

Intro to Racial Justice

for families with kids ages 6-12

Created by [Nico Van Ostrand](#)
Pay as you're able [HERE](#).

INTENTION

This is a starting point, an incomplete set of activities that must be used alongside other resources. It is intended mainly for families who haven't had many conversations about race but are ready to get started.

INSPIRED BY

Justice in June by Autumn Gupta contains resources for adults wishing to be better allies. This calendar was created in a similar spirit, with children and families in mind.

RESOURCES

- [Systemic Racism Explained](#)
- [NPR Talking Race With Young Children](#)
- [Nicole Byer script about BLM](#) (on Instagram, contains expletives)
- [Teaching Tolerance](#)

BOOK LIST

This list contains links to read aloud videos on YouTube, including many of the stories featured here.

A quick search will offer many other book lists about race, and most of those books can be found at your local (and/or POC owned) bookstore.

QUESTION WALL

Before you begin, create a space to keep questions that come up during this learning.

Answer questions you can, but acknowledge questions you don't feel equipped to answer, and questions that have no answer. Practice researching, centering BIPOC voices, and listening deeply as you seek answers together.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Talking about race with kids is challenging and difficult. It might get messy, and that's okay. Use phrases like "Tell me more about that" and "how does your body feel while we talk about this?" This is activism work and you are ready for it.

MY IDENTITY

WEEK 1

For each story, ask:

What did you notice about this story?

How did this story make you feel?

What did this story remind you of?

What is this story asking you to do?

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DAY 1

Read Thunder Boy Jr.

Activity: Ask your child to create a piece of art with their name in the middle, and to surround it with words and/or pictures that describe some unique things about them.

DAY 2

Read I Am... (Positive Affirmations for Brown Boys).

Activity: Write an "I Am" poem (optional templates: Basic | Advanced)

DAY 3

Read Islandborn

Activity: Share your story with your child. What memories do you have from when you were younger? Ask your child to draw pictures of what you describe.

DAY 4

Ask your child: What is your story? What memories do you have from when you were younger?

Activity: Ask your child to draw pictures of some memories they have. Put these pictures in a book with the Day 3 pictures and read your story together.

DAY 5

Read Be Who You Are

Activity: Draw the outline of your child's head on a large piece of paper. Ask them to decorate the space inside their head with words and images that show who they are. (I am Asian. I am someone who likes cats. I am a sister.)

DAY 6

Activity: On the same paper and head outline from Day 5, ask your child to decorate the space around the outline with words and images that represent the communities and groups they belong to.

RACE

WEEK 2

For each story, ask:

What did you notice about this story?

What did this story remind you of?

How did this story make you feel?

What is this story asking you to do?

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DAY 1

Read Let's Talk About Race

Activity: Ask your child to draw a self portrait showing things that are unique about them. Then ask, What do you think someone would assume about you based on how you look? Are any of these assumptions true? Do any of them hurt?

DAY 2

Read The Skin You Live In

Activity: Take a look at your skin together. What do you notice? Look closely at it, look at it in the sun and in the dark. For this activity, focus on noticing and naming.

DAY 3

Read Black Is Brown Is Tan

Activity: Look at family pictures together (including extended and chosen family). What races are in your family? For this activity, focus on noticing and naming.

DAY 4

Read Not My Idea

Activity: This is a heavy topic; take time to sit with it together. Ask your child to draw or write about what they think of this story. Give them space to ask questions and express their feelings. Add to your question list as needed.

DAY 5

Read Bein' With You This Way

Activity: This story was turned into a song -- what is this song about? Invite your child to write their own song lyrics that celebrate the diversity of the people they know.

DAY 6

Talk about it:

- What do you think about this week's stories?

Use this time to talk openly about race. Explore your own race and heritage. This conversation may be messy and uncomfortable, but will allow your child to process and give them space to ask questions.

RACISM

WEEK 3

For each story, ask:

What did you notice about this story?

What did this story remind you of?

How did this story make you feel?

What is this story asking you to do?

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DAY 1

Read Rosa

Activity: Fighting for justice can be dangerous. Talk about what Rosa Parks and other protesters risked as they fought for justice. Ask: Why do you think people chose to boycott and march even though it was dangerous?

DAY 2

Read The Story of Ruby Bridges

Activity: Ask your child to make a list of unfair rules, both from the story and from their own experiences. Introduce the concept of systemic oppression.

DAY 3

Read Separate is Never Equal

Activity: Revisit the list of unfair rules from Day 2. Who makes the rules? Who enforces them (makes sure people follow them)? Find out together and add this information to your list, to be used in Week 4.

DAY 4

Read Not Quite Snow White

Activity: List out your child's favorite stories together. Who is represented in those stories? What kinds of races, jobs, and lifestyles are in the stories? Focus on noticing and naming.

DAY 5

Read Something Happened in Our Town

Activity: Make a list: Who do you know that can help when things are unfair? After your child has listed helpers they know personally, extend the activity by learning together about local activists and the work they do.

DAY 6

Talk about it:

- How do you feel about the stories we've read this week?
- Do you feel like you have been changed inside by these stories? How so?

ACTIVISM

WEEK 4

For each story, ask:
What did you notice about this story? How did this story make you feel?
What did this story remind you of? What is this story asking you to do?

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DAY 1

Read [A is for Activist](#)

Activity: Go through the story slowly. Ask your child which words they've heard before, and pick a few to look up together and learn more about. (Or use this list: Activist, Culture, Grassroots, Justice, Diversity)

DAY 2

Read [Say Something](#)

Activity: Like the story says, everyone has something to say. What do you and your child have to say? Make a sign to hang in your window.

DAY 3

Read [Mama's Nightingale](#)

Activity: Return to the list of unfair rules from last week and pick one to focus on. Who made or enforces this rule? Find out together, then invite your child to write a letter to them explaining why they think the rule is unfair.

DAY 4

Read [Let the Children March](#),

Activity: If you or your child has marched before, take a moment to share or revisit that story together. If you haven't marched, learn together about youth-led activism in your area.

DAY 5

Read [Why Children March for George Floyd](#)

Activity: Invite your child to think back over the past month of learning. Ask them what they feel called to march for: What causes are you passionate about? What will you do to make the world a more just place?

DAY 6

Activity: When people learn about justice, sometimes we say they are "waking up." This process lasts your whole lifetime, because there's always more to learn. Ask your child to share and/or draw what they started to wake up about this month, and what they hope to learn more about.