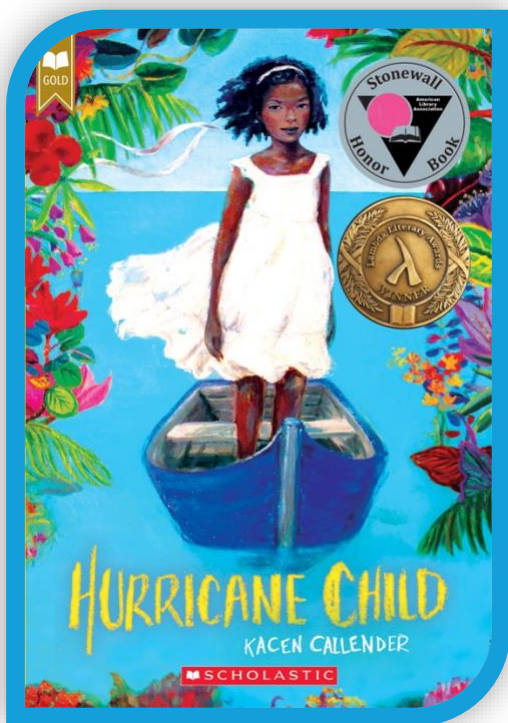




# Book of the Month

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.



## Hurricane Child

Kacen Callender (Author)

ISBN: 978-1338129311

Publisher: Scholastic, Inc.

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 8–12

### Book Themes

Bullying Prevention, Identity, Friendship, LGBTQ Identity, Heterosexism

### About the Book

Being born during a hurricane is unlucky, and twelve-year-old Caroline, who lives on Water Island in the U.S. Virgin Islands, has had her share of bad luck lately. But when a new student arrives, Caroline believes her luck is turning around. Kalinda soon becomes Caroline's first friend. Together, the two girls must brave their own feelings of friendship—and love—while they seek to discover why Caroline's mother has disappeared, or risk losing her forever.

### 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?
- When you first meet Caroline, what are your thoughts about her? How does your impression of Caroline change throughout the book?
- When Caroline says she “sees things no one else sees,” what do you think she means? Have you ever felt that way?
- What examples of bias and bullying behavior do you see in the book? How do you think each of the characters involved feels at the time and afterward? Did anyone act as an ally to Caroline?
- What happens when Kalinda begins attending Caroline’s school? How does their friendship begin and change throughout the book?
- What happens when Caroline expresses her love to Kalinda? How did Caroline’s classmates treat her after they found out?
- How is bias against LGBTQ people expressed throughout the book? Have you ever seen or experienced this kind of bias? What happened?
- When Caroline finally sees her Mom again, how does she feel about her mother’s reason for leaving? How do those feelings change over time?
- 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. Bullying and Acting as an Ally

Talk with your child about bullying and the ways bullying takes place in the book. There are many ways that Caroline is bullied by others throughout the book. Elicit examples such as: Caroline’s classmates tease her, call her names, make fun of her, ignore and exclude her, attack and threaten her. Define **bullying** as when a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed. Explain that when bias and bullying take place, there are different behaviors that people can engage in. The different roles include:

**Aggressor:** Someone who says or does hurtful things on purpose and over and over.

**Ally:** Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of prejudice.

**Bystander:** Someone who sees bullying or prejudice happening and does not say or do anything.

**Target:** Someone who is bullied or treated in harmful ways by a person or group of people on purpose over and over.

Elicit examples of each of these from the book. For example, Marie is a bystander because she watches the bullying happen but doesn’t say or do anything. Explain that because we all can play several of these roles in our lives, we should not label the person who engages in bullying behavior,

like Anise, as a “bully.” She probably has played other roles as well, including bystander and ally. Highlight the fact that most people engage in all these behaviors (aggressor, ally, bystander, target) at different times or in different situations. Tell your child about times when you have engaged in each of these four roles, and how you feel looking back on your experiences. Ask your child about the times they have engaged in each of these behaviors, why they acted as they did, and how they felt in those situations. Emphasize that there are different ways you can act as an ally in bias and bullying situations, using ADL's [6 Ways to be an Ally](#) resource.

## 2. People Who are LGBTQ and Heterosexism

Talk with your child what happens in the book when it is revealed that Caroline is in love with Kalinda. Remind them that several students call her names, say she's a sinner and continue to engage in name-calling and bullying. Those words, behaviors and actions are called “heterosexism” (also sometimes referred to as homophobia). Explain that heterosexism is “the marginalization and/or oppression of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and/or asexual, based on the belief that heterosexuality is the norm.” This means that heterosexism is based on the idea that romantic and/or sexual relationships and feelings between a man and a woman is acceptable, and that all other relationships or feelings are unacceptable. Talk with your child about some of the challenges faced by LGBTQ people including other forms of bias and discrimination like anti-gay slurs, hate crimes, bullying, being judged, not being accepted by family or friends, etc. Similar to what happened to Caroline, every day in schools, LGBTQ students hear biased language, experience harassment and assault and feel the school environment is not accepting of them and may be hateful. Talk with your child about whether they see this in their own school and discuss ways they can act as an ally when they see this kind of bias taking place. Share your own experiences as well as how you've acted as an ally.

## 3. U.S. Virgin Islands and Hurricanes

The book takes place on Water Island (where Caroline lives) and St. Thomas, (where Caroline attends school and the family attends church and goes grocery shopping). These islands are in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which consist of Water Island, Saint Croix, Saint John, Saint Thomas, and many other surrounding smaller islands. Use a map to show your child the U.S. Virgin Islands. Hurricanes and weather play a major role in the book, as they do in that region of the world. The book is called Hurricane Child because Caroline was born during a hurricane and is sometimes referred to as a “hurricane child.” You can talk about where the U.S. Virgin Islands are, learn more about their history and [how hurricanes impact the people and community](#). While this wasn't specifically referenced in the book, you can discuss how weather and [natural disasters impact certain identity groups differently](#). While many people think that natural disasters don't discriminate and are “equal opportunity” catastrophes, natural disasters impact people in different ways and tend to have a more negative and lasting effect on certain identity groups such as women, poor people, people who are disabled, people who are elderly and undocumented immigrants. You can do more research on this and talk about why this is and what can be done about it.

## Other Books You May Like



Ivy Aberdeen's *Letter to the World* by Ashley Herring Blake,

[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/ivy-aberdeens-letter-to-the-world](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/ivy-aberdeens-letter-to-the-world)



Posted by John David Anderson, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/posted](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/posted)

*The House You Pass on the Way* by Jacqueline Woodson,  
[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-house-you-pass-on-the-way](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-house-you-pass-on-the-way)

## ADL Additional Resources

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

### Curriculum Resources

Identity-Based Bullying, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying).  
Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems).

### Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol](http://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.)

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources](http://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 and Racism

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about)

As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all](http://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](http://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 [Heterosexism and What Can I Do about It?](#) and [What Bullying Is and Is Not](#).

### **Children's Books**

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

[Bullying Awareness & Prevention](#)

[LGBTQ People & Heterosexism](#)

[People, Identity & Culture](#)