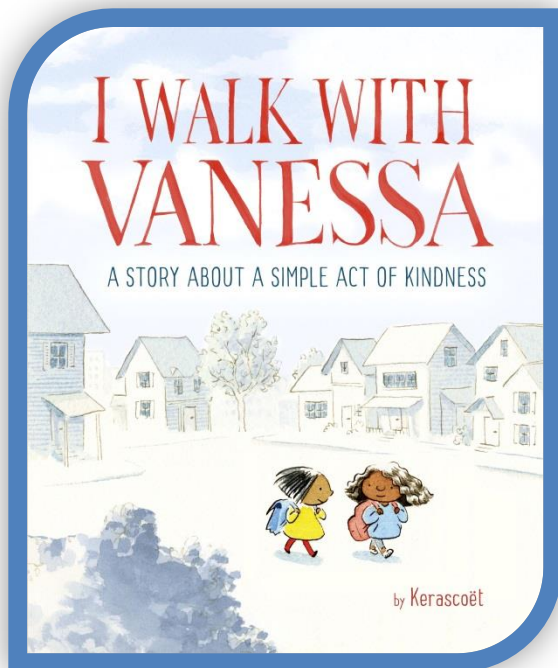




# Book of the Month

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.



## I Walk With Vanessa

Kerascoët (Illustrators)

ISBN: 978-1524769567

Publisher: Schwartz & Wade

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 4-8

### Book Themes

Friendship, Being an ally, Bullying and mean behavior, Community, Strength in numbers

### About the Book

This simple yet powerful wordless picture book tells the story of one girl who inspires a community to stand up to bullying. The book explores the feelings of helplessness and anger that arise in the wake of seeing a classmate treated badly and shows how a single act of kindness can lead to an entire community joining in to help.

### Conversation Starters

*I Walk with Vanessa* is a wordless picture book. If you haven't read a wordless book together before, explain to your child that this book has no words so that when you "read" the book together, you will

look at the illustrations and discuss what's happening on each page rather than reading words. In addition to that, use open-ended questions after reading it 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.

During the "reading" of the book, use these questions:

- What do you notice about Vanessa during her first few days of school? (pages 2-5) What is it like to be new at school?
- What happens to Vanessa after school? (pages 6-7)
- What happens with the other girl who sees what happens to Vanessa and what does she do? (pages 8-13)
- What happens next? (pages 24-31)
- After she gets support from the girl, how is school different for Vanessa? (page 32)

After "reading" the book aloud, use these questions:

- What happens in the story?
- What happens to Vanessa and how does she feel? How do you know?
- Has anything like that ever happened to you or someone you know?
- What words would you use to describe the girl who helped and supported Vanessa?
- Have you ever done anything like that?
- What happens after the girl picked up Vanessa from her house in the morning? How do the other children get involved?
- How did you feel when the story ends?
- What do you think 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. **Being New at School: Empathy**

You find out early in the book that Vanessa and her family recently moved to this town/community and Vanessa is new at school. Elicit from your child what happens in school for Vanessa and what they notice about her first day (i.e. she is left out and seems to feel sad). Talk with your child about whether there have ever been new students at their school and how they may have felt in those first few days or longer. You may also discuss whether they have ever been new at school or new to a group/club when the group or class was already formed. Talk with them about what they or others did to help the person feel included and also what they or others may have done to make the person feel excluded. Ask how they or that student may have felt being excluded or included in

order to build empathy for that person's experience and feelings. Finally, talk about what the girl in the book (and others who followed her lead) did to make Vanessa feel included.

## 2. Act as an Ally

It is important to convey to your child that when mean, biased or bullying behavior occurs, there are many ways you can choose to act as an ally. As you are reading the book together, ask what the girl did when she saw the mean behavior directed at Vanessa. Elicit/explain that the girl observed what was happening, talked to her friends, thought about what to do and then on the following she decided to go to Vanessa's house and pick her up from school; later other kids joined in. The girl was acting as an ally by being kind to Vanessa. Discuss the [many ways](#) someone can act as an ally and ask your child to identify ways they have acted as an ally or observed other people acting as allies. You can also talk about situations they have experienced themselves or witnessed involving bullying or mean behavior and role play (what they might do and/or say) with them how they might act as an ally in that situation. Be sure to emphasize the need for safety when choosing an ally strategy. In addition, be a role model for your child by standing up for what's right in small and large ways and talk with them about what you did and why.

## 3. Strength in Numbers: Community

Talk with your child about the strength in numbers and how kindness and ally behavior can multiply, as illustrated in the book. Elicit from your child that in the book, the girl does something to reach out to and support Vanessa. And that one act is very important. When others join in, and also walk with Vanessa, it shows how the impact can be even greater if there are more people who act as allies. Explain that when it comes to bullying and other mean behavior, one person can make a difference in the way that the girl who was nice to Vanessa did. But then when she included other people, it really helped Vanessa feel safe and included. Talk with your child about the strength in numbers and how when more people act (and move from acting as bystanders to acting as allies), the impact can be even greater. Elicit or point out that by the end of the book, the page was filled with all the students walking with Vanessa and how she seemed to feel included. Talk about your own experiences with strength in numbers/community and ask if your child if they have experienced or witnessed something like that and how they felt about it.

## Other Books You May Like

*Arnie and the New Kid* by Nancy Carlson, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/arnie-and-the-new-kid](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/arnie-and-the-new-kid)

*Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Wilson, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/each-kindness](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/each-kindness)

*The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-invisible-boy](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-invisible-boy)

*The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade* by Justin Roberts, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-smallest-girl-in-the-smallest-grade](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-smallest-girl-in-the-smallest-grade)

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on bullying and acting as an ally.

### Curriculum & Print Resources

Are You Ready to be an Ally?, [www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Are-You-Ready-to-Be-an-Ally.pdf](http://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Are-You-Ready-to-Be-an-Ally.pdf)

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)

### Websites

Be an Ally: Six Simple Ways

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/be-an-ally-six-simple-ways](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/be-an-ally-six-simple-ways)

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies and Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-strategies](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-prevention-strategies)

Provides a collection of ADL resources on bullying and cyberbullying for educators, administrators, students and families and caregivers.

Bullying and Cyberbullying Workshops

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-workshops](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/bullying-and-cyberbullying-workshops)

Information on ADL's interactive workshops and assembly programs for educators, youth and parent/family members on bullying and cyberbullying.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

[www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying)

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](http://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](http://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. Specifically, see "What Can I Do about Bullying among Young Children?" at

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner/bullying-among-young-children](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner/bullying-among-young-children)

### 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.

### Children's Books

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

Bullying Awareness & Prevention, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[165\]=165&tid\[166\]=166&tid\[167\]=167&tid\[168\]=168&tid\[169\]=169](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[165]=165&tid[166]=166&tid[167]=167&tid[168]=168&tid[169]=169)