

Beginning with Books: Affirming Identities & Raising Voices - Year Four
A Yearlong, Schoolwide Initiative at Orchard School
2023-2024

Students develop an understanding of identity at an early age. Learning about different racial, cultural, and gender identities helps students develop empathy and care for those who have identities different than their own. Previously known as the "Reading to Raise Anti-Racists" project, this schoolwide initiative uses picture books as a place to begin having meaningful, transformative conversations. These books will be read and discussed at school each month and we hope that you will be able to continue the conversations at home.

Possible Discussion Protocol:

1. What did the story make you think about or wonder?
2. How does this story connect to your own life?
3. What did you learn from this story/what will you take with you after reading this story?

This document from Teaching Tolerance (now [Learning for Justice](#)) is a good introduction to this work and includes the opportunity for some self-assessment:

[Let's Talk!: Discussing Race, Racism, and Other Difficult Topics with Students](#)

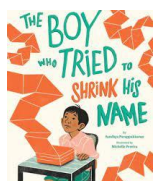
Also, [Classroom Resources](#) that would work for many of the books below are available through the Learning for Justice website.

Age appropriate standards for anti-bias, multicultural, and social justice education:

[Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards K-2 and 3-5](#)

[START HERE START NOW: A Guide to Antibias and Antiracist Work in Your School Community](#) by Liz Kleinrock - two copies available in Orchard's library

To further collective understanding, the DEI Team suggests that each grade level team (one class per grade each month) share something about the month's book during the final whole school meeting of the month. A prompt will be offered, but it's ok to go outside of that.



SEPTEMBER

[The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name](#) by Sandhya Parappukkaran

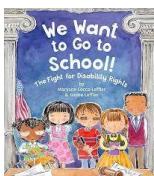
When Zimdalamashkermishkada starts at a new school, he knows he'll have to introduce himself to lots of new people. He trips over his long name and decides to shrink it down to the shorter, simpler Zim. The nickname works fine for introductions, but deep down, it doesn't feel right. It's not until a new friend sees him for who he truly is that Zimdalamashkermishkada finds the confidence to step proudly into his long name. This book is an uplifting story that encourages young readers to celebrate their authentic selves, and proclaims that no one should ever have to shrink themselves to fit in. ([Summary from ADL](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Skateboard Activity](#) on TPT from Mr. V's Workshop of Resources
- [Educator Guide](#) (scroll down to find the title and click download)
- [YouTube](#) Read Aloud

Companion Books for The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name:

- Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal
- Andy (That's My Name) by Tomie de Paola
- Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes
- My Language. Your Language by Lisa Bullard
- My Name is Not Alexander by Jennifer Fosberry
- My Name Is Not Isabella by Jennifer Fosberry
- Teach Us Your Name by Huda Essa
- The Name I Call Myself by Hasan Namir
- Turtle Knows Your Name by Ashley Bryan
- What Are Your Words? A Book About Pronouns by Katherine Locke
- Your Name is a Song by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow



OCTOBER

We Want to Go to School: The Fight for Disability Rights by Maryann Cocca-Leffler

There was a time in the United States when millions of children with disabilities weren't allowed to go to public school. But in 1971, seven kids and their families wanted to do something about it. They knew that every child had a right to an equal education, so they went to court to fight for that right. The case *Mills v. Board of Education of the District of Columbia* led to laws ensuring children with disabilities would receive a free, appropriate public education. Told in the voice of Janine Leffler, one of the millions of kids who went to school because of these laws, this book shares the true story of this landmark case. ([Summary from publisher](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Teacher's Instructional Guide](#) from publisher
- [Author's website](#)

Companion Books for We Want to Go to School: The Fight for Disability Rights:

- ABC For You and Me Margaret Ginnis
- All the Way to the Top by Annette Bay Pimentel
- Brayden Speaks Up by Brayden Harrington
- Dad and Me in the Morning by Patricia Lakin
- Everyone Belongs by Heather Avis
- I'm a Big Sister Now by Michelle Emmert
- Mama Zooms by Jane Cowen-Fletcher
- Midnight & Moon by Kelly Cooper
- My Friend Isabelle by Eliza Woloson
- Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask About Having a Disability by Shane Burcaw
- Susan Laughs by Jeanne Willis
- Through Grandpa's Eyes by Patricia MacLachlan



Just Ask by Sonia Sotomayor

In *Just Ask*, United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor celebrates the different abilities kids (and people of all ages) have. Using her own experience as a child who was diagnosed with diabetes, Justice Sotomayor writes about children with all sorts of challenges—and looks at the special powers those kids have as well. As the kids work together to build a community garden, asking questions of each other along

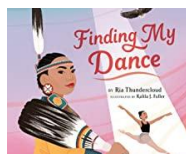
the way, this book encourages readers to do the same: When we come across someone who is different from us but we're not sure why, all we have to do is *Just Ask*.

Selected Resources:

- [Activity Plans](#)
- [Fold an Accordion book and draw a garden](#)
- [Facilitating Conversations with *Just Ask*](#)
- [Literature Guide](#)
- [Read Aloud](#)

Companion Books for *Just Ask*:

- [ABC For You and Me](#) Margaret Girnis
- [All the Way to the Top](#) by Annette Bay Pimentel
- [Brayden Speaks Up](#) by Brayden Harrington
- [Dad and Me in the Morning](#) by Patricia Lakin
- [Everyone Belongs](#) by Heather Avis
- [I'm a Big Sister Now](#) by Michelle Emmert
- [Mama Zooms](#) by Jane Cowen-Fletcher
- [Midnight & Moon](#) by Kelly Cooper
- [My Friend Isabelle](#) by Eliza Woloson
- [Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask About Having a Disability](#) by Shane Burcaw
- [Susan Laughs](#) by Jeanne Willis
- [Through Grandpa's Eyes](#) by Patricia MacLachlan



NOVEMBER

[Finding My Dance](#) by Ria Thundercloud

Ria Thundercloud tells the true story of her path to dance and how it helped her take pride in her Native American heritage. At four years old, Ria Thundercloud was brought into the powwow circle, ready to dance in the special jingle dress her mother made for her. As she grew up, she danced with her brothers all over Indian country. Then Ria learned more styles—tap, jazz, ballet—but still loved the expressiveness of Indigenous dance. And despite feeling different as one of the only Native American kids in her school, she always knew she could turn to dance to cheer herself up. Follow along as Ria shares her dance journey—from dreaming of her future to performing as a professional—accompanied by striking illustrations that depict it while bringing her graceful movements to life.

Selected Resources:

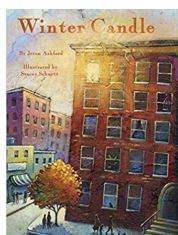
- <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2197767/ria-thundercloud/>
- More about Ria
- <https://www.powwows.com/ria-thunder-cloud-author-of-finding-my-dance-pow-wow-life-podcast/> interview with Ria
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfbj6Asq6GA> Interview with Ria
- <https://sandiapueblo.nsn.us/>
- <https://ho-chunknation.com/>
- [Native Americans Today](#) - lesson from Read Write Think by Debbie Reese
- [Native American Heritage Month](#) - resources from Library of Congress
- [Native American Cultures Across the US](#) - lesson plans, teacher guides and media

resources from NEH.gov

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGDrr4z_e0w Ria dancing
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzolWX_HYV8 Dancing video for children

Companion Books for Finding My Dance:

- Bowwow Powwow = Bagosenjige-niimi'idim by Brenda J. Child
- Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- Powwow Day by Traci Sorell
- Red Bird by Barbara Mitchell
- Tallchief: America's Prima Ballerina by Maria Tallchief
- We Are Still Here: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know by Traci Sorell
- What Your Ribbon Skirt Means to Me: Deb Haaland's Historic Inauguration by Alexis Buntun



DECEMBER

Winter Candle by Jeron Ashford

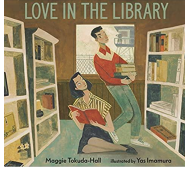
When each family at the diverse Juniper Court apartment complex needs something to light up the dark of winter, the stump, lumpy candle provides a glow brighter than the fanciest taper. Nana Clover has a Thanksgiving centerpiece, the Danziger family has a havdalah candle to bless the ending of Sabbath, the Erikson's have a Saint Lucia Day, Donte's family has a faith candle for the for the kinara, and Nasreen and Faruq have a candle to help guide their father to their new apartment when the power goes out. A multicultural assortment of neighbors passes on the candle revealing the true spirit of winter holidays, celebrations and family reunions.

Selected Resources:

- [Winter Candle Read Aloud](#)
- [Winter Candle Picture book lesson](#)
- [Curriculum guide and activities](#)

Companion Books for Winter Candle:

- Celebrate Hanukkah by Deborah Heiligman
- Eight Winter Nights: A Family Hanukkah Book by Laura Krauss Melmed
- Kwanzaa: A Family Affair by Mildred Pitts Walter
- Kwanzaa Karamu: Cooking and Crafts for a Kwanzaa Feast by April A. Brady
- Lucia Morning in Sweden by Ewa Rydaker
- My First Kwanzaa Book by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate
- On Hanukkah by Cathy Fishman
- The Hanukkah Book by Marilyn Burns
- The People Remember by Ibi Aanu Zobi
- The Story of Kwanzaa by Donna Washington
- Seven Candles for Kwanzaa by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- Who Are You Santa Lucia? by Glenda Cedarleaf
- Winter: December, January and February by Cath Senker



JANUARY

[Love in the Library](#) by Maggie Tokuda-Hall

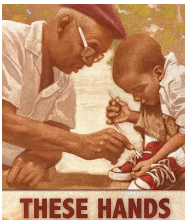
After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tama is sent to live in a War Relocation Center. All Japanese Americans from the West Coast—elderly people, children, babies—now live in prison camps like Minidoka. To be who she is has become a crime, it seems, and Tama doesn't know when or if she will ever leave. Trying not to think of the life she once had, she works in the camp's tiny library, taking solace in pages bursting with color and light, love and fairness. And she isn't the only one. George waits each morning by the door, his arms piled with books checked out the day before. As their friendship grows, Tama wonders: Can anyone *possibly* read so much? Is she the reason George comes to the library every day? This moving love story finds hope in heartbreak. ([Publisher's description](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Maggie Tokuda-Hall discusses *Love in the Library*](#)
- [Scholastic and Censorship of *Love in the Library*](#)
- [Background Knowledge for Teachers About Minidoka Internment Camp](#)

Companion Books for [Love in the Library](#):

- [A Boy at War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor](#) by Harry Mazer
- [Alice on the Island: A Pearl Harbor Survival Story](#) by Mayumi Shimose
- [Attack on Pearl Harbor](#) by Kate Messner
- [Attack on Pearl Harbor: the True Story of the Day America Entered World War II](#) by Shelly Tanaka
- [Early Sunday Morning: the Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows](#) by Barry Denenberg
- [I Am an American: A True Story of the Japanese Internment](#) by Jerry Stanley
- [It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way](#) by Kyo Maclear
- [Konichiwa: I Am a Japanese-American Girl](#) by Tricia Brown
- [Pearl Harbor](#) (History Smashers) by Kate Messner
- [Pearl Harbor](#) by Jennifer Swanson
- [Raid of No Return](#) by Nathan Hale
- [Seen and Unseen: What Dorothea Lange, Toyo Miyakake, and Ansel Adams's Photographs Reveal About the Japanese American Incarceration](#) by Elizabeth Partridge
- [So Far From the Sea](#) by Eve Bunting
- [The Bombing of Pearl Harbor](#) by Lauren Tarshis
- [The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559, Mirror Lake Internment Camp](#) by Barry Denenberg



FEBRUARY

[These Hands](#) by Margaret H. Mason

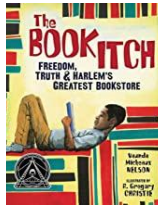
Joseph's grandpa could do almost anything with his hands. He could play the piano, throw a curveball, and tie a triple bowline knot in three seconds flat. But in the 1950s and 60s, he could not bake bread at the Wonder Bread factory. Factory bosses said white people would not want to eat bread touched by the hands of the African Americans who worked there. In this powerful intergenerational story, Joseph learns that people joined their hands together to fight discrimination so that one day, their hands—Joseph's hands—could do *anything at all in this whole wide world*. ([publisher's summary](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Teacher's Guide to *These Hands*](#)
- [Poetry Activity](#)
- [These Hands Activities Webpage](#)

Companion Books for These Hands:

- [Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box](#) by Michael S Bandy
- [How Do You Spell Unfair?: MacNolia Cox and the National Spelling Bee](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford
- [Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) by Jonah Winter
- [Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race](#) by Megan Madison
- [Race Cars: A Children's Book About White Privilege](#) by Jenny Devenny
- [Racism](#) by Harriet Brundle
- [The Antiracist Kid: A book About Identity, Justice, and Activism](#) by Tiffany Jewell
- [The First Step: How One Girl Put Segregation on Trial](#) by Susan E. Goodman



The Book Itch by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

In the 1930s, Lewis's dad, Lewis Michaux Sr., had an itch he needed to scratch—a book itch. How to scratch it? He started a bookstore in Harlem and named it the National Memorial African Bookstore.

And as far as Lewis Michaux Jr. could tell, his father's bookstore was one of a kind.

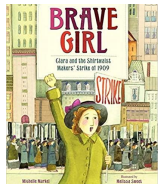
People from all over came to visit the store, even famous people—Muhammad Ali, Malcolm X, and Langston Hughes, to name a few. In his father's bookstore people bought and read books, and they also learned from each other. People swapped and traded ideas and talked about how things could change. They came together here all because of his father's book itch. Read the story of how Lewis Michaux Sr. and his bookstore fostered new ideas and helped people stand up for what they believed in.

Selected Resources:

- [Harlem Black Owned Bookstore](#) video of Lewis Michaux
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tmma10JjVM8> read aloud
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wLpYQBjUGc> Interview with author Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_H._Michaux

Companion Books for The Book Itch:

- [Dear Benjamin Banneker](#) by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- [Hand in Hand : Ten Black Men Who Changed America](#) by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- [Shomberg: The Man Who Built a Library](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford
- [The Highest Tribute: Thurgood Marshall's Life, Leadership and Legacy](#) by Kekla Magoon
- [Thurgood](#) by Jonah Winter



MARCH

[Brave Girl](#) by Michelle Markel

When Clara arrived in America, she couldn't speak English. She didn't know that young women had to go to work, that they traded an education for long hours of labor, that she was expected to grow up fast. But that didn't stop Clara. She went to night school, spent hours studying English, and helped support her family by sewing in a shirtwaist factory. Clara never quit, and she never accepted that girls should be treated poorly and paid little. Fed up with the mistreatment of her fellow laborers, Clara led the largest walkout of women workers the country had seen. From her short time in America, Clara learned that everyone deserved a fair chance. That you had to stand together and fight for what you wanted. And, most importantly, that you could do anything you put your mind to. This picture book biography about Ukrainian immigrant Clara Lemlich tackles topics like activism and the U.S. garment industry. ([publisher's summary](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Teacher's Guide](#)
- [Pairing Picture Books with Primary Sources](#)
- [Educator's Guide with Questions and Supplemental Resources](#)
- [Parent/Family Discussion Guide](#)
- [Brave Girl Vocabulary](#)

Companion Books for [Brave Girl](#):

- [A Is For Activism](#) by Innosanto Nagara
- [Bread and Roses, Too](#) by Katherine Paterson
- [Coming to America](#) by Betsy Maestro
- [I Is for Immigrants](#) by Selina Aiko
- [Immigrant Kids](#) by Russell Freedman
- [Immigrants](#) by Martin W. Sandler
- [I Was Dreaming to Come to America](#) by Veronica Lawlor
- [Kids Make History: A New Look at America's Story](#) by Susan Washburn Buckley
- [Learning About America's Industrial Growth with Graphic Organizers](#) by Linda Wirkner
- [Light for All](#) by Margarita Engle
- [The Industrial Revolution](#) by Andrew Langley
- [Watch Me: A Story of Immigration and Inspiration](#) by Koyin Richards
- [We Came to America](#) by Faith Ringgold
- [Who Did It First?: 50 Politicians, Activists, and Entrepreneurs Who Revolutionized the World](#) by Jay Leslie



[Shirley Chisholm Is a Verb](#) by Veronica Chambers

Shirley Chisholm famously said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." This dynamic biography illuminates how Chisholm was a doer, an active and vocal participant in our nation's democracy, and a force to be reckoned with. Now young readers will learn about her early years, her time in Congress, her presidential bid and how her actions left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire, uplift, and instruct.

([Summary from publisher](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Short Video](#) from YouTube about Shirley Chisholm
- [“Seat at the Table” Activity](#)
- “The Chisholm Trail” [Activity Packet](#) (click to download mid-page)

Companion Books for Shirley Chisholm Is a Verb:

- [Nonfiction Reader from Raz-Plus](#) with accompanying materials
- Shirley Chisholm Dared: The Story of the First Black Woman in Congress by Alicia D. Williams
- Shirley Chisholm by Laurie Calkhoven



APRIL

The Boy Who Grew a Forest by Sophia Gholz

In India, there is a boy who loves nature. The boy treasures his precious river-island and the wildlife who share it with him. But each year he witnesses animals displaced from loss of habitat, while his island slowly erodes away. He worries that if animals wither without trees, people will too. With nothing but a handful of bamboo saplings, the boy sets out on a mission to reclaim the land the river has taken.

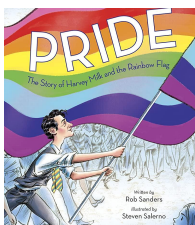
The Boy Who Grew A Forest follows the true story of Mishing tribesman, Jadav Payeng, who single-handedly planted over twelve hundred acres of lush forest on a once barren island in northeastern India. ([Summary from author](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Curriculum Guide and Activities](#) from the author
- [Coloring Page](#) from the author
- [YouTube Read Aloud](#) from the author
- “Plant a Forest of Your Own” Seed Planting Activity (in the back of the book)

Companion Books for The Boy Who Grew a Forest:

- Cracking Up: A Story About Erosion by Jacqui Bailey
- Habitat Destruction by Emily Kington
- Vanishing Rain Forests by Ted O’Hare
- Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees by Franck Prevot
- Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story of Africa by Jeanette Winter
- We Have a Dream by Maya-rose Craig
- Zonia’s Rain Forest by Juana Martinez-Neal



MAY

Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag by Rob Sanders

In this deeply moving and empowering true story, young readers will trace the life of the Gay Pride Flag, from its beginnings in 1978 with social activist Harvey Milk and designer Gilbert Baker to its spanning of the globe and its role in today’s world. Award-winning

author Rob Sanders's stirring text, and acclaimed illustrator Steven Salerno's evocative images, combine to tell this remarkable – and undertold – story. A story of love, hope, equality, and pride. ([Summary from publisher](#))

Selected Resources:

- [Educator Guide](#) from Anti-Defamation League
- [Parents' Guide](#) from Anti-Defamation League
- [Lesson Plan](#) from Human Rights Campaign (Identity Capes Activity)
- [Educator Guide](#) from Random House Publishing
- [Teachers Guide](#) From Pride and Less Prejudice
- [YouTube](#) Read Aloud
- More Queer Affirming Resources from [QueerKidStuff.com](#)
- "Love is Love" Song for Kids [link here](#)

Companion Books for Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag:

- And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson
- Daddy's Roommate by Michael Willhoite
- Emma and Meesha My Boy: a Two Mom Story by Kaitlyn Considine
- Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman
- Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle by Nina La Cour
- Papa, Daddy, & Riley by Seamus Kirst
- Rainbow: A First Book of Pride by Michael Genhart
- Stella Brings the Family by Miriam Schiffer
- Strong by Rob Kearney
- The Different Dragon by Jennifer Bryan