

Transracial Journeys' Book Corner Holiday Guide

An annotated bibliography for families formed by transracial adoption with a focus on the intersectionalities of adoption, race, ethnicity, gender expression and identity.

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BOARD BOOKS

Baby's First Words / Stella Blackstone & Sunny Scribens, illustrated by Christiane Engel

Amazon says this book is for ages 2-5, but it would be great for babies and toddlers, too.

Gender Focus: LGBTQ parents

Dad and baby have a great day together in this colorful board book. When a baby's other dad comes home, it's time for a bubble bath and a cozy tuck-in. Young children will enjoy learning new words as they spend the day with this happy family.

Curls / Roth Forman, illustrated by Geneva Bowers

Baby and up

Gender Focus: Girl

Four Black girls celebrate their beautiful hair as they get ready for a fun day together.

Follow Your Dreams, Little One / Vashti Harrison

Baby- 3 years

Gender Focus: Boy

Beautifully illustrated, this book introduces little ones to famous Black men who did great things. Readers will meet men who raised their voices, used their art, reached new heights, made a difference, and stood up for what was right. You'll also want to check out Vashti Harrison's other board books - *Dream Big, Little One* and *Think Big, Little One* – for an introduction to inspiring Black women.

Homemade Love / bell hooks, illustrated by Shane W. Evans

Baby and up

Gender Focus: Girl

Mama calls her Girlpie, and she's Daddy's honey bun chocolate dew drop. But when she does something naughty, will Mama and Daddy still love her? YES! This colorful board book is a sweet celebration of family love.

Rosa Loves Cars / Jessica Spanyol

Ages 1-3 years

Gender Focus: Girl

Rosa and her diverse group of friends drive and race their toy cars, do tricks with monster trucks, build a car with a cardboard box, use their diggers in the sandpit, and more. After enjoying this playful board book, children will want to check out the rest of the *All About Rosa* series.

PICTURE BOOKS

Another / Christian Robinson

Grades Preschool-3, ages 4-8 years

Gender Focus: Girl

In the middle of the night a young girl and her cat are led into a world of upside-down stairs, colorful balls, and a diverse group of playful children. Is it really happening or is it just a dream? An intriguing adventure for lovers of wordless books.

Becoming Vanessa / Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Ages 3-6 years

Gender Focus: Girl

Vanessa wants to feel special on her first day of school, but everything goes wrong. The outfit she picked is too fancy, and her name has too many letters. She shares her sad feelings with her parents, who help her discover how special her name is – and how special she is, too! A super book to share at the beginning of the school year.

Cool Cuts / Mechal Renee Roe

Baby- 3 years

Gender Focus: Boy

This fun and affirming book is a celebration of cool Black hairstyles. Each page features a different boy who loves his hair and is “born to be awesome!”

Festival of Colors / Kabir Sehgal & Surishtha Sehgal, illustrated by Vashti Harrison

Grades Preschool-3, ages 2-8 years

Gender Focus: Boy & Girl

Chintoo and Mintoo are preparing for Holi, the Indian festival of colors. Readers will learn about Holi, as they enjoy the day with Chintoo, Mintoo, their family, friends, and neighbors. A joyful celebration of a colorful holiday!

Goodbye Summer, Hello Autumn / Kenard Pak

Grades 1-2, ages 4-7 years

Gender Focus: Girl

A young girl walks through woods and fields in this beautifully-illustrated exploration of the transition from summer to fall. She encounters animals as they prepare for winter, and plants as they change with the season. She walks through a town populated with diverse people preparing for autumn, too. A delightful book to cuddle up with as summer comes to an end.

Henry at Home / Megan Maynor, illustrated by Alea Marley

Grades Preschool-K, Ages 4-6 years

Gender Focus: **Boy & Girl**

Liza and Henry are young siblings who spend a lot of time playing creatively until it's time for Liza to go to kindergarten. A sweet story of siblings who have to part (due to school), learn how to play independently, and come together to share their new experiences.

How to Welcome a New Baby / Jean Reagan, illustrated by Lee Wildish

Grades Preschool-3, ages 4-8 years

Gender Focus: **Boy**

New Baby

The title says it all! Grandparents, parents and a young boy in a multiracial family get ready to welcome a new baby. The vignette on how to help your dad when the baby falls asleep on him is charming and emphasizes big brother's important role in the family.

I Am Enough / Grace Byers, illustrated by Keturah A. Bobo

Grades Preschool-3, ages 4-8 years

Gender Focus: **Girl**

A lyrical and poignant statement about our identities: how we are alike and how we are different. The gentle pace of the book moves toward self-advocacy and self-worth, while dealing with the difficulties we encounter when we don't get along with each other or when we are bullied.

The Kissing Hand/ Audrey Penn

Grades Preschool-K, ages 4-7 years

Tapestry Books Catalog

Chester, a young raccoon, expresses his fear of leaving home and going to school. His mother has an old family secret to share that will help him overcome his reservations so he can attend school with other woodland animals.

Lola at the Library / bell hooks, illustrated by Rosalind Beardshaw

Baby-3 years

Gender Focus: **Girl**

Lola loves books! She and her Mommy go to the library every Tuesday. Lola returns her books, enjoys storytime, and picks new books to take home. When Lola goes to bed her Mommy reads her a story. Young children will enjoy the gentle adventures of Lola and her diverse group of friends in this book, and in the other titles in the *Lola Reads* series.

Pink is for Boys / Robb Pearlman, illustrated by Eda Kaban

Grades Preschool-3, ages 4-8 years

Gender Focus: Boy and Girl

A diverse group of boys and girls make yellow paper crowns and wear blue baseball uniforms. They run through green grass and eat orange popsicles. This book is a lively way to let young readers know that all the colors are for everyone!

The Remember Balloons / Jessie Oliveros, illustrated by Dana Wulfekotte

Grades Kindergarten-4, ages 5-9 years

Gender Focus: Boy

Dementia

Grandpa has a big bunch of balloons, and each balloon holds a memory. Picking berries, finding his lost dog, marrying Grandma, going fishing. James loves to hear Grandpa tell the stories held in the balloons. But lately Grandpa's balloons have been floating away, taking their memories with them. *The Remember Balloons* is a beautiful story – and a sensitive, hopeful way to talk with children about memory loss.

When We Say Black Lives Matter / Maxine Beneba Clarke

Grades 1-4, ages 6-9

A beautiful Black baby is born, and as the child grows, the parents explain what it means to say, sing, call out, and whisper Black Lives Matter. Readers will be drawn in by the poetic text that bends and curves around bold colors and shapes on each page.

J FICTION

For Black Girls Like Me / Mariama J. Lockington

Grades 4-7, ages 9-11 years

Gender Focus: Girl

Adoption

Written by a transracial adoptee, this is the story of Makeda, an 11-year-old Black girl growing up in a White family. Life is good, but she is tired of answering questions about her family, and she often wonders about her birth mother. When her family moves to another state, Makeda's life changes. She misses her best friend, who is also a transracial adoptee. There are troubles with mean girls at school, and her mother suffers a mental health crisis. *For Black Girls Like Me* would be a great discussion starter!

Just Right Jillian / Nicole D. Collier

Grades 3-7, ages 8-12 years

Gender Focus: Girl

Jillian is very smart, but she is also very shy. Even when she knows the right answer at school, she doesn't speak up. Now it's time for the annual Mind Bender competition, and Jillian's teacher is encouraging her to compete. Readers will be cheering for Jillian as she builds her confidence and finds her voice.

Makena: See Me, Hear Me, Know Me / Daniel Lewis Patrick

Grades 3-7, ages 8-12 years

Gender Focus: Girl

After a long quarantine from school due to Covid, Makena is looking forward to starting 7th grade in person. She's excited to shop for back-to-school outfits with her family and works hard to create a fashion tailored to fit her own identity. At school and in the world, she experiences racism. She reflects on these racist experiences, discusses them with her friends and family and works to make a statement about her experiences in the clothing she wears and the social media she posts. Just like the title, readers can use the mantra, "see me, hear me, know me."

Second Dad Summer / Benjamin Klas and Fian Arroyo

Grades 4-7, ages 9-11 years

Gender Focus: Boy and LGBTQ+

This story about friendship and family takes place over a hot summer near downtown Minneapolis. Jeremiah is spending the summer with his dad and his dad's boyfriend, Michael. Jeremiah is sometimes embarrassed by Michael's outgoing and colorful personality, and he's reluctant to let down his barriers with his dad's boyfriend. However, a new friendship, gardening and a rocky relationship with a grumpy, elderly neighbor work to build a relationship between the two.

Snapdragon / Kat Leyh

Grades 4-7, ages 9-11 years

Gender Focus: Girl and LGBTQ+

Friendship, love, community and acceptance build the backbone of this wonderful graphic novel. Snapdragon/Snap is often left at home alone with her three-legged dog Good Boy or GB for short. Her single mom works a lot and is a college student. One day, GB goes missing and Snap goes searching for him in the woods. Reunited with her dog, Snap becomes friends with GB's rescuer - a mysterious and magical, elderly woman who lives alone in the woods and who once had a loving relationship with Snap's grandma. This graphic novel features a wide variety of gender presentations and body types and focuses on community, acceptance, love and friendship.

A Soft Place to Land / Janae Marks

Grades 3-7, ages 8-12 years

Gender Focus: Girl

Job Loss, Moving

Joy's father loses his job, so the family has to sell their house and move to a small apartment. How will Joy cope with all the changes? She's sharing a room with her little sister, hearing Mom and Dad's arguments through thin walls, trying to make new friends, and wishing the family could afford her piano lessons. Despite some setbacks, Joy finds that there are wonderful people everywhere – and that dreams can come true no matter where you live.

Stuntboy, in the Meantime / Jason Reynolds, illustrated by Raul the Third

Grades 2-7, ages 8-12 years

Gender Focus: Boy

Stuntboy, aka Portico, lives in a castle, aka an apartment building, with his mom, dad and grandma, but not for long, as his parents are separating. Stuntboy tries to use his superhero power to maneuver his way through the “frets,” which he gets whenever his parents argue. To cope, he often goes down the hall to his best friend Zola’s apartment, where he learns to breathe, meditate and watch their favorite TV show together. This book is almost a graphic novel but is cataloged as a novel.

TEEN FICTION

A Song Below Water / Bethany C. Morrow

Grades 8-12, ages 12-18

Gender Focus: Girl

This is an urban fantasy that works as an allegory for being young and Black in the United States. Effie’s sent away to live with another family after a harrowing incident AND the death of her mother in middle school. By high school, Effie manages to forge a strong, sisterly relationship with Tavia and Tavia’s parents in her second home. The girls are influenced by a Black social media icon who motivates them to attend a protest. They’re also kept from secrets about their identities because their families are trying to protect them. They’re determined to find out the truth about who they truly are!

Swing / Kwame Alexander

Grades 9-12, ages 13-18 years

Gender Focus: Boy

This free verse novel focuses on the evolving friendship of Swing and Noah and how it changes in high school. Added to the mix is that people in their community and at school keep finding American flags in unexpected places without any rhyme or reason, and it’s kind of unsettling. What do the flags represent? This is a beautifully-rendered, free-verse telling of high school, friendship and first love.

NONFICTION

The 1619 Project: Born on the Water / Nikole Hannah-Jones & Renee Watson, illustrated by Nikkolas Smith

Grades 2-5, ages 7-10 years

Her school assignment is “trace your roots.” How can a young Black girl, who can only trace her family back three generations, complete this assignment? Her grandmother gathers the family around to tell them about their beginnings. She talks about the vibrant civilization enjoyed by African people before they were kidnapped and enslaved. She tells stories of the terrible journey to America, and what happened to the survivors when they arrived. Ending on a hopeful note, this is a moving and important book.

A History of Me / Adrea Theodore, illustrated by Erin Robinson

Grades Preschool-3, **ages** 4-8 years

She loves to learn, but it's hard being the only brown girl in class – especially when the teacher talks about slavery and the civil rights movement. Everyone looks at her and she wants to disappear. Her mother tells her about the brave and strong women who came before her – and encourages her to be proud of her heritage. A hopeful and empowering book, based on the author's own story.

Kwanzaa: How to Celebrate it in your Home / Kathleen Minnick-Taylor, illustrated by Charles Taylor II

For the family

A brief, yet thorough and accessible, guide to celebrating Kwanzaa accompanied by colorful, instructive illustrations.

Let it Shine / Ashley Bryan

Grades Preschool-3, **ages** 4-8 years

Cut paper illustrations celebrate three traditional spirituals in this vibrant book. Music for the songs and a short history of the spiritual are the perfect complement to the joyful illustrated songs.

Me and White Supremacy: Become an Antiracist Changemaker / Layla F. Saad

Grades 5-12, **ages** 10-16 years

This young readers' edition of *Me and White Supremacy* is a useful and accessible way to help young people understand and deal with racism. Each chapter covers a different topic – white privilege, anti-blackness, racist stereotypes, cultural appropriation, allyship, etc. At the end of each chapter the author gives readers the opportunity to reflect, and ideas for ways to take action. An excellent resource!

The People Remember / Ibi Zoboi, illustrated by Loveis Wise

Grades Preschool-3, **ages** 4-8 years

A beautiful retelling of the history of enslaved Africans and their descendants in America. Gorgeous illustrations and poetic text take the reader on a compelling journey through time, and weave in the principles of Kwanzaa along the way. A wonderful book to share at Kwanzaa – or any time!

Rise Up! The Art of Protest / Jo Rippon

Grades 3-7, **ages** 8-12 years

Young people can make a difference in the important issues facing us – women's rights, racial injustice, LGBTQ rights, and more. Through brief text and historical posters, this book illustrates the history of protest movements – and inspires young readers to fight for a world where everyone's human rights are respected.

Say Her Name / Zeta Elliot, illustrated by Loveis Wise

Grades 7 and up, age 12 years and up

Inspired by the #SayHerName campaign, this powerful poetry collection celebrates the creativity, resilience, and courage of Black girls and women. Readers who wish to dive deeper will find information about the genesis of many of the poems at the end of the book. A great choice for poetry lovers, as well as those looking for a creative discussion starter.

A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin / Jen Bryant, illustrated by Melissa Sweet

Grades K-3, ages 5-8 years

Young artists will be inspired by this beautifully illustrated biography of Black artist Horace Pippin. Horace loved to draw from early childhood, but the circumstances of his life prevented him from becoming an artist until he was 40 years old. His paintings of the real life he saw around him are now displayed in museums all over the country. As Horace said, "Pictures just come to my mind... and I tell my heart to go ahead." A great message for aspiring artists young and old!

Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You / Jason Reynolds, Ibram X. Kendi, adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul, illustrated by Rachelle Baker

Grades 1-5, age 6-10 years

AND

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You / Jason Reynolds, Ibram X. Kendi

Grades 7 and up, age 12 years and up

Passionate, illuminating, and sometimes funny, both versions of *Stamped* are a great way for young people to learn about the history of racism in America. How did racism start, why is it still here, and how can we overcome it? These are important books to read and share.

Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Boy / Emmanuel Acho

Grades 5-9, age 10-14 years

Why isn't it okay for whites to use the "N" word? What is white privilege and how does it work? What does it mean to be an ally? Author Emmanuel Acho gives readers lots to think about and discuss in this book full of uncomfortable questions like these. A wonderful book for young people and their adults to read and talk about.

Unspeakable: the Tulsa Race Massacre / Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Grades 3-6, age 8-12 years

Greenwood was a thriving Black neighborhood in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The area was so prosperous that it was known as Black Wall Street. Tragically, Greenwood was destroyed by a white mob in 1921. Businesses and homes were looted and burned, and many people were killed. *Unspeakable's* beautifully written text, combined with Floyd Cooper's distinctive illustrations, bring this important historical event to life.

ADULT

The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story / Nikole Hannah-Jones

A gripping, brilliant read of the history of the United States from its origins to the present day as told by Black academics, poets, essayists and more.

Fights: One Boy's Triumph Over Violence / Joel Christian Gill

This autobiographical graphic novel depicts the violent and traumatic childhood Gill had to endure and overcome. The book's powerful narrative and drawings impart an almost visceral feeling for this child's trauma at school, at home and with gangs. Although this book is marketed to teens, its depictions of emotional, sexual and physical abuse are graphic. Any adult who reads this would come away with a better understanding of childhood trauma and hopefully, have more empathy too.