



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

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.



Front Desk

Kelly Yang (Author)

ISBN: 978-1338157796

Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books

Year Published: 2018

Age Range: 8–12

Book Themes

Asian-American people and culture, Family, Immigration and Anti-immigrant bias, Bullying, Racism, Collective power, Acting as an ally

About the Book

Mia Yang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her parents, who are immigrants, clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide people who are immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Yangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao and go for her dreams?

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, you can use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remembering not to judge

their responses, listening thoughtfully and engaging in a give-and-take will help them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- What were your thoughts about Mia in the beginning of the book and how did that change over time?
- What happens between Lupe and Mia that made them closer friends? Has anything like that ever happened in a friendship of yours?
- What are some examples of bullying that you read about throughout the book? How do you think the bullying could have been addressed?
- Why do you think Mia decided to enter the contest to win a motel? What happens when she doesn't win?
- The book reveals several stereotypes people have of each other, from the students in Mia's class to the police officers to Mr. Yao? What are those stereotypes and how are they challenged in the book?
- What did you learn about people who are immigrants and the ways they are treated?
- Are there any characters that you can relate to? If so, which ones and why?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next?
- What do you think is the overall 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. Bullying and Identity-Based Bullying

Talk with your child about bullying and the different roles we play when we are faced with bias and bullying, eliciting examples from the book. Explain that **bullying** is when a person or a group behaves in ways—on purpose and over and over—that make someone feel hurt, afraid or embarrassed. The different roles include:

Aggressor: Someone who says or does hurtful things on purpose and over and over.

Ally: Someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of prejudice.

Bystander: Someone who sees bullying or prejudice happening and does not say or do anything.

Target: Someone who is bullied or treated in harmful ways by a person or group of people on purpose over and over.

Highlight the fact that we all have probably played each of these roles at different times or in different situations. Ask your child about the times they have engaged in each of these behaviors, why they acted as they did, and how they felt in those situations. Explain that **identity-based bullying** is bullying that targets the person based on an aspect of their identity such as race, gender, religion, disability, etc. Talk about the ways that Mia was the target of bullying based on several aspects of her identity, including her socioeconomic status (i.e., her family is poor). Also, emphasize that there are many different ways you can act as an ally in bias and bullying situations, using ADL's [Be An Ally: Six Simple Ways](#) resource. Talk with them about how you have acted as an ally and explore with them ways they have in the past and can act as an ally in the future.

2. Immigration and Anti-Immigrant Bias

Together, read the “Author’s Note” in the back of the book (starting on page 287) about Kelly Yang’s immigration story as well as some history about immigration from China over the years. Talk with them about what immigration means, defining it as the process of coming into a non-native or foreign country to live. You can share with them that 40 million people living in the U.S. were born in another country and that the U.S. has more immigrants than any other country in the world. You may also share that people who are undocumented immigrants are foreign-born people who come to the U.S. without the legal papers to do so and who often have left their home countries because of extreme poverty, danger or wanting to be with their families in the U.S. Some enter the country legally as tourists, students or temporary workers and become undocumented when their papers expire. Many have lived in the U.S. for a long time, have families here and feel like citizens. If your family are immigrants or have immigration as part of your family’s story, share that information with your child. You can also share that there is sometimes disrespect, bias and discrimination directed towards people who are immigrants, as was illustrated in the book.

3. Collective Power

Talk with your child about the “power in numbers” or collective power that is illustrated towards the end of the book. Mia, along with others (e.g., family members, friends, customers, the “weeklies,” neighboring store owners and people who they let stay at the motel for free) pulled together and collected all the money needed to purchase the motel. Elicit from your child that none of those people could buy it on their own but together, they were able to raise enough money to purchase it. Talk to your child about situations in which group/collective power can make a difference, from examples like cooking dinner together, working on a collaborative project to social change movements, each using collective power to have a bigger impact or making the project better. Share examples from your own life, from history, from current events and ask your child if something like that has ever happened to them. Make the overall point that when we work with other people and do something together, often the result and impact is much greater than when we, as individuals, try to do something.

Other Books You May Like

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/american-born-chinese

Amina’s Voice by Hena Khan, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/aminas-voice

Gaby, Lost and Found by Angela Cervantes, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/gaby-lost-and-found

The Year of the Rat by Grace Lin, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-year-of-the-rat

ADL Additional Resources

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

Curriculum Resources

Huddled Mass or Second Class?: Challenging Anti-Immigrant Bias in the U.S., www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/huddled-mass-or-second-class-challenging-anti-immigrant

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

Websites

Asian and Pacific American Heritage Month

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/asian-pacific-american-heritage-month-resources

A collection of resources to teach and celebrate this heritage of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States in school, communities and at home.

6 Ways to Be an Ally

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

Education Resources on Immigration, Immigrants and Anti-Immigrant Bias

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/education-resources-on-immigration-immigrants-and-anti

This collection of resources includes lesson plans, children's books, teaching tips and strategies, discussion guides for parents/family members and civil rights resources to help educators and others provide background and address the topics of immigration, immigrants and anti-immigrant bias and discrimination.

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.

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, [What Bullying Is and Is Not](#).

Children's Books

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

People, Identity & Culture: Asian/Asian-American/South Asian/South-Asian American/Pacific Islander,

[www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[203\]=203](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[203]=203)

People, Identity & Culture: Immigrants, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[207\]=207](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[207]=207)

Bias, Discrimination & Hate: Anti-Immigrant Bias, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[178\]=178](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[178]=178)