



# JUSTICE & SYSTEMIC RACISM

• Suggested for ages 8-11 •

The aims of The Conscious Child: Family Book Discussion Kits are: 1) To celebrate diverse voices; and 2) to help facilitate family discussions about racial equity, identity, and justice. Included in this kit are discussion questions for each book, and a list of further recommended reading.

## CHECK OUT THESE KITS TOO!

- Identity & Belonging
- Immigration & Refugees
- Solidarity & Activism



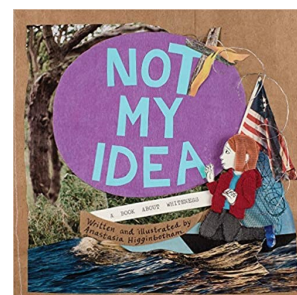
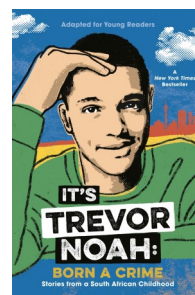
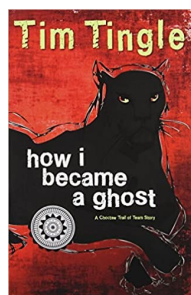
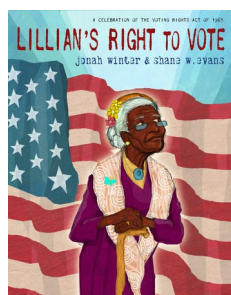
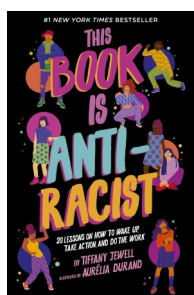
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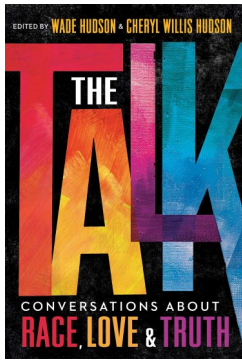
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# JUSTICE & SYSTEMIC RACISM

## Further Recommended Reading

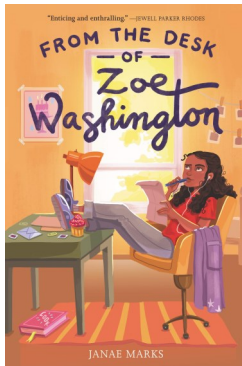


- ***This Book is Anti-Racist*** by Tiffany Jewell
- ***Lillian's Right to Vote*** by Jonah Winter & Shane W. Evans
- ***How I Became a Ghost*** by Tim Tingle
- ***Genesis Begins Again*** by Alicia D. Williams
- ***It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime*** by Trevor Noah
- ***Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*** by Anastasia Higginbotham



## THE TALK: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE, LOVE & TRUTH

- Before or after reading the chapter “Handle Your Business,” help your child research the history of racist animal imagery.
  - In “Not a China Doll,” why does Grace Lin argue that calling her daughter a “cute China doll” is offensive and not actually a compliment?
  - In “The Way of the Anigiduwagi,” Traci Sorell references both cultural assimilation and appropriation; explain and/or research these concepts with your child.
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- Before reading the chapter “Why Are There Racist People?”, ask your child this question. After reading the chapter, discuss if/how their opinion has changed.
  - In the chapter “F.R.I.E.N.D.S.,” Torrey Maldonado writes, “School helped to oppress us. Literacy there erased or reduced us” (p. 67). What do you think he means? (Read Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s seminal essay, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors”—available at <https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>—for some talking points.)



## FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON by Janae Marks

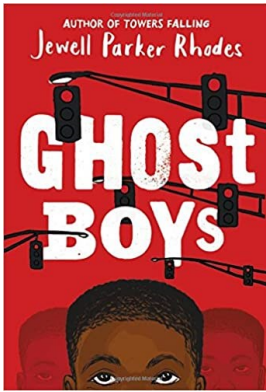
### DURING/AFTER READING:

- How has Marcus’ incarceration affected Zoe and her family? How has it affected Marcus himself?
  - Can you relate to Zoe’s initial belief that only guilty people go to prison? What conclusions does Zoe make about the American legal system by the end of the book?
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- In her book *So You Want to Talk About Race*, author and activist Ijeoma Oluo defines racism as “any prejudice against someone because of their race, when those views are reinforced by systems of power.” In Chapter 17, Grandma tells Zoe that Marcus’ conviction was “all part of systemic racism” (p. 133). In what ways do you think systemic racism played a part in Marcus’ story.
  - Research The Innocence Project (<https://innocenceproject.org>). What is their mission and what have they accomplished so far? **ADULTS: You may want to preview the website before sharing with your child as some case details include mature content.**



- In the Chapter “Ten,” Tracey Baptiste never explicitly states why she’s reviewing the ten rules with her son when they are pulled over by the police. What do you think her reasons are?
- After reading the chapter “Hablar,” how would you respond if you heard one of your peers telling someone, “English only! This is America! Speak our language!”?
- After reading the chapter “Our Inheritance,” reflect on how “racism is a system” and ways in which you and your family may benefit from that system.
- After finishing the book, reflect on which chapter resonated with you the most.

- Research the experiences of children with incarcerated parents:
  - Check out We Got Us Now (<https://www.wegotusnow.org>), a “nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization amplifying the issues children and young adults with incarcerated parents face due to mass incarceration.”
  - Check out the New York Initiative for Children of Incarcerated Parents at <https://susu-osborne.org>.

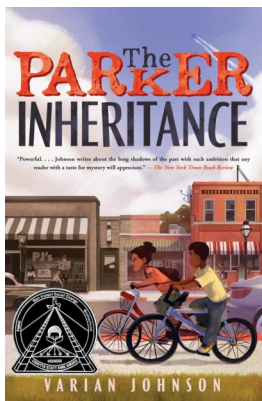


## **GHOST BOYS by Jewell Parker Rhodes**

BEFORE READING: Emmett Till—murdered in 1955 at age 14—is a character in *Ghost Boys*. Prepare your child for his appearance in the book by researching and discussing his death.

DURING/AFTER READING:

- After watching the video of Jerome's death, Sarah says, "He didn't see you. My father didn't really see you" (p. 109). What does she mean?
- Why do you think Jerome appears to Sarah and not her father?
- How did you feel when the judge announced that there was not enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime? Why do you think Jewell Parker Rhodes chose this verdict for the story?
- In the chapter "Silence," Jerome says, "Emmett told me that the men who killed him never believed they did wrong. An all-white jury found them innocent. The judge said there wasn't enough evidence to charge Officer Moore with a crime. But he's not celebrating. Is that progress?" (p. 183). What do you think?



## **THE PARKER INHERITANCE by Varian Johnson**

DURING/AFTER READING:

- Both Siobhan and Leanne Washington make a clear distinction between what it means to seek justice and what it means to seek vengeance. Identify examples of each from the book. What is the difference between the two? What are the likely outcomes of each? Identify and analyze examples of justice and vengeance from U.S. history and current events.
- There are many forms of community service and activism described in *The Parker Inheritance*; highlight examples as you read. Encourage your child to identify ways they can participate in social justice, community service, and activism in their own community.
- Throughout the novel, Varian Johnson draws parallels between the racial prejudice and discrimination of the 1950s and today. What are some examples of this from the book? Can you think of others?

- Discuss the importance of empathy in the book.
- In the chapter “Day of the Dead,” Emmett says, “Only the living can make change” (p. 191). How can you make change to end racial injustice?