

## Picture Books

Illustrated texts can illuminate antiracism and edify readers of all ages. I read picture books to and with learners of all ages and grades (including adults) to talk about racism and advocate antiracism. Additionally important, reading these texts with older students offers them brilliant mentor texts for their own writing journeys.

### **The Colors of Us**

By Karen Katz

This book will grab with you right at the opening: “My name is Lena, and I am seven. I am the color of cinnamon. Mom says she could eat me up.” Your students will eat up the words and pictures of this book exploring and naming the rich tapestry of our skin colors. As the narrator says, the names of our skin “sound so delicious.”

### **Whoever You Are**

By Mem Fox

Every child should know and read the writer Mem Fox. In this text, Fox celebrates children’s many connections and similarities among children while uplifting real or perceived differences in kids’ physical appearances and everyday lives.

### **Chocolate Me!**

By Taye Diggs

A boy who is teased for being different is nudged by his mother to see how beautiful he truly is. And, yes, the book is authored by the actor Taye Diggs.

### **The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family**

By Olympic medalist Ibtihah Muhammad with S.K. Ali

This book echoed my own heart as a girl. Being a third culture kid who moved dozens of times facing multiple times of being the new kid in class, my brother Ronnie was my very best friend. The bond between siblings is a central message of this compelling book. Equally edifying is the author’s perspective about staying true to yourself and being proud of who you are. The author’s memories of her own first days of wearing a hijab along with the her personal notes at the end of the book give children wise insights about how to stand proud and strong when made to feel “othered.”

### **The Skin You Live In**

By Michael Tyler

A delightful book of vibrant words and pictures to help young children explore the beauty of our skin colors and universal connections – “‘cause you’re more than you seem. You are all that you think and you hope and you dream.”

### **Who Do I See in the Mirror?**

By Vese Aghoghovbia Aladewolu

The author encourages readers to embrace and honor their inside and outside beauty of self and others.

### **The Same But Different Too**

By Karl Newsom

If you are working with your students or own children to embrace similarities and differences, this is fun book to ignite great discussions and birth vivid “Ah, ha!” insights.

### **Black is Brown is Tan**

By Arnold Adoff

In this poetic picture book of a very personal story, an interracial family joyfully celebrates and honors the colors of their family and other multicultural families - “all the colors of the race.” The intentional use of words and illustrations makes this book a rich mentor text for multiple literacy lessons, too. Be sure to linger in the afterword with students to help them learn more about segregation laws and advancements made – and still needed – to allow all people to be in partnerships and create families together.

### **My Hair**

By Hannah Lee

Hair, a natural way many of us connect to our identity, is explored through this delightful book about a little girl deciding how to style her hair for her birthday.

### **Dreamers**

By Yuyi Morales

Immigration stories spill over our dinner table often. Three of the children in our extended family have married immigrants. Their experiences, their stories continuously teach us, move us, humble us. Likewise in this captivating book, the author shares her immigration journey with language which literally took my breath away – “We are two languages. We are lucha. We are resilience. We are hope.” Our students can either deeply relate to Morales’ words and story or will only become more connected and compassionate by dwelling in her immigration dream.

### **Saturday**

By Oge Mora

Just as 2020 has dealt us continuous unexpected challenges and detours, this story champions what matters most – togetherness – especially when things just don’t go as planned.

### **An ABC of Equality**

By Chana Ginette

Tough but vital concepts of equality are revealed through this ABC book. It's always exciting to find great books to illuminate serious subjects in conceptual ways making these accessible to children.

### **Hats of Faith**

By Medeia Cohen

As your antiracism efforts include honoring diversity of faith and religion, turn to this book celebrating shared customs of head coverings. It is powerful to show the similarities between faiths and cultures through everyday customs or practices, and to honor differences.

### **The Day You Begin**

By Jacqueline Woodson

Like big hugs from their favorite relative, this book offers children comfort. With messages of wisdom about diversity, feeling alone and finding one's voice, the lovely mix of words and illustrations (from Rafael Lopez) reassure young readers and offers them hope in friendship and self-acceptance. All children must know and read Jacqueline Woodson!

### **Freedom Summer**

By Deborah Wiles

This picture book offers intermediate and older readers a window into the segregated South of 1964 through a strong friendship between two boys – one black and one white. I have shared this work with many, many classes over the last two decades because it is so relatable, while also being so different from our students' lives. The text and realities of earlier times – here and in other countries – help surface essential conversations with our students about racism as we identify more ways we can be antiracist personally, with our community, and in our host countries.

### **All Are Welcome**

By Alexandra Penfold

The title says it all. Let's always welcome one another with open arms and hearts as young children do in their friendships. Each person we meet, each person of our community holds the potential of friendship. Every reader of this inviting book will widen their lens and broaden their understanding of the value of differences and connections among us.

## Biographies about Martin Luther King Jr.

Bring his words and fight for civil rights and justice to life for young readers. Here are a few to add to your collection:

[Martin Luther King Jr.](#) from Little People, Big Dreams and authored by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara

Learning About Dignity from the Life of Martin Luther King Jr. by Jeanne Strazzabosco

## Young Adult Nonfiction

### **This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work**

By Tiffany Jewell

Fighting racism and developing an antiracist heart and lens must begin in childhood. You may be your students only opportunity to take this vital journey. This text engages readers in anti-racist lessons such as Choosing My Path: Taking Action and Responding to Racism; Opening the Window: Making Sense of the World; and Waking Up: Understanding and Growing into My Identities (Isn't it lovely that the author used the plural there to honor the complexity of each person?). The lessons encourages reflection, always a critical element of real learning and growth. A must have for every library.

### **Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You**

By Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

Excellent synthesis from the book flap: "The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. Racist ideas are woven into the fabric of this country, and the first step to building an antiracist past and present. This book takes you on that journey, showing how racist ideas started and were spread, and how they can be discredited."

My own racism lens was shattered wide open as I read Reynolds and Kendi's historical narrative. With the book's numerous punch you in the gut accounts, readers can gain insights about not only our country's horrific history of racism but insights to identify racism now to stamp it out (Shout out to book title!). All students should know and turn to authors Reynolds and Kendi.

### **The Undeclared**

By Kwame Alexander and Kadir Nelson

This Caldecott Medal Book is a poem which grew into a picture book. Honoring black history in America, the words are gorgeous, the messages essential for all international students, too: "opened a world of possible." While this is a picture book, the information is candid and may be disturbing for young readers (It had me in tears the first time I read it.). This is a book to study yourself first in determining the best time or ages to share it

with your own students. But it will be a book none of your students every forget. It serves as a powerful role model for their own brave thoughts in fighting racism and honoring resiliency, courage, and dedication of the people profiled in this gorgeous text.

## Additional Antiracism Learning and Teaching Resources

For a variety of resources and thinkers, please turn to our [ISS Padlet: How to Be an Antiracist](#). I update and expand this collection often.

[“Antiracist” Grading Starts with You](#) by Cornelius Minor

[Anti-Racist Work in Schools: Are You in it for the Long Haul?](#) By Elizabeth Klienrock

[Teaching a Global Curriculum During Distance Learning](#) by Laurel Schwartz

[Trauma is ‘Written Into Our Bodies’—but Educators Can Help](#) by Stephen Merrill with Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

[What is Race](#) by John Eligon

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