



# Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Division

**About the Monthly Featured Book 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 Journey

Francesca Sanna (Author & Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1909263994

Publisher: Flying Eye Books

Year Published: 2017

Age Range: 6–10

## Book Themes

Refugees, Family, Feelings, Safety and Protection

## About the Book

What is it like to have to leave everything behind and travel many miles to somewhere unfamiliar and strange? A mother and her two children set out on such a journey; one filled with fear of the unknown but also great hope. This book is told from the perspective of a young child and explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leave their home and everything they know to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war.

## 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 happens in the story?
- Why do you think the family had to leave their home?
- Have you ever known anyone that had to leave their home because of war or other “bad things” that happened? What do you think that was like for them?
- How did the children in the story feel during their journey and especially when they had to hide? Have you ever felt that way?
- How did the mother make them feel protected and safe?
- Who were the different people who helped the family and how did they help them?
- How do you think the family felt when they saw land for the first time since on the boat?
- Have you ever had a similar kind of feeling when you were on a journey and you arrived?
- What do you think might happen next in the story?
- What 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. About Refugees

Read aloud the Author's Note on page 42. Explain that the book is about a family who are refugees. If your child doesn't know what refugee means, define **refugee** as someone who flees persecution, conflict or war. Explain that persecution is when people are continually treated in a cruel and harmful way, often due to their race, religion or political opinions. Explain that there is a very serious and large refugee crisis happening today. There are currently sixty million people who have been forced to leave their homes. There are refugees fleeing Syria, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and dozens of other countries. If you want to learn more about the refugee experience and refugee crisis, see these additional resources: [Desperate Journey](#) (Junior Scholastic), [The Refugee Crisis](#) (Newsela) and [The Contemporary Refugee Problem](#) (Fact Monster). You may also want to talk with your child about people and organizations helping to support refugees including: [UNHCR \(United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees\)](#), [Multifaith Alliance for Syrian Refugees](#), [Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees](#) and [UNICEF](#). If interested, you could learn more about what they're doing or get involved in some way.

### 2. Journeys

Remind your child of the title of the book, *The Journey*. Talk with them about what journey the family is taking in the book and what a journey is in general. Define journey as “travel or passage from one place to another.” Explain that there are many kinds of journeys: trips, transitions (e.g. a transition from an old school to a new school) or something more abstract like a transition from one

place in your mind to another (e.g. going from being a child to being a tween or teen). Talk together about journeys you have gone on together, journeys they have taken themselves, or the metaphorical journey like from one age to another. Explain that with any journey, there is something you are leaving behind and something new you are going to; like one door closing and another one opening. For example, the family in the story left behind their home which brought up a lot of sad feelings and they were going to a new place which brought up anticipation, fear and hope. Talk with them about journeys they have taken and the thoughts and feelings that go along with those.

### 3. Feelings and Empathy

The feelings of the family in the book are expressed in a variety of ways (words, facial expressions, body language, illustrations including color) throughout the book. These feelings include fear, sadness, excitement, confusion, hope, anticipation and more. Examining the words and pictures that convey those emotions provides an opportunity to help your child understand how feelings are expressed, expand their feelings vocabulary and build empathy. As you read the book, ask your child how different characters feel and how they have come to those conclusions. Build empathy and understanding by asking children how they might feel in a similar situation. Because the book is about a difficult subject, be sure to ask them how they feel about what they are reading, give them ample time to express their own feelings and be accepting about all the feelings they share. Don't be surprised if a variety of feelings emerge or very little emotion is expressed. Sometimes feelings can develop later after children have had time to process them.

### Other Books You May Like

*Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* by Mary Williams,

[www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/brothers-in-hope-the-story-of-the-lost-boys-of](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/brothers-in-hope-the-story-of-the-lost-boys-of)

*Half Spoon of Rice* by Icy Smith, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/half-spoon-of-rice](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/half-spoon-of-rice)

### ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on refugees and social justice.

#### Curriculum Resources

"Social Justice Poetry," *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/social-justice-poetry).

"We Were Strangers Too: Learning about Refugees through Art," *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/we-were-strangers-too](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/we-were-strangers-too).

"Who Am I? Identity Poems," *Current Events Classroom*, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems).

## Websites

### Anti-Bias Education

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education)

Provides training program offerings for pre-K through 12th grade school communities—educators, administrators, youth and families—which focus on the development of an inclusive culture and respectful school climate by addressing issues of bias and bullying.

### The Question Corner

[www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html](http://www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html)

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.

### Table Talk: Refugees, Reactions and World Response

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/refugees-reactions-world-response](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk/refugees-reactions-world-response)

Provides strategies and advice for talking with young people about refugees and the refugee crisis.