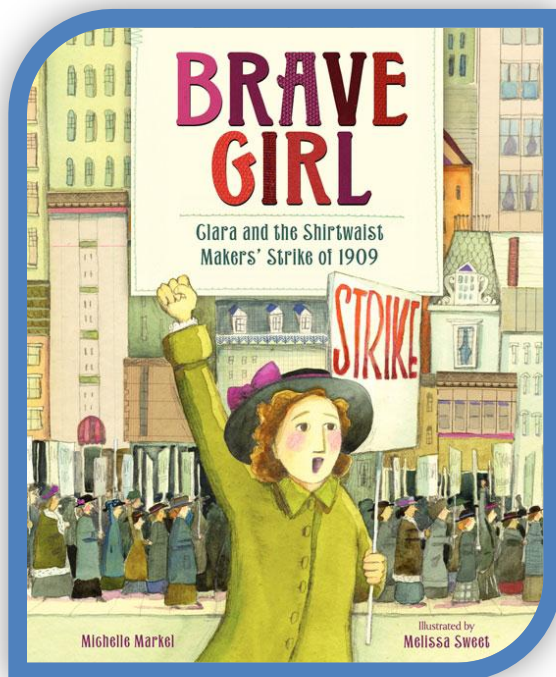




Book of the Month

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.



Brave Girl

Michelle Markel (Author), Melissa Sweet (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0061804427

Publisher: Balzer and Bray

Year Published: 2013

Age Range: 5–8

Book Themes

Immigration, Women's History, Labor, Social Justice

About the Book

When Clara arrived in America, she couldn't speak English. She didn't know that young women had to go to work and that they traded an education for long hours of labor. Fed up with the mistreatment of her fellow laborers, Clara led the largest walkout of women workers the country had seen. From her short time in America, Clara learned that everyone deserved a fair chance and that you had to stand together and fight for what you wanted.

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?
- What was it like to work in the factory where Clara worked?
- How would you feel if someone you knew worked there? What advice would you give them?
- Why do you think the young women were fighting so that things could be safer, better and more fair at work?
- How would you describe Clara's personality? If she was around today, do you think you would be friends with someone like her?
- What do you think a union is? (Explain that a **union** is a group of workers that work together to make where they work safer and better, and to make sure they are all treated fairly.)
- How do you think Clara felt when the men didn't think the women were "tough enough" to go on strike? How do you know?
- How does Clara convince the other young women to go on strike?
- How does Clara feel at the end of the story?
- What is 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. Gender Stereotypes and Sexism

As you read the book, highlight the way Clara is portrayed throughout the story. She is a hard worker, strong, stands up for what she believes in and is a natural leader. Remind them how in the book, the men at the factory talk about wanting to have a strike and start a union but don't think "the ladies are tough enough." Ask them what Clara's response to this is ("She'll show them."). Explain that the story takes place more than 100 years ago and back then, there were stereotypes about girls and women. Explain to your child that a stereotype is the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way. Ask them what they think the stereotypes are of girls and women, back then and today. Talk with your child about gender roles and how girls and boys sometimes get messages about what they are "supposed" to like and be interested in and this can limit their ability to explore many different interests. Ask them about whether they have seen people use stereotypes. Remind them that it is important to follow their own dreams and interests regardless of what people and society think they should do just because of their gender. It is important to be a role model for your child in not stereotyping yourself and in highlighting the different ways that people don't conform to gender norms.

2. Being Brave/Standing Up

Ask your child about the ways in which Clara was brave, stood up for what she believed in and fought for fairness for all. Elicit from your child the ways that Clara did this: she talked with the other young women about how they were treated, she went on the picket line and encouraged others to do the same and she spoke at the union meeting and suggested a general strike. Talk with your child

about why Clara did this and the importance of being brave and standing up for what you believe in. It's also important to stress that we can all make a difference, as Clara did. Ask your child if there is something in their life that they feel is unfair or "not right" and how they would go about changing that. Help them think about what they can do to make a difference. In addition, be a role model for your child by talking to them about times in your own life when you have stood up for something you believed in and how—in small and large ways—you continue to do this and why.

3. Labor and Social Justice

Read the last pages of the book on pages 32–33, which describes more about immigration in the late 1800s and early 1920s, the garment industry, how the workers were treated in those factories and the general strike in 1909. If you haven't already, explain to your child that a **union** is a group of workers that work together to make where they work safer and better, and to make sure they are all treated fairly. A **strike** is when the people who work in a place get together and say they are not going to work until it is safer, better and people are treated fairly. Explain that the New York Shirtwaist Strike of 1909, upon which the book is based, was a strike involving primarily Jewish women, many of whom were immigrants, who worked in factories making clothes. After the strike, which was led by Clara Lemlich, the union worked out a deal to get better salaries, work fewer hours and improve where they worked. Explain that there are unions in other jobs/workplaces; share any personal knowledge and experiences you (or family friends or your extended family) have with unions, strikes and labor history to make it more relevant for your child.

Other Books You May Like

I Dissent by Debbie Levy, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/i-dissent.html

Separate is Never Equal by Duncan Tonatiuh, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/separate-is-never-equal.html

Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx by Jonah Winter, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/sonia-sotomayor-a-judge.html

The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist by Cynthia Levinson, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/the-youngest-marcher.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on gender, sexism and social justice.

Curriculum Resources

"Mo'Ne Davis and Gender Stereotypes," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/mone-davis-and-gender-stereotypes.html.

"Social Justice Poetry," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/social-justice-poetry.html

"Stereotypes of Girls and Women in the Media," *Current Events Classroom*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/stereotypes-of-girls-and-women-in-the-media.html.

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in.html

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.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying: For Educators, Parents and Family Members of Elementary Age Children

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

Definitions for words 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.

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.

Women's History Month Resources

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/womens-history-month.html

A list of PreK-12 curriculum and other educational resources to bring Women's History Month to classrooms and schools.

Early Childhood Anti-Bias Education

www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood

Provides program offerings and resources specifically for early childhood educators, caregivers and family members with a focus on teaching mutual respect and an appreciation for diversity in an effort of preventing the seeds of prejudice from taking root in young children.

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.

Children's Books

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

Gender and Sexism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/gender-sexism.html

Social Justice, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice.html