Books are a powerful tool for learning about diverse perspectives. While we might think of these types of books as being for older people, no one is too young to engage with texts that start important conversations about race and racism. If you’re a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle—anyone that regularly interacts with children—there are a myriad of great children’s books filled with vibrant and engaging illustrations that cover these topics in a way that is accessible for kids. But where do you start? In a now-viral Twitter thread, educator Brittany Smith shared her favorite books to have in her classroom.

Smith’s selections both educate on and celebrate diversity. Some cover historical figures, such as the book Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History by Vashti Harrison. Others broach topics that have profound effects on children. Maddi’s Fridge raises awareness about poverty and hunger while My Family Divided is based on actor Diane Guerrero’s personal story of her undocumented immigrant parents’ deportation.

Scroll down for Smith’s picks. And for even more suggestions, visit Twitter to see what other people recommended in their replies.

Educator Brittany Smith shared her favorite children’s books dealing with race and racism.
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism

By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

MALCOLM LITTLE: THE BOY WHO GREW UP TO BECOME MALCOLM X WRITTEN BY ILYASAH SHABAZZ AND ILLUSTRATED BY AG FORD

LET IT SHINE: STORIES OF BLACK WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS WRITTEN BY ANDREA DAVIS PINKNEY AND ILLUSTRATED BY STEPHEN ALCORN

CFCE Program
17 Kirk St.
Lowell, MA 01852
978-654-5704; gfortes@comnteam.org
The CFCE Program is funded by a grant from the MA Department of Early Education and Care. It is managed by Community Teamwork
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By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

*SOMETHING HAPPENED IN OUR TOWN: A CHILD’S STORY ABOUT RACIAL INJUSTICE* WRITTEN BY MARIANNE CELANO, MARIETTA COLLINS, AND ANN HAZZARD AND ILLUSTRATED BY JENNIFER ZIVOIN

![Something Happened In Our Town](image)

*MY HAIR IS A GARDEN* BY COZBI A. CABRERA

![My Hair Is a Garden](image)

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SEPARATE IS NEVER EQUAL: SYLVIA MENDEZ AND HER FAMILY’S FIGHT FOR DESEGREGATION BY DUNCAN TONATIUh

YOUNG WATER PROTECTORS: A STORY ABOUT STANDING ROCK BY ASLAN TUDOR AND KELLY TUDOR
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism

By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

**MY FAMILY DIVIDED: ONE GIRL’S JOURNEY OF HOME, LOSS, AND HOPE**

*BY DIANE GUERRERO AND ERICA MOROZ*

**WE ARE GRATEFUL: OTSALIHELIGA**

*WRITTEN BY TRACI SORELL AND ILLUSTRATED BY FRANÉ LESSAC*

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**I AM NOT A NUMBER** WRITTEN BY JENNY KAY DUPUIS AND KATHY KACER AND ILLUSTRATED BY GILLIAN NEWLAND

![I Am Not A Number](image1)

**SCHOMBURG: THE MAN WHO BUILT A LIBRARY** WRITTEN BY CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD AND ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC VELASQUEZ

![Schomburg](image2)
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism

By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

**LAILAH’S LUNCHBOX: A RAMADAN STORY** WRITTEN BY REEM FARUQI AND ILLUSTRATED BY LEA LYON

![Lailah's Lunchbox](image1)

**THE DAY YOU BEGIN** WRITTEN BY JACQUELINE WOODSON ILLUSTRATED BY RAFAEL LÓPEZ

![The Day You Begin](image2)

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**THE WHISPERING TOWN** by Written by Jennifer Elvgren and Illustrated by Fabio Santomauro

**MOSES: WHEN HARRIET TUBMAN LED HER PEOPLE TO FREEDOM** Written by Carole Boston Weatherford and Illustrated by Kadir Nelson
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism
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_WHEN I WAS EIGHT_ WRITTEN BY CHRISTY JORDAN-FENTON AND MARGARET POKIAK-FENTON AND ILLUSTRATED BY GABRIELLE GRIMARD

WHEN I WAS EIGHT

HAPPY IN OUR SKIN WRITTEN BY FRAN MANUSHKIN AND ILLUSTRATED BY LAUREN TOBIA
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By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

**CHOCOLATE MILK, POR FAVOR: CELEBRATING DIVERSITY WITH EMPATHY**
*Written by Maria Dismondy and Illustrated by Donna Farrell*

**VOICE OF FREEDOM: FANNIE LOU HAMER, SPIRIT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**
*Written by Carole Boston Weatherford and Illustrated by Ekua Holmes*
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism

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**WHEN WE WERE ALONE** BY DAVID A. ROBERTSON AND JULIE FLETT

**SHINING STAR: THE ANNA MAY WONG STORY** BY PAULA YOO AND LIN WANG

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LITTLE LEADERS: BOLD WOMEN IN BLACK HISTORY BY VASHTI HARRISON

MADDI’S FRIDGE WRITTEN BY LOIS BRANDT AND ILLUSTRATED BY VIN VOGEL
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By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

*SULWE* WRITTEN BY LUPITA NYONG’O AND ILLUSTRATED BY VASHTI HARRISON

*A IS FOR ACTIVIST* BY INNOSANTO NAGARA
20+ Children’s Books That Discuss Race and Racism

By Sara Barnes on June 4, 2020

INTERSECTION ALLIES: WE MAKE ROOM FOR ALL WRITTEN BY CHELSEA JOHNSON, LATOYA COUNCIL, AND CAROLYN CHOI AND ILLUSTRATED BY ASHLEY SEIL SMITH

THE PROUDEST BLUE: A STORY OF HIJAB AND FAMILY WRITTEN BY IBTIHAJ MUHAMMAD AND S.K. ALI AND ILLUSTRATED BY HATEM ALY
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h/t: [BuzzFeed]

All images via Brittany Smith/Twitter.

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SARA BARNES

Sara Barnes is a Staff Editor at My Modern Met and Manager of My Modern Met Store. As an illustrator and writer living in Seattle, she chronicles illustration, embroidery, and beyond through her blog Brown Paper Bag and Instagram @brwnpaperbag. She wrote a book about embroidery artist Sarah K. Benning titled 'Embroidered Life' that was published by Chronicle Books in 2019. Sara is a graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art. She earned her BFA in Illustration in 2008 and MFA in Illustration Practice in 2013.

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