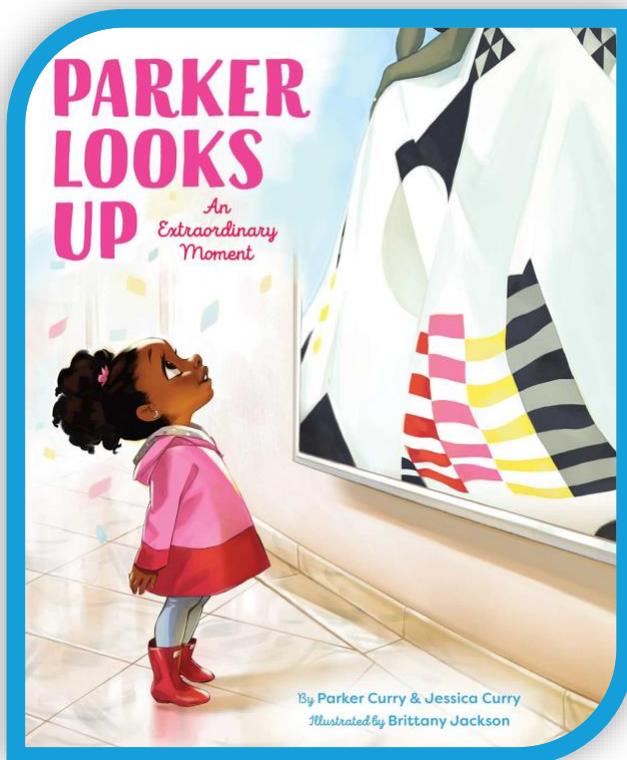




Book of the Month

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.



Parker Looks Up: An Extraordinary Moment

Parker Curry and Jessica Curry (Authors),
Brittany Jackson (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1534451865

Publisher: Aladdin

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 4–8

Book Themes

Identity, Role Models, Representation, Race,
Black History Month

About the Book

When Parker Curry came face-to-face with the portrait of First Lady Michelle Obama at the National Portrait Gallery, she didn't just see the First Lady of the U.S. She saw a queen—one with dynamic self-assurance, regality, beauty, and truth who captured this young girl's imagination. When a nearby museum goer snapped a photo of a mesmerized Parker, it became an internet sensation. Inspired by this visit, Parker, and her mother, Jessica Curry, tell the story of a young girl and her family, whose trip to a museum becomes an extraordinary moment, in a moving picture book. Parker sees the possibility and promise, the hopes and dreams of herself in this powerful painting of Michelle Obama.

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 happens in the story?
- Who wrote the book? (Explain the Parker Curry, the girl who the book is about, and her mother Jessica Curry, wrote the book.) What do you think that was like for them to write a book together?
- Have you ever wanted to write a book?
- What do Parker, her sister and her friend see in the museum? Have you ever gone to a museum? What was it like?
- When Parker sees the painting of Michelle Obama, why do you think she “froze in her tracks?” What do you think she is feeling and thinking? (Explain that Michelle Obama is married to Barack Obama (President 2008-2016), the first Black President in the U.S. which made Michelle Obama the first Black First Lady of the U.S.
- Why do you think that Parker notices that Michelle Obama has “rich brown skin just like Parker?” Why is this important to Parker?
- How does Parker’s Mom describe Michelle Obama? What are the words you know and don’t know? What words would you use to describe yourself?
- Why does seeing the picture of Michelle Obama make Parker feel so good and powerful?
- What is the 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. Identity and Our Role Models

Talk with your child about what it means to have role model(s). Explain that a role model is a person who you look up to or admire. Ask your child if they think Michelle Obama is a role model to Parker, and why or why not they think that. Explain that a **role model** can be someone that shares an aspect of your identity (e.g., race, gender, religion, etc.) or not. Share that in this case, both Parker and Michelle Obama are Black, and Parker notes in the book that Michelle Obama has “rich brown skin just like Parker.” Therefore, Michelle Obama being Black is important to Parker. Sometimes it is particularly impactful when the person looks like you or shares a part of your identity. Discuss how a role model can be someone you know, including a family member, friend of classmate. A role model can also be someone who you don’t know but admire, like a famous person or someone in history. Share with your child someone who is or was a role model for you and explain what qualities (including if you share an identity group and why that matters) they have that make them a role model; you can look at pictures together if available. Ask your child if they have a role model, who it is and why.

2. Michelle Obama and Representation

Explain that in real life, First Lady Michelle Obama's portrait is in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, a museum in Washington D.C. You can see her portrait [here](#) and also see the portrait of [President Obama](#). Together, read aloud the note from Amy Sherald (the artist who drew First Lady Michelle Obama's portrait) on page 38. You can then elicit and explain what the artist expresses in this note, that she feels it is important and powerful to see images of yourself, especially aspects of your identity, reflected in art (and other aspects of media like books, movies, TV shows, games, dolls, toys, etc.). Seeing yourself in these prominent places is what she means by "representation." Representation helps people feel good about themselves and aspects of their identity and feel empowered to follow their dreams, pursue their interests and passions. You can also talk about the importance of seeing yourself represented in various aspects of life (politics, media, sports, entertainment, other jobs/professions) as Michelle Obama is the first Black woman who was the First Lady. Reflect on other areas of your life where representation has made a difference and ask your child to reflect on those examples as well.

3. Black History Month

Explain to your child that February is Black History Month—an annual celebration of the history, achievements, and contributions of Black/African American people in the U.S. Explain that the reason a month is dedicated to honoring Black people, history and culture is because sometimes when history is discussed and taught, Black people are less likely to be included or not included at all. This is due to racism, bias, and exclusion. The same is true for other themed months like Women's History Month and Native American Heritage Month. You can explain that this book focuses on an aspect of Black History, the U.S.'s first Black President and first Black First Lady. Talk with your child about the importance of "breaking barriers," which means someone in that identity group achieved something that no one else in that identity group did before. This is an important part of Black history and American history. If interested, together engage in some additional reading or watch programming to learn more about Black History Month, using [PBS Kids for Parents](#), [Center for Racial Justice in Education](#), [Scholastic](#), [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) and other books and web resources.

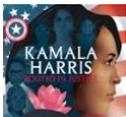
Other Books You May Like



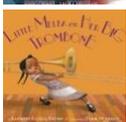
Firebird by Misty Copeland, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/firebird



Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/grace-for-president



Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice by Nikki Grimes, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/kamala-harris-rooted-in-justice



Little Melba and Her Big Trombone by Katheryn Russell-Brown, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/little-melba-and-her-big-trombone

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on identity, representation and role models.

Websites

12 Exceptional Kid Lit Books to Read for Black History Month

www.adl.org/blog/12-exceptional-kid-lit-books-to-read-for-black-history-month

This blog recommends children's and young adult books to read for Black History Month.

Black History Month

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/black-history-month

A list of lesson plans and resources to help you teach about black history in your classroom.

Civil Rights Movement

www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/civil-rights-movement

Provides historical background information, resources and pictures about the Civil Rights Movement.

Early Childhood FAQs

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner

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 also, [Why Is It Important to Teach Young Children to Appreciate Diversity?](#)

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

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

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 also, [Diversity in Media and Why Visibility Matters](#) and [Why We Need Diverse Books](#).

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

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.

Children's Books

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

[People, Culture & Culture: Black, African American, Caribbean](#)

[Race & Racism: Black, African American, Caribbean People](#)