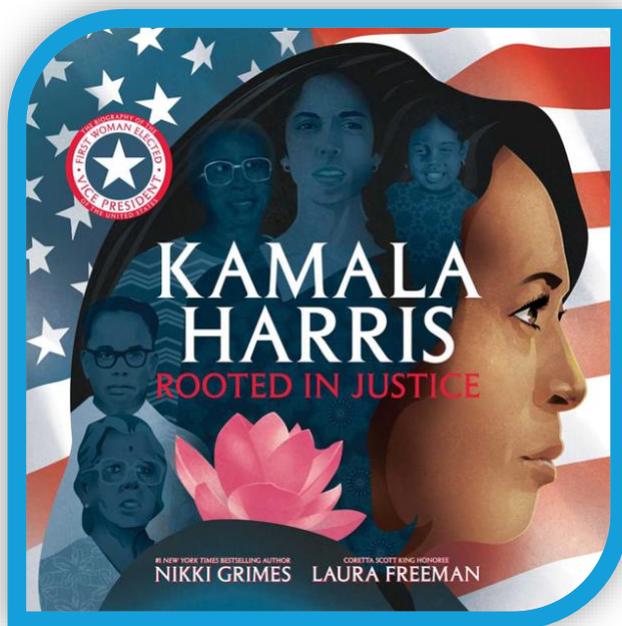




# Book of the Month

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.



## Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice

Nikki Grimes (Author), Laura Freeman (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1534462670

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers

Year Published: 2002

Age Range: 5–10

### Book Themes

People, Identity and Culture, Social Justice, Civil Rights, Elections and Voting, Breaking Barriers

### About the Book

When Kamala Harris was young, she often accompanied her parents to civil rights marches—so many, in fact, that when her mother asked a frustrated Kamala what she wanted, the young girl responded with: “Freedom!” As Kamala grew from a small girl in Oakland to a Senator running for President, it was this long-fostered belief in freedom and justice for all people that shaped her into the inspiring figure she is today. From fighting for the use of a soccer field in middle school to fighting for the people of her home state in Congress, Senator Harris used her voice to speak up for what she believed in and for those who were otherwise unheard. Her dedication led to her becoming the Vice President of the U.S. in 2020.

## 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 conversation that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What do you know about Kamala Harris?
- What did you learn about Kamala Harris by reading the book?
- Why do you think the second half of the book's title is "Rooted in Justice?" How is Kamala Harris "rooted in justice?"
- How is the theme of "justice" addressed throughout the book?
- What was Kamala's childhood like? How do you think it had an impact on her as an adult?
- How did Kamala going to Howard University, an all-Black college, influence her?
- If you could ask the author—or Kamala herself—a question, what would you ask?
- Why do you think a book about Kamala Harris is important now?
- What 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. People, Identity and Culture

Ask your child how Kamala identifies in terms of race and culture. Explain that Kamala Harris identifies as Black and Jamaican as well as South Asian and Indian. Her Dad is from Jamaica and her Mom is from India. These define her race and culture. Talk about what "culture" means with your child. You can define **culture** as parts of daily life that are seen in food, customs, holidays, music and more that a group of people share. Explain that these aspects of culture are often (but now always) handed down from one generation to another through relatives and ancestors. Talk with your child about the aspects of race, ethnicity and culture that are important in your family. Explain how you would define your family's culture(s), and together identify what foods, holidays, customs, naming traditions, etc. are important to your family. Your family may connect with more than one culture or may not have a strong cultural identity, and that can also be discussed. Talk with your child about what they know and don't know about their culture, what they may have found out about their culture from you (their parent), grandparents or other relatives; what more they want to know and the questions they have in order to learn more.

### 2. "Breaking Barriers"

After reading the book, ask your child what they already knew about Kamala Harris and what they learned. If they don't already say it, explain that one important aspect of Kamala Harris becoming Vice President is that she "broke a barrier" (or also referred to as a "glass ceiling"). Talk about what it means to break a barrier, explaining that since a barrier is a limitation or boundary, breaking barriers means you reached something that no one in that group did before and you broke that boundary. Ask your child what boundary Kamala Harris broke and explain that no woman, no Black person and no South Asian person ever became a Vice President in the U.S. Explain that Kamala Harris was elected

the first woman, first Black woman and first South Asian woman elected Vice President. Ask and share other barriers that have been broken and what barriers remain in our community or society (e.g., Barack Obama becoming the first Black president, Sonia Sotomayor became the first Latina Supreme Court Justice, or provide a more child-centered example like the first girl to play Little League baseball, etc.). In her acceptance speech, Kamala Harris said, “While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last.” Talk with your child about the importance of seeing yourself represented in various aspects of life (politics, media, sports, entertainment, other jobs/professions). For example, explain that before 2020, since there had never been a woman or woman of color as Vice President or President, that makes it more difficult for others who are girls/women and girls/women of color to see and imagine themselves in that role. Having someone in that position makes it more likely that others will see that they can achieve that. Reflect on other areas of your life where role models and representation have made a difference.

### 3. Social Justice

Talk with your child about the subtitle of the book, “Rooted in Justice,” asking your child what they think it means that Kamala Harris is “rooted in justice.” Explain that the idea of social justice is a theme throughout the book and throughout Kamala Harris’ life. Ask them what they think **justice** is, defining it as fair treatment and access to resources and opportunity. Explain that this means that all people, regardless of their identity, should have a fair chance and deserve to get what they need to achieve their goals and dreams. That includes correcting or repairing unfairness experienced by some identity groups or communities. Talk with your child about the ways that Kamala Harris is rooted in justice and when, throughout her life, what issues of justice and fairness she worked on. Then ask your child where they see issues of injustice or unfairness in their life—at school, in their community, in society, online. Talk about what they have done and what they could do when they see injustice and share ways that you have addressed injustice in your life through your actions.

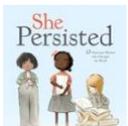
## Other Books You May Like



*Child of the Civil Rights Movement* by Paula Young Shelton,  
[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/child-of-the-civil-rights-movement](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/child-of-the-civil-rights-movement)



*Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/grace-for-president](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/grace-for-president)



*She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World* by Chelsea Clinton,  
[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/she-persisted-13-american-women-who-changed-the](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/she-persisted-13-american-women-who-changed-the)



*She Was the First! The Trailblazing Life of Shirley Chisholm* by Kathryn Russell-Brown,  
[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/she-was-the-first-the-trailblazing-life-of](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/she-was-the-first-the-trailblazing-life-of)

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity and culture, social justice and elections.

### Curriculum Resources

Representing the People: Diversity and Elections, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/representing-the-people-diversity-and-elections](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/representing-the-people-diversity-and-elections).

Social Justice Poetry, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry).

The 2020 Presidential Election: What Can We Learning from Victory Speeches?, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/the-2020-presidential-election-what-can-we-learn-from](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/the-2020-presidential-election-what-can-we-learn-from).

### Websites

7 Engaging Picture Books about Voting and Elections

[www.adl.org/blog/7-engaging-picture-books-about-voting-and-elections](http://www.adl.org/blog/7-engaging-picture-books-about-voting-and-elections)

This blog includes a round-up of picture books for elementary students about voting, elections and the power of democracy. Talking with young children about voting and elections can open doors to conversations about fairness, democracy, citizenship and participation.

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism](http://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.

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.

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 Table Talk [The Purpose and Power of Protest](#).

Teaching about Elections

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-elections](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/teaching-about-elections)

Elections provide great opportunities to teach students about civics, how government works, the electoral process, current events and issues, historical context and campaign politics. This page provides education resources, lesson plans and other election-related pedagogical content to assist you in teaching about elections.

**Children's Books**

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

[People, Identity and Culture](#)

[Social Justice](#)