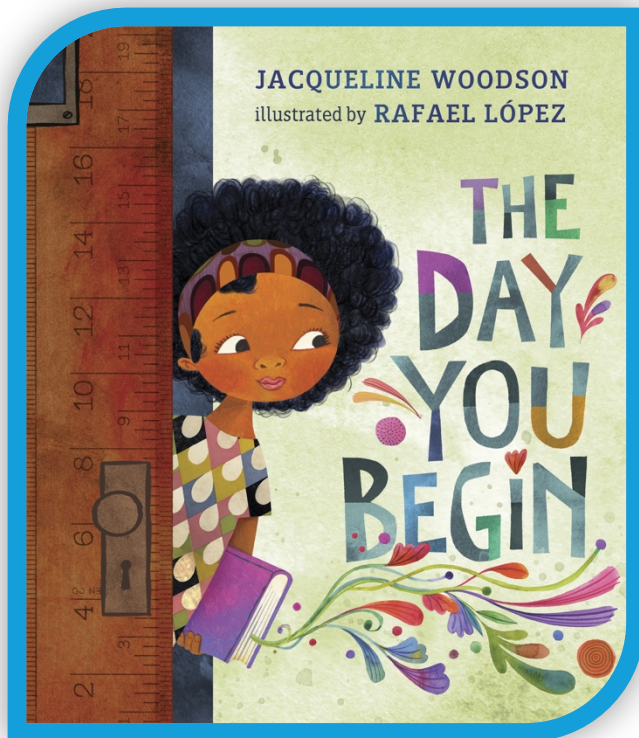




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



The Day You Begin

Jacqueline Woodson (Author), Rafael López (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0399246531

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 5–8

Book Themes

Identity, Culture, Similarities and Differences, Feeling different

About the Book

There are lots of reasons to feel different. Maybe it's how you look or talk, or where you're from; maybe it's what you eat or something else just as random. It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet, but somehow you do it. This book reminds us that we all feel like outsiders sometimes and how brave it is that we go forth anyway. And that sometimes, when we reach out and begin to share our stories, others will be happy to meet us halfway.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What is the book about?
- Why does Angelina feel like no one is like her? Have you ever felt that way?
- In what ways do the other characters in the book feel like no one is like them?
- At first, why do you think Angelina didn't want to tell the other children about her summer? What made her change her mind and what happened?
- How does the girl with lunchbox feel when all the children stare at her? Has something like that ever happened to you or someone at school?
- Have you ever felt that sometimes "the world feels like a place that you're standing all the way outside of?"
- How do the children feel at the end?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- Why do you think the book is called *The Day You Begin*?
- What do you think is the message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Feeling Different

In the book, we meet a variety of characters who feel "no one there is quite like you." Ask your child about those characters in the book and talk about the aspects of their identity or unique experiences that make them feel different, including how they look, the language(s) they speak, the food they eat, where they are from and places they have traveled. Then discuss with your child other aspects of identity and ways in which people sometimes feel different, first focusing on your child and family and then other people you know—family, friends, neighbors, etc. You can also discuss how in the book, even though some of the children felt that there was no one like them in the class, when they shared about themselves and their stories, they found similarities and places of connection. This is expressed on page 26: "There will be times when you walk into a room and no one there is quite like you until the day you begin to share your stories." You can talk about how sharing of ourselves deepens our connection to others.

2. Similarities and Differences

The book focuses on both similarities and differences and conveys the message that while we should acknowledge, accept and respect differences, we are able to connect with people despite differences. Sometimes people have a tendency to want to focus on similarities and not differences. Be careful not to perpetuate this notion or encourage the concept of being "colorblind." Don't gloss over differences by saying things like, "We're all the same inside." Starting at a young age, children

are aware of differences and telling them not to notice things like race, skin color, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, etc. is inaccurate and confusing. When you acknowledge differences, you let children know that aspects of identity are important and should not be ignored. When you accept and respect differences, you tell children that we can and should be friends with and connect with those who are different than us and there are always ways to connect regardless of differences. Talk with your child about the various aspects of identity explored in the book and reflect on your own identity groups, as individuals and as a family. Talk about your similarities and differences and the similarities/differences of those in your family, school and community. Let your child know that you can talk about both similarities and differences.

3. People, Identity and Culture

In the book, we learn something about each of the characters' identity, including race, ethnicity and/or culture. As you read the book, ask about or point out those elements of identity and culture in the book such as hair/skin color, name, language spoken, food, places travelled, country of origin. You can describe culture as "parts of daily life that are seen in food, customs, holidays, music and more that a group of people share." Explain that these aspects of culture are often handed down from one generation to another through relatives and ancestors. They are also sometimes—but not always—connected to their geographic location or country where people's relatives originally came from. Talk with your child about the aspects of race, ethnicity and culture that are important in your family. Explain how you would define your family's culture(s), and together identify what foods, holidays, customs, naming traditions, etc. are important to your family. Your family may connect with more than one culture or may not have a strong cultural identity, and that can also be discussed as well. Talk with your child about what they know and don't know about their culture, what they may have found out about their culture from you (their parent), grandparents or other relatives; what more they want to know and the questions they can ask in order to learn more.

Other Books You May Like

Dear Primo by Duncan Tonatiuh, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/dear-primo

One Family by George Shannon, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/one-family

Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/same-same-but-different

Zero by Kathryn Otoshi, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/zero

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity and culture.

Curriculum Resources

Who Am I? Identity Poems, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems.

Websites

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children. See also, [Why Not Focus on Similarities?](#)

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See also, [Why We Need Diverse Books](#).

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity and Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid\[201\]=201&tid\[202\]=202&tid\[203\]=203&tid\[204\]=204&tid\[205\]=205&tid\[206\]=206&tid\[207\]=207&tid\[208\]=208&tid\[209\]=209&tid\[210\]=210&tid\[211\]=211&tid\[212\]=212&tid\[213\]=213&tid\[214\]=214&tid\[215\]=215](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-7=1&tid[201]=201&tid[202]=202&tid[203]=203&tid[204]=204&tid[205]=205&tid[206]=206&tid[207]=207&tid[208]=208&tid[209]=209&tid[210]=210&tid[211]=211&tid[212]=212&tid[213]=213&tid[214]=214&tid[215]=215)

Similarities and Differences, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[214\]=214](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[214]=214)