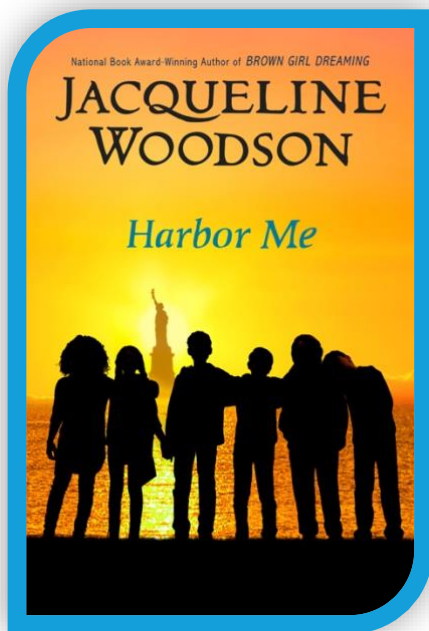




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



Harbor Me

Jacqueline Woodson (Author)

ISBN: 978-0399252525

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 10 and up

Book Themes

Ally Behavior, Friendship, Identity, Immigration and Deportation, Race and Racism

About the Book

It all starts when six young people are told by their teacher that they will meet for a weekly chat—by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in what they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it is safe to talk about what's bothering them—everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears that they hide from the rest of the world. And together, they grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their

responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- What character(s) did you relate to and why?
- Why do you think Ms. Laverne, the students' teacher, felt the students needed a place to talk without any adults around? Would you like to do something like this?
- What happens when each of the main characters share their stories? What were your thoughts and feelings as you read about them?
- Do you find it is helpful to share your experiences, stories and feelings with others? Please explain.
- How is the concept of freedom (and lack of freedom) used in the book? What does freedom mean to you?
- What are some of the social justice issues that are addressed in the book? Do those issues resonate with you? What other equity and justice issues are important to you?
- Why do you think the book is called *Harbor Me*? How is the term harbor used throughout the novel, and what does it mean?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Race and Identity

In the book, we learn about different aspects of each of the main characters' identity, including their race and ethnicity. As you read the book, or after your child has read it, talk about the aspects of the characters' racial and ethnic identity that were meaningful in the book. Explore how you learned about each of the characters' race and ethnicity, the importance this had to their stories, and their different perspectives and experiences based on their race and ethnicity (i.e., Amari and Ashton's different perspective on noticing race and their relationships with police). Talk together about your family's racial and ethnic identity(s) and how race and ethnicity may impact your experiences and points of view. Another concept to highlight is that within a specific racial or ethnic group, people can have very different experiences. Therefore, a person's perspective is made of many things, including their race and ethnicity. Talk with your child about what aspects of their identity are important to them, and discuss the extent to which they feel accepted in their family, community and school for who they are.

2. Friendship and Sharing Feelings and Experiences

An important message of the book is that talking with others about our feelings, experiences and stories helps people connect as friends and helps people feel better when they may feel down. Ask your child why Ms. Laverne (the main characters' teacher) wanted to provide a space and time for the students to talk together about their lives. Remind them about when Haley said, "My uncle says that when you tell stories, it's like letting out all the scared inside of it" and ask what they think she means by this. Also, discuss the title of the book, *Harbor Me*, and its meaning in terms of them helping each other and acting as harbors for each other. Talk with your child about experiences they've had with

sharing their thoughts, feelings, experiences and stories with their friends and other peers. Elicit and explain that it is often helpful to share with others because it helps you feel less alone, helps you connect with others, helps you feel understood and “seen,” and sometimes can help you work through problems and difficult situations. Also, having people really listen can make you feel heard and more connected to them. You can also talk about your own experiences with this, affirming how important it is to share feelings and stories with others.

3. Issues and Activism

Throughout the book, different issues of injustice are raised and discussed through the characters' stories. One is the issue of police-involved violence of Black and Latino boys and men, including the mention of [Tamir Rice](#), the 12-year-old African-American boy in Cleveland, OH who was shot by a police officer while playing with a toy gun. The other issue that is addressed is immigration, being undocumented and deportation. You can use some of the resources below if you want to explore those issues in more depth. You can ask your child what issues (in their school, community or society) concern them. Share what it means to be an activist, defining activist as a person who uses or supports to help make changes in politics or society. You can explain that people engage in activism when they feel something is unfair or unjust and want to do something about it, and they often do this with other people. Share with your child situations or times when you have engaged in activism and talk about something you might do together about an issue you care about. Convey the message that when we see something unfair, unjust or inhumane—whether it's something small in our school/community or on a larger scale like racism or voting rights—we can do something about it.

Other Books You May Like



All American Boys by Jason Reynolds, Brendan Kiely, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/all-american-boys

Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/hello-universe

Posted by John David Anderson, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/posted

Same Sun Here by Silas House, Neela Vaswani, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/same-sun-here

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on race and racism, immigration, ally behavior and identity.

Curriculum Resources

Who Am I? Identity Poems, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism

A list of ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These strategies can be acted upon individually, organized together as a group and young people can join with a larger effort that is taking place locally or nationally.

6 Ways to Be an Ally

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

Education Resources on Immigration, Immigrants and Anti-Immigrant Bias

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/education-resources-on-immigration-immigrants-and-anti

A collection of education resources for educators, parents and families on immigration, immigrants and anti-immigrant bias.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about

Provides strategies and advice for talking with young people about race and racism.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See Table Talk [What Bullying Is and Is Not](#).

Teaching about Racism, Violence, Inequality and the Criminal Justice System

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-racism-violence-inequity-and-the-criminal

Anti-bias resources and strategies to help you discuss with your youth incidents during the past several years of police officers involved in the deaths of African-American and Latino males and a biased justice system.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

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Race & Racism, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid[217]=217&tid[218]=218&tid[219]=219&tid[220]=220&tid[221]=221)

[8=1&tid\[217\]=217&tid\[218\]=218&tid\[219\]=219&tid\[220\]=220&tid\[221\]=221](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid[217]=217&tid[218]=218&tid[219]=219&tid[220]=220&tid[221]=221)