



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.



Your Name is a Song

Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (Author), Luisa Uribe (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1943147724

Publisher: The Innovation Press

Year Published: 2020

Age Range: 5–10

Book Themes

People, Identity and Culture, Diversity, Importance of Names, Bullying

About the Book

Frustrated by a day full of teachers and classmates mispronouncing her beautiful name, a little girl tells her mother she never wants to come back to school. In response, the girl's mother teaches her about the musicality of African, Asian, Black-American, Latinx and Middle Eastern names on their lyrical walk home through the city. Empowered by this newfound understanding, the young girl is ready to return the next day to share her knowledge with her class.

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 is the book about?
- How does Kora-Jalimuso feel about her name? How do you know?
- What are some of the different feelings Kora-Jalimuso has and expresses throughout the book?
- Have you ever had someone not be able to pronounce your name? How did you feel?
- Have you ever mispronounced someone's name? Have you ever heard a name that was new to you? What happened?
- Why do you think the author wrote the book?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think will happen next?
- 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. Names

In the book, we see that Kora-Jalimuso is upset and frustrated because her teacher and classmates do not pronounce her name right. She explains what happens when her teacher tries: "it got stuck in her mouth." Talk with your child about their name and the names of other children in their class. Ask them how Kora-Jalimuso felt when others did not or could not pronounce her name. Together you can [watch a video](#) of the author pronouncing each of the names in the book. To build empathy, you can ask how they might feel or have felt in a similar situation. It may be helpful to explain to your child that instead of saying someone's name is "hard" or "difficult to pronounce," you could say that you need more practice saying it." Stating that someone's name is "difficult to pronounce" makes it sound like there's something wrong with their name, which can make children feel excluded, "othered" or marginalized. In addition, you can share with them that some names that may be considered "hard" to pronounce in their classroom or community may be very common names in a classroom in a different community or country. And names that might be considered common or ordinary in their classroom or community might be uncommon or even "hard to pronounce" in another classroom. If appropriate, you can also talk with them about their name and the origins of it and you can discuss how they feel about their name.

2. People, Identity and Culture

In the back of book (on pages 40-42), the author provides information about each of the names in the book, how each name is pronounced and the cultural, religious or racial origin of the name. For some people and families, names reflect something about their identity or culture. 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 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 as well. 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 can ask in order to learn more.

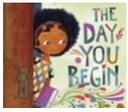
3. Feelings

Throughout the book, there many feelings expressed by Kora-Jalimuso and other characters. While you read the book together or afterwards, elicit from your child some of the feelings expressed by Kora-Jalimuso and other characters. Talk about each of the feelings, what those feelings are, how they are expressed and ask your child how they know the character is feeling that way. This helps them understand more deeply how to “read the feelings” of others. With some of the feelings you discuss, ask them about times they have had similar feelings and why they felt as they did. In addition, help to expand their feelings vocabulary by thinking together about other words that express a similar feeling (e.g. mad can also be angry, enraged, furious, etc.). If there is continued interest, you can have them draw faces or whole people and ask them to show them feeling a certain way with how they draw them.

Other Books You May Like



Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/alma-and-how-she-got-her-name



The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-day-you-begin



The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-name-jar



Thunder Boy Jr. by Sherman Alexie, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/thunder-boy-jr

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity, culture and diversity.

Curriculum Resources

Identity-Based Bullying, 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.

Websites

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.

The Question Corner: 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.

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 "[Why We Need Diverse Books](#)."

Children's Books

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

[People, Identity & Culture](#)

[People, Identity & Culture: Similarities & Differences](#)