

Picture Books on Diverse Experiences

(*denotes series)

Black Lives Matter

The Undeclared by Kwame Alexander (JPN 811.6 ALE)

This poem is a love letter to black life in the United States. It highlights the unspeakable trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion, and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes.

When We Say Black Lives Matter by Maxine Beneba-Clarke

In this joyful exploration of the Black Lives Matter motto, a loving narrator relays to a young Black child the strength and resonance behind the words. In family life, through school and beyond, the refrains echo and gain in power, among vignettes of protests and scenes of ancestors creating music on djembe drums

Call and Response: The Story of Black Lives Matter by Veronica Chambers (JNF 323.119 CHA)

The rallying cry of Black Lives Matter captured global attention and spurred thousands of people of all ages, races, genders, and backgrounds to stand up for major progressive social reform. The widespread protests, rooted in the call-and-response tradition of the Black community, were fueled by a growing understanding for many that systemic racism undermines the very nature of democracy. But where did this movement begin? And why, after years of work by everyday people, did the world finally begin to take notice?

Race Cars by Jenny Devenny

This is a children's book about white privilege. It was created to serve as a springboard for parents and educators to facilitate tough conversations with their kids about race, privilege and oppression.

Why? A Conversation about Race by Taye Diggs

"Why?" is a question asked by children daily, and in this striking and timely story, it begins a straightforward and challenging conversation between children of color and the adults in their lives. It distills the conversations many children and adults are having about race, injustice, and anger in communities throughout our country, and gives them context that young readers can connect with.

The 1619 Project: Born on the Water by Nikole Hannah-Jones

A young student receives a family tree assignment in school, but she can only trace back three generations. Grandma gathers the whole family, and the student learns that 400 years ago, in 1619, their ancestors were stolen and brought to America by white slave traders. But before that, they had a home, a land, a language. She learns how the people said to be born on the water survived.

Are Your Stars Like My Stars? by Leslie Helakoski

No matter where they live, all children gaze at the blue sky, bask in the warmth of the golden sun, dig in the rich dirt, and watch clouds grow soft and rosy at the end of day. Through the eyes of one inquisitive and thoughtful young narrator, young readers explore the idea of perspective, and come to realize that all of us, everywhere, share the colors of the world.

Black is a Rainbow Color by Angela Joy

From the wheels of a bicycle to the robe on Thurgood Marshall's back, Black surrounds our lives. It is a color to simply describe some of our favorite things, but it also evokes a deeper sentiment about the incredible people who helped change the world and a community that continues to grow and thrive.

Antiracist Baby by Ibram X. Kendi

Take your first steps with Antiracist Baby! Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, follow Antiracist Baby's nine easy steps for building a more equitable world.

This is Your Brain on Stereotypes by Tanya Lloyd Kyi (JNF 303.385 KYI)

An essential overview of the science behind stereotypes: from why our brains form them to how recognizing them can help us be less biased. From the time we're babies, our brains constantly sort and label the world around us --- a skill that's crucial for our survival. But, as adolescents are all too aware, there's a tremendous downside: when we do this to groups of people it can cause great harm.

Let's Talk About Race by Julius Lester (JNF 305.8 LES)

This stunning picture book introduces race as just one of many chapters in a person's story.

Our Skin: First Conversations About Race by Megan Madison

While young children are avid observers and questioners of their world, adults often shut down or postpone conversations on complicated topics because it's hard to know where to begin. Research shows that talking about issues like race and gender from the age of two not only helps children understand what they see, but also increases self-awareness, self-esteem, and allows them to recognize and confront things that are unfair, like discrimination and prejudice.

M is for Melanin: A Celebration of the Black Child by Tiffany Rose

Each letter of the alphabet contains affirming, Black-positive messages, from A is for Afro, to F is for Fresh, to W is for Worthy.

Who are Your People? by Bakari Sellers

When you meet someone for the first time, they might ask, "Who are your people?" and "Where are you from?" Children are shaped by their ancestors, and this book celebrates the village it takes to raise a child.

The Skin You Live In by Michael Tyler

With the ease and simplicity of a nursery rhyme, this lively story delivers an important message of social acceptance to young readers.

Your Legacy: A Bold Reclaiming of Our Enslaved History by Schele Williams (JPN 973.049 WIL)

Beginning in Africa before 1619, this stunning picture book presents an unprecedentedly accessible, empowering, and proud introduction to African American history for children. While your ancestors' freedom was taken from them, their spirit was not; this book celebrates their accomplishments, acknowledges their sacrifices, and defines how they are remembered—and how their stories should be taught.

Refugee/Immigrant Experiences

My Name is Bana by Bana Alabed

When seven-year-old Bana Alabed took to Twitter to describe the horrors she and her family were experiencing in war-torn Syria, her heartrending messages touched the world and gave a voice to millions of innocent children.

Isabel and Her Colores Go to School by Alexandra Alessandri

English, with its blustery blues and whites, just feels wrong to Isabel. She prefers the warm oranges and pinks of Spanish. As she prepares for class at a new school, she knows she's going to have to learn--and she would rather not! Her first day is uncomfortable, until she discovers there's more than one way to communicate with friends.

I is for Immigrants by Selina Alko

What do African dance, samosas, and Japanese gardens have in common? They are all gifts the United States received from immigrants: the vibrant, multifaceted people who share their heritage and traditions to enrich the fabric of our daily lives.

A Thousand White Butterflies by Jessica Betancourt-Perez

Isabella has recently arrived from Colombia with her mother and abuela. She misses Papa, who is still in South America. It's her first day of school, her make-new-friends day, but when classes are canceled because of too much snow, Isabella misses warm, green, Colombia more than ever. Then Isabella meets Katie and finds out that making friends in the cold is easier than she thought!

I Dream of Popo by Livia Blackburne

When a young girl and her family emigrate from Taiwan to America, she leaves behind her beloved popo, her grandmother. She misses her popo every day, but even if their visits are fleeting, their love is ever true and strong.

My Two Border Towns by David Bowles

Early one Saturday morning, a boy prepares for a trip to The Other Side/El Otro Lado. It's close--just down the street from his school--and it's a twin of where he lives. To get there, his father drives their truck along the Rio Grande and over a bridge, where they're greeted by a giant statue of an eagle. Their outings always include a meal at their favorite restaurant, a visit with Tío Mateo at his jewelry store, a cold treat from the paletero, and a pharmacy pickup. On their final and most important stop, they check in with friends seeking asylum and drop off much-needed supplies.

Light for All by Margarita Engle

Discover the myriad contributions that all immigrants have made as they come to join family or start their own lives together in a new country they call home. Coming with their hopes, dreams, and determination, generations of immigrants have made the fabric of this country diverse, vivid, and welcoming.

Danbi Leads the School Parade by Anna Kim

Danbi is thrilled to start her new school in America. But a bit nervous too, for when she walks into the classroom, everything goes quiet. Everyone stares. Danbi wants to join in the dances and the games, but she doesn't know the rules and just can't get anything right. Luckily, she isn't one to give up. With a spark of imagination, she makes up a new game and leads her classmates on a parade to remember!

Where Are You From? by Jaime Kim

When a girl is asked where she's from—where she's really from—none of her answers seems to be the right one. Unsure about how to reply, she turns to her loving abuelo for help. He doesn't give her the response she expects. She gets an even better one.

The Paper Boat by Thao Lam

At her home in Vietnam, a girl rescues ants from the sugar water set out to trap them. Later, when the girl's family flees war-torn Vietnam, ants lead them through the moonlit jungle to the boat that will take them to safety. Before boarding, the girl folds a paper boat from a bun wrapper and drops it into the water, and the ants climb on. Their perilous journey, besieged by punishing weather, predatory birds, and dehydration, before reaching a new beginning, mirrors the family's own.

Areli is a Dreamer by Areli Morales

When Areli was just a baby, her mama and papa moved from Mexico to New York with her brother, Alex, to make a better life for the family--and when she was in kindergarten, they sent for her, too. Everything in New York was different. Gone were the Saturdays at Abuela's house, filled with cousins and sunshine. Instead, things were busy and fast and noisy. Areli's limited English came out wrong, and schoolmates accused her of being illegal. But with time, America became her home. And she saw it as a land of opportunity, where millions of immigrants who came before her paved their own paths. She knew she would, too.

Yao Bai and the Egg Pirates by Tim J Myers

Yao Bai is finally old enough to sail with his father and uncle to the Farallon Islands, to gather the precious eggs seabirds lay there. But on their way home they encounter trouble on the sea—pirates! Just when Yao's father and uncle believe their hard day's work would all be gone, Yao comes up with a clever plan. But will it be enough to save all the eggs?

A Sled for Gabo by Emma Otheguy

On the day it snows, Gabo sees kids tugging sleds up the hill, then coasting down, whooping all the while. Gabo wishes he could join them, but his hat is too small, and he doesn't have boots or a sled. But he does have warm and welcoming neighbors in his new town who help him solve the problem in the sweetest way possible!

Home is in Between by Mitali Perkins

Shanti misses the warm monsoon rains in India. Now in America, she watches fall leaves fly past her feet. Still, her family's apartment feels like a village: Mama cooking luchi, funny stories in Bangla, and Baba's big laugh. But outside, everything is different – trick-or-treating, ballet class, and English books. Back and forth, Shanti trudges between her two worlds. She remembers her village and learns her new town. She watches Bollywood movies at home and Hollywood movies with her friends. She is Indian. She is also American. How should she define home?

Salma the Syrian Chef by Danny Ramadan

All Salma wants is to make her mama smile again. Between English classes, job interviews, and missing Papa back in Syria, Mama always seems busy or sad. A homemade Syrian meal might cheer her up, but Salma doesn't know the recipe, or what to call the vegetables in English, or where to find the right spices! Luckily, the staff and other newcomers in her Welcome Home are happy to lend a hand—and a sprinkle of sumac. With creativity, determination, and charm, Salma brings her new friends together to show Mama that even though things aren't perfect, there is cause for hope and celebration.

Fatima's Great Outdoors by Ambreen Tariq

Fatima Khazi is excited for the weekend. Her family is headed to a local state park for their first camping trip! The school week might not have gone as planned, but outdoors, Fatima can achieve anything. At the end of an adventurous day, the family snuggles inside one big tent, serenaded by the sounds of the forest. The thought of leaving the magic of the outdoors tugs at Fatima's heart, but her sister reminds her that they can keep the memory alive through stories--and they can always daydream about what their next camping trip will look like.

Wishes by Muon Thi Van

An arresting, poetic journey and a moving reflection on immigration, family, and home, this book tells the powerful, honest story about one Vietnamese family's search for a new home on the other side of the world, and the long-lasting and powerful impact that makes on one of the youngest members of the family.

Watercress by Andrea Wang

Driving through Ohio in an old Pontiac, a young girl's parents stop suddenly when they spot watercress growing wild in a ditch by the side of the road. Grabbing an old paper bag and some rusty scissors, the whole family wades into the muck to collect as much of the muddy, snail covered watercress as they can. At first, she's embarrassed. Why can't her family get food from the grocery store? But when her mother shares a story of her family's time in China, the girl learns to appreciate the fresh food they foraged. Together, they make a new memory of watercress.

From the Tops of the Trees by Kao Kalia Yang

Young Kalia has never known life beyond the fences of the Ban Vinai Refugee Camp, the Thai camp holding many thousands of Hmong families. For Kalia and her cousins, life isn't always easy, but they still find ways to play, racing with chickens and riding a beloved pet dog. Just four years old, Kalia is still figuring out her place in the world. When she asks what is beyond the fence, at first her father has no answers for her. But on the following day, he leads her to the tallest tree in the camp and, secure in her father's arms, Kalia sees the spread of a world beyond.

The Most Beautiful Thing by Kao Kalia Yang

When Kalia becomes unhappy about having to do without and decides she wants braces to improve her smile, it is her grandmother—a woman who has just one tooth in her mouth—who helps her see that true beauty is found with those we love most.

Indigenous Communities

Bowwow Powwow by Brenda J. Child

Windy Girl is blessed with a vivid imagination. From Uncle she gathers stories of long-ago traditions, about dances and sharing and gratitude. Windy can tell such stories herself—about her dog, Itchy Boy, and the way he dances to request a treat and how he wriggles with joy in response to, well, just about everything. When Uncle and Windy Girl and Itchy Boy attend a powwow, Windy watches the dancers in their jingle dresses and listens to the singers. When Windy falls asleep under the stars, Uncle's stories inspire other visions in her head: a bowwow powwow, where all the dancers are dogs. In these magical scenes, Windy sees veterans in a Grand Entry, and a visiting drum group, and traditional dancers, grass dancers, and jingle-dress dancers—all with telltale ears and paws and tails. All celebrating in song and dance. All attesting to the wonder of the powwow.

We All Play by Julie Flett

Animals and kids love to play! This wonderful book celebrates playtime and the connection between children and the natural world.

Clam Digging with Grandma by Hannah Gifford

Silu can't wait to go clam digging! Follow along as Silu and her grandma spend a fun day digging for clams.

Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes by Wab Kinew (JPN 970.004 KIN)

Wab Kinew has created a powerful rap song that showcases a diverse group of Indigenous people in the US and Canada, both the more well known and the not-so-widely recognized. Individually, their stories, though briefly touched on, are inspiring; collectively, they empower the reader with this message: "We are people who matter, yes, it's true; now let's show the world what people who matter can do."

Josie Dances by Denise Lajimodiere

To gather all these essential pieces, she calls on her mom, her aunty, her kookum, and Grandma Greatwalker. They have the skills to prepare Josie for her powwow debut. As the months go by, Josie practices her dance steps while Mom stitches, Aunty and Kookum bead, and Grandma Greatwalker dreams Josie's spirit name. Josie is nervous about her performance in the arena and about all the pieces falling into place, but she knows her family is there to support her. The powwow circle is a welcoming space, and dancers and spectators alike celebrate Josie's first dance. When she receives her name, she knows it's just right. Wrapped in the love of her community, Josie dances to honor her ancestors.

Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Leitich Smith

The cone-shaped jingles sewn to Grandma Wolfe's dress sing tink, tink, tink, tink... Jenna loves the tradition of jingle dancing that has been shared over generations in her family and intertribal community. She hopes to dance at the

next powwow. But with the day quickly approaching, she has a problem—how will her dress sing if it has no jingles?

We are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, this book issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the Earth's water from harm and corruption.

Zonia's Rain Forest by Juana Martinez-Neal

Zonia's home is the Amazon rain forest, where it is always green and full of life. Every morning, the rain forest calls to Zonia, and every morning, she answers. She visits the sloth family, greets the giant anteater, and runs with the speedy jaguar. But one morning, the rain forest calls to her in a troubled voice. How will Zonia answer?

Fry Bread by Kevin Noble-Maillard

Fry bread is food. It is warm and delicious, piled high on a plate. Fry bread is time. It brings families together for meals and new memories. Fry bread is nation. It is shared by many, from coast to coast and beyond. Fry bread is us. It is a celebration of old and new, traditional and modern, similarity and difference. This wonderful story is an evocative depiction of a modern Native American family.

My Heart Fills with Happiness by Monique Gray Smith

The sun on your face. The smell of warm bannock baking in the oven. Holding the hand of someone you love. What fills your heart with happiness?

You Hold Me Up by Monique Gray Smith

Award-winning author Smith wrote this book to prompt a dialogue among young people, their care providers and educators about reconciliation and the importance of the connections children make with others.

Kamik's Sled by Matilda Sulurayok*

Jake's puppy is growing quickly, but as Jake soon realizes, he isn't becoming any easier to handle. With some advice and a little help from his grandmother, Jake learns basic principles of how to begin training a dog to pull. Kamik finally has his first sled, and he and Jake can finally begin exploring the tundra together. But Jake and Kamik are still inexperienced, and when a blizzard starts blowing in across the tundra, Jake must rely on his knowledge to get home.

The American Dream/Promise

What Does It Mean to be American? by Rana DiOrio (JPN 973 DIO)

What does it mean to be American? Does it mean you like apple pie or fireworks? Not exactly.

Three Little Engines by Bob McKinnon

Graduation day is finally here! The Little Blue Engine, the Yellow Passenger Engine, and the Red Freight Engine are excited to take their final test of Engine School: making their first solo trip over the mountain. But each engine encounters different challenges and obstacles on their journey.

America My Love, America My Heart by Daria Peoples-Riley

What begins as a single question from a single child multiplies as America, sweeping across the country with every page turn, inviting in more and more children of color—and their questions. Does America love them when they speak? Or whisper? Or shout? When they stand? Does America love them just as they are?

We Are a Garden: A Story of How Diversity Took Root in America by Lisa Westberg Peters (JPN 973 PET)

The wind blew in a girl and her clan, where herds of mammoths still wandered the frozen tundra. It later blew a boy and his family across frigid waters, and they spread across the new land. Over time, the wind continued to disperse newcomers from all directions. It blew in men who hoped to find gold, and slave ships, and immigrant families. And so it continued, for generations and generations.

American Anthem: A Song of Our Nation by Gene Scheer (JPN 973 SCH)

With words that speak to the soul of our nation, and art from twelve different illustrators, all depicting what America means to them, this book takes readers on a journey through this beautiful country—its history, its struggles, and its dignity—and throughout, we count our own blessings and think about how we can do more to share them with others, and give our best to our country and everyone in it.

Protesting/Fighting for Change

Enough!: 20 Protesters Who Changed America by Emily Easton (JPN 920 EAS)

America has been molded and shaped by those who have taken a stand and said they have had enough. In this dynamic picture book, stand alongside the nation's most iconic civil and human rights leaders, whose brave actions rewrote history.

If You're Going to a March by Martha Freeman

As more and more children attend the growing number of marches across the country, this cheerful guide serves as a great reference tool and conversation starter for youthful participants.

Change Sings: A Children's Anthem by Amanda Gorman

As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes—big or small—in the world, in their communities, and in most importantly, in themselves.

Hands Up! by Breanna McDaniel

A young black girl lifts her baby hands up to greet the sun, reaches her hands up for a book on a high shelf, and raises her hands up in praise at a church service. She stretches her hands up high like a plane's wings and whizzes down a hill so fast on her bike with her hands way up. As she grows, she lives through everyday moments of joy, love, and sadness. And when she gets a little older, she joins together with her family and her community in a protest march, where they lift their hands up together in resistance and strength.

A is for Activist by Immosanto Nagara (JBO)

This book is an ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives: families who want their kids to grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for.

Lubaya's Quiet Roar by Marilyn Nelson

Young Lubaya is happiest when she's drawing, often behind the sofa while her family watches TV. There, she creates pictures on the backs of her parents' old protest posters. But when upsetting news shouts into their living room, her parents need the posters again. The next day her family takes part in a march, and there, on one side of the posters being held high, are Lubaya's drawings of kids holding hands and of the sun shining over the globe--rousing visual statements of how the world could be.

Speak Up by Miranda Paul

Join a diverse group of kids on a busy school day as they discover so many different ways to speak up and make their voices heard! From shouting out gratitude for a special treat to challenging a rule that isn't fair, these young students show that simple, everyday actions can help people and make the world a better place.

Resist!: Peaceful Acts that Changed Our World by Diane Stanley (JNF 303.61 STA)

From music to marches, from sit-ins to walk-outs, activists throughout history have defended the disenfranchised and demanded reform, refusing to back down even in the face of violent oppression and overwhelming opposition. Today, a new generation of activists has arisen, speaking up in unprecedented numbers against systemic oppression, bias, and injustice.

Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights by Rob Sanders

Protesting. Standing up for what's right. Uniting around the common good—kids have questions about all of these things they see and hear about each day.

Liberty's Civil Rights Road Trip by Michael Waters

Time to board the bus! Liberty and her friend Abdullah, with their families and a diverse group of passengers, head off to their first stop: Jackson, Mississippi. Next on their map are Glendora, Memphis, Birmingham, Montgomery, and finally Selma, for a march across the iconic Edmund Pettus Bridge.

Inclusivity

Ways to Welcome by Linda Ashman

When everyone knows they're welcome, the world is a better place--and you might just make a new friend.

All of Us by Kathryn Erskine

ME can be WE. YOU can come, too. Join young readers to see how the whole world is a community made up of people who are more similar than we are different.

They're So Flamboyant by Michael Genhart

Each band of birds—a gaggle of geese, a dole of doves, a charm of finches, a brood of chickens, a scream of swifts, and an unkindness of ravens—all have their feathers ruffled and express their apprehension about the new and different arrivals. Bright pink colors, long legs, how dare they! Even a watch of nightingales patrols after dark. When the band of jays decides it is time to settle down the neighborhood, the pride of peacocks takes the lead, with support from a waddle of penguins, a venue of vultures, a mob of emus, and a gulp of cormorants. Finally, they all land at the flamingos' welcome party only to realize that they had all been birdbrained. Their new neighbors are actually quite charming, and not so scary and different after all.

Jacob's School Play: Starring He, She, and They by Sarah and Ian Hoffman*

As Mrs. Reeves class plans for their school show, *Life on the Farm*, all of the students, including Jacob, find themselves unexpectedly trying to understand Ari's identity as they. Ms. Reeves helps Jacob through his confusion by saying, "From the outside, we can't see who anybody is on the inside. So we have to trust them when they tell us." After the show premieres and is a hit with family and friends, Jacob comes to full realization of what he, she, and they means and embraces Ari as who they are and the whole class reaches a new level of identity comprehension.

Intersectionallies: We Make Room for All by Chelsea Johnson

The nine interconnected characters proudly describe themselves and their backgrounds, involving topics that range from a physical disability to language

brokering, offering an opportunity to take pride in a personal story and connect to collective struggle for justice.

The group bond grounds the message of allyship and equality. When things get hard, the kids support each other for who they are.

You Are Enough by Margaret O’Hair

It can be hard to be different - whether because of how you look, where you live, or what you can or can't do. But wouldn't it be boring if we were all the same? Being different is great! Being different is what makes you YOU.

A Kid is a Kid is a Kid by Sara O’Leary

Being the new kid is hard, a child in the school playground tells us. I can think of better things to ask than if I’m a boy or a girl. One after another, children share the questions they’re tired of being asked again and again — as opposed to what they believe are the most important or interesting things about themselves. As they move around the playground, picking up new friends along the way, there is a feeling of understanding and acceptance among them. And in the end, the new kid comes up with the question they would definitely all like to hear: “Hey kid, want to play?”

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

Discover a school where all young children have a place, have a space, and are loved and appreciated. Readers will follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms. A school where students from all backgrounds learn from and celebrate each other's traditions. A school that shows the world as we will make it to be.

A Church for All by Gayle Pitman

On Sunday morning, we gather together. We are every color. Every age. Rich and poor. Our church is open, affirming, and accepting. We believe in love instead of hate. There’s room for everyone! This book celebrates a spiritual community that embraces all people—no matter their age, race, class, gender identity, or sexual orientation—in love and faith.