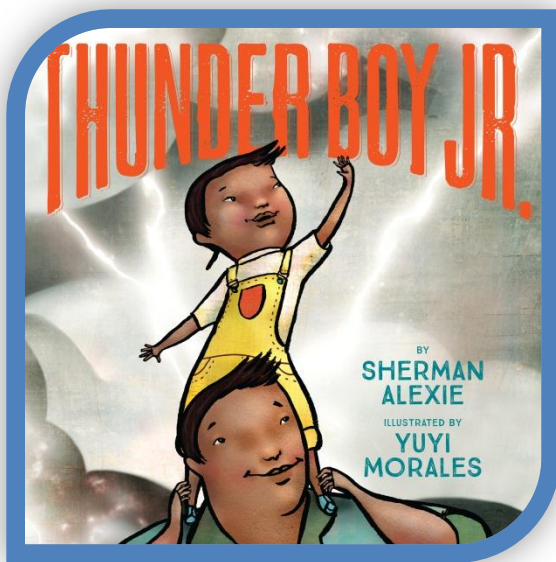




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

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.



Thunder Boy Jr.

Sherman Alexie (Author), Yuyi Morales (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0316013727

Publisher: Little Brown Books for Young Readers

Year Published: 2016

Age Range: 4--8

Book Themes

Names, Native American people, Family

About the Book

Thunder Boy Jr. is named after his dad, but he wants a name that's all his own. Just because people call his dad Big Thunder doesn't mean he wants to be Little Thunder. He wants a name that celebrates something cool he's done, like Touch the Clouds, Not Afraid of Ten Thousand Teeth or Full of Wonder. But just when Thunder Boy Jr. thinks all hope is lost, he and his dad pick the perfect name... a name that is sure to light up the sky.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read 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?

- How would you describe Thunder Boy's personality?
- Does Thunder Boy like his name? How do you know?
- How do you feel about your name? What do you like about it and what don't you like?
- Do you know the reason you were named what you were? What more do you want to know?
- Why does Thunder Boy want to name himself the following names: Drums, Drums and More Drums, Star Boy and Full of Wonder?
- If you could name yourself, what would it be?
- When Thunder Boy says "My dad read my mind. My dad read my heart," what does he mean? Have you ever felt someone read your mind and heart and if so, what was that like?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?
- What was the message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Names

The book is focused around a Native American boy named Thunder Boy and the different feelings he has about his name. If you haven't done so previously, tell your child about the origin of their name and answer any questions they have about it. Explain that the process for how parents/family members name their children is often very special, important and personal to the family. Also, share with them that there are a variety of factors that people use to name their children, including: their cultural or religious background, a family/ancestor name, a name with a special meaning, a character in a book or movie, or simply that they just like the name. Ask your child if they know anything about their friends' or classmates' names and encourage them to ask if they don't know. Also, remind your child that we should never make fun of people's names because of how unique and special names are and because we should not tease people about an aspect of their identity.

2. My Unique Interests and Personality

In the book, Thunder Boy considers other names he could possibly name himself that have to do with his interests, talents, personality or something that "celebrates something cool I've done," as he states in the book. Go back to that part of the book (starting on page 16) and remind your child about the different names that Thunder Boy comes up with and what those names reflect about him (e.g. climbs mountains, loves playing in the dirt, loves powwow dancing, dreams of traveling the world). Then, have a conversation with your child about their unique talents, personality and experiences. Having children reflect on who they are and affirming and nurturing what is special and unique about them fosters positive self-concept and self-esteem. In addition, pointing out their unique and different interests and experiences sets a foundation for talking about other kinds of differences and conveys a message about understanding and appreciating diversity.

3. Diversity of Native American People

Explain to your child that Thunder Boy and his family are Native American people. Although the book does not specify to which nation Thunder Boy and his family belong, explain to your child that there is a great diversity of Native American people in the United States and that there are more

than 500 Native American nations and 180 tribal languages spoken in the United States. In the same way that different racial groups have great variation within them, explain that the culture of different Native American nations (naming traditions/ceremonies, languages, beliefs, ways of life, traditions, tribal history, folktales, etc.) varies widely. You can share a little bit about naming ceremonies with the understanding that the specifics vary among nations: in many Native American or indigenous cultures, there are multiple naming ceremonies; the name the child receives at birth may be a nickname or a name that the child will carry until his true name is discovered as she or he develops their gifts; and this name would change with adulthood and a person can have several names during their lifetime.

Other Books You May Like

Saltypie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness into Light by Tim Tingle, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/saltypie-a-choctaw-journey.html

Shin-chi's Canoe by Nicola I. Campbell, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/shin-chis-canoe.html

SkySisters by Jan Bourdeau Waboose, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/skysisters.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on Latino people and culture and diversity.

Curriculum Resources

"Lewis and Clark: The Unheard Voices," *Curriculum Connections*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/lewis-and-clark.html.

"Should Washington's NFL Team Change Their Name?," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/should-washingtons-nfl-team-change-their-name.html

"Who Am I? Identity Poems," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lessonplans/c/who-am-i-identity-poems.html

Websites

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/parent-family-and-caregivers.html

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

Table Talk: Sports, Mascots and Bias

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/sports-mascots-and-bias.html

Provides strategies and advice for talking with young people about sports and mascots and the use of terms related to Native American people.

The Question Corner

www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children. See "[How Can I Help Children Appreciate Diversity?](#)"

Children's Books

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

People, Identity and Culture: Native American and Indigenous People, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=native-american-and-indigenous-people
People, Identity and Culture, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-identity-culture.html