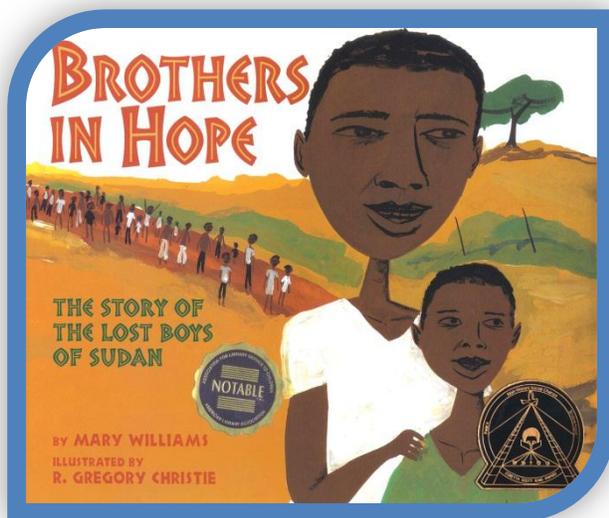




Book of the Month

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.



Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan

Mary Williams (Author), R. Gregory Christie (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1584302322

Publisher: Lee & Low Books

Year Published: 2005

Age Range: 7–12

Book Themes

People and Identity, Refugees, Working Together, Activism

About the Book

Eight-year-old Garang is tending cattle far from his family's home in southern Sudan when war comes to his village. Frightened but unharmed, he returns to find everything has been destroyed. Soon Garang meets up with other boys whose villages have been attacked. Before long, they become a moving band of thousands, walking hundreds of miles seeking safety—first in Ethiopia and then in Kenya. Along the way, the boys faced numerous hardships and dangers but their faith and mutual support help keep the hope of finding a new home alive in their hearts. This story is based on real-life experiences of a band of approximately 30,000 southern Sudanese boys, between the ages of 8 and 15, who walked nearly 1000 miles searching for a safe refuge.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read 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 story about?
- Have you ever known someone like Garang, whose father said his “heart and mind are strong”?
- How do you think the boys felt after being separated from their parents, families and homes?
- What are some of the most important things families do for us and in what ways did the boys create their own family?
- What was the refugee camp like? What do you think would be difficult about living in a refugee camp, especially as a child?
- How did you feel when you learned that the book is based on a true story of boys in the Sudan?
- Have you heard about other refugees that have been in the news recently and if so, what have you heard?
- In the book, Tom asks Garang to tell his story because it will help other refugees. How did Garang’s story help others?
- How do you think the boys felt when they heard they were going to the United States to live in permanent homes?
- What more do you want to know about the Lost Boys of the Sudan and other refugees?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Working Together

As you read the book together, talk with your child about the various ways that the boys worked together, pointing out specific examples of how they collaborated on decisions and needed each other in order to survive. Stress to your child the importance of working with others in order to achieve goals and get important tasks accomplished. You can start the conversation by asking them for examples of how they work with other people in their daily lives. This can include activities such as: taking care of a family pet and household responsibilities/chores, working together on a group project for school and sports’ teams that have to work together. Explain that because different people bring different skills and talents, those different abilities are needed to get something accomplished. In addition, often a group makes a better decision than just one person deciding alone because you get everyone’s best thoughts about how to accomplish the task and, because everyone is part of the decision, they feel more committed to making it happen. In the book, the boys who traveled together were all invested in the decisions that were made because their lives depended on it.

2. Understanding of and Empathy for Refugees

Talk with your child about refugees, describing a refugee as: a person who flees their home or country because of violence, poverty or war. Explain that there have been different refugee crises throughout history and that there is a refugee crisis right now: People from Syria have been fleeing their homes (due to war, violence and poverty) in search of safety and assistance since the country's civil war began in 2011. Several neighboring countries (Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Iraq) have taken in more than 3 million refugees over the past few years. Recently, many refugees have made their way to Europe, often through a dangerous boat trip which has led to thousands of deaths. Explain that many countries have agreed to help, including taking in refugees and providing financial assistance but some countries are also resistant to taking in refugees. In order to build understanding of and empathy for the refugees, you can share stories and information about their plight (using the resources below) and photos ([UNHCR](#) and [International Business Times](#)) which illustrate the refugee experience. [Note: view the photos first and make sure they are appropriate for your child.]

3. Activism

As you read and talk about the book, highlight Tom's role: he helped the boys in the refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, provided assistance to them when they were fleeing in Ethiopia and eventually arranged for them to come to the United States. Explain that during difficult times of severe need and crisis, there are people who help by being activists to bring attention to the issue and also provide humanitarian assistance such as food, money, housing, etc. Explain that during this latest refugee crisis, there are many countries who have agreed to take in refugees and provide financial assistance and there are also organizations and individual people who are helping in various ways. Talk with your child about how there are things everyone can do to help and brainstorm some possibilities they can do or which you can do together, including: talking with others about it or through social media, donating money or holding a fundraiser, volunteering at a refugee organization, writing a letter to an elected official, etc. Convey the message that when we see something unfair, unjust or inhumane—whether it's something small in our school/community or on a larger scale like the refugee crisis—we can do something about it.

Other Books You May Like

Making it Home: Real-Life Stories from Children Forced to Flee by Beverley Naidoo,

www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/making-it-home-real-life-stories.html

The Kid's Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/the-kids-guide-to-social-action.html

Half Spoon of Rice by Icy Smith, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/half-spoon-of-rice.html

Irena's Jar of Secrets by Marcia Vaughan, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/books/irenas-jars-of-secrets.html

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on refugees, genocide, and activism.

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in.html

Includes several ideas for bringing social activism into the classroom and outside of the school walls. These are lifelong skills and attitudes that teach students about citizenship and that there is something you can do when faced with injustice.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

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.

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-bullying.html

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

Table Talk: Refugees, Reactions and World Response

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/refugees-reactions-and-world-response.html

This table talk provides parents and family members with the tools they need to engage in conversations about important news stories and societal and world events concerning refugee crisis in Europe and how the world has responded.

Children's Books

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

Hate, Genocide and Holocaust, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/hate-genocide-holocaust.html

People, Identity and Culture, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-identity-culture.html

Social Justice, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/social-justice.html