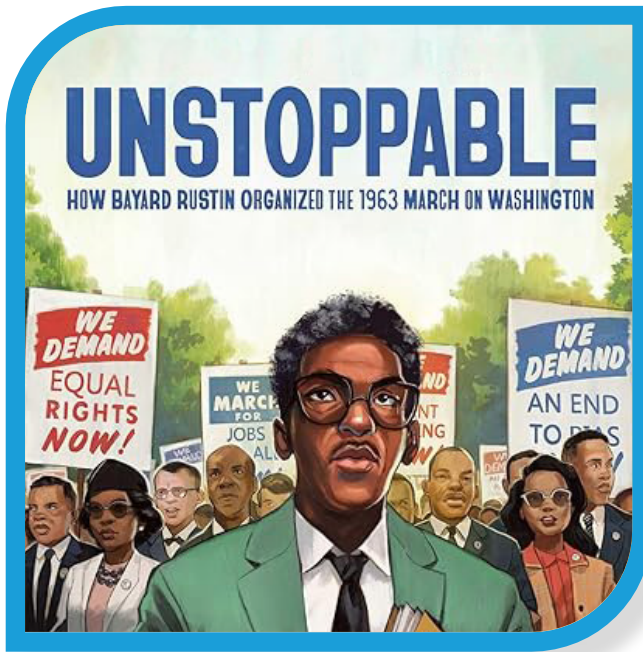




# Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Monthly Featured Book:** 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 ADL Education's programs. 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.



## Unstoppable: How Bayard Rustin Organized the 1963 March on Washington

Michael G. Long (Author) and Bea Jackson (Illustrator).

Age Range: 6-10

Year Published: 2023

### Book Themes

Civil Rights, Nonviolence, Social Justice, "Troublemakers"

### About the Book

Bayard Rustin was a troublemaker. He spent his life disrupting racism and prejudice with nonviolent direct action. He organized protests against war, nuclear weapons, racial segregation and discrimination. He was a friend and mentor to Martin Luther King Jr., and he was unapologetically gay and Black. When Bayard and his mentor, A. Philip Randolph, set out to organize the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Bayard was targeted by those who wished to see the movement fail. But Bayard Rustin would not be stopped. With the support of Dr. King and future congressman John Lewis, Bayard organized the largest protest in civil rights history.

### Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud 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, listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that will help them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- The first sentence of the book says, "Bayard Rustin was a troublemaker." What do you think the author means by "troublemaker" here?

- Why do you think the march was called “The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom?” What was the purpose or goal of the march?
- What do you think it was like to be at the March on Washington? Have you ever gone to or seen a march like that?
- How did you feel when you learned that 250,000 people attended the march?
- What is nonviolence? Why was it important to Bayard Rustin?
- What did you learn about Bayard Rustin by reading the book? What else do you want to know about him?
- What words would you use to describe Bayard Rustin? Why those words?
- Do you think it's important to learn about important people in history? Please explain.
- Why do you think the author wrote this 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. Who was Bayard Rustin?

Talk with your child about what they learned about Bayard Rustin by reading the book and what more they want to know about him. Together, read the Author's Note on pages 31-32 to learn more about him. Elicit and share that Bayard Rustin was born in 1912 in Pennsylvania. He began his lifelong civil rights activism work after moving to New York in the 1930s, where he was involved in early civil rights activism. Combining nonviolent resistance with organizational skills, he was a key adviser to Martin Luther King, Jr. in the mid-1950s. He and labor leader A. Philip Randolph came up with the idea and led the organizing effort for the 1963 March on Washington. It was one of the largest peaceful demonstrations in U.S. history and helped to pass important laws about civil rights. Bayard Rustin often worked behind the scenes not only because of his race but also because he was gay. You can watch [this video](#) together to learn more about him. If there is continued interest, here are other sources about Bayard Rustin from [Fact Monster](#), [Kids Britannica](#), [History](#) and [Biography](#). *Rustin*, a film about his life, was released in 2024. Here is a [trailer of the film](#) (note that the film is rated PG-13).

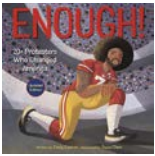
### 2. Activism

Talk with your child about what it means to be an activist. You can define an activist as “A person who uses or supports actions to bring about change in their community or the world.” Ask your child why they think people engage in activism and elicit/explain that people engage in activism when they feel something is unfair or unjust and want to do something about it. They often do this working with other people like they did in the book. Elicit from them all the different ways in the book that people engaged in activism and the many different actions/strategies they used to make a difference. Share with your child situations or times when you have engaged in activism and talk about something you might do together about an issue you care about. Convey the message that when we see something unfair, unjust or inhumane—whether it's something small in our school/community or on a larger scale like racism, antisemitism or voting rights—we can do something about it. You can use [ADL's 10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism](#) to talk about different ideas, both large and small, and also discuss how some of the ideas in this document are strategies that Bayard Rustin and other activists used.

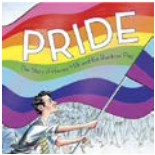
### 3. LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Talk with your child about how June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month—a yearly celebration of the history, achievements and contributions of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) people. Because Bayard Rustin was gay and that aspect of his identity is part of his story, reading and discussing this book is one way to learn about and commemorate LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Explain to them that the reason a month is dedicated to highlighting and honoring LGBTQ+ people is because sometimes we don't see LGBTQ+ people much or at all on TV shows, movies, games, and books or LGBTQ+ people are not included when we discuss and teach history. This is because of bias, prejudice and exclusion. Explain that bias is "a preference, either for or against an individual or group, that affects fair judgment." Talk with your child about how it is difficult to face bias, talking about and eliciting whether they have ever seen or experienced bias. You can also discuss stereotypes (the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way), which come from having biases about a group of people. Discuss why stereotypes are unfair (e.g., not all people who are members of a group are the same and behave in the same way). When we stereotype people, we don't allow or encourage people to be all of their full selves, who they are, express themselves, explore their interests and follow their dreams. Explore why it's important to read books like this one for LGBTQ+ Pride Month and also throughout the year.

### Other Books You Might Like



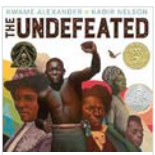
Enough! 20 Protesters that Changed America - <https://www.adl.org/enough-20-protesters-who-changed-america>



Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag - <https://www.adl.org/pride-story-harvey-milk-and-rainbow-flag>



Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation - <https://www.adl.org/separate-never-equal-sylvia-mendez-and-her-family-s-fight-desegregation>



The Undefeated - <https://www.adl.org/undefeated>

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on civil rights, activism and making a difference.

- 10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-activism>
- Bellen Woodward, Identity and "Crayon Activism" <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/bellen-woodward-identity-and-crayon-activism>
- Children's Books About Civil Rights <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1653>
- Civil Rights Movement <https://www.adl.org/resources/background/civil-rights-movement>
- Kids Can Make a Difference <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/kids-can-make-difference>
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month Resources <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/lgbtq-pride-month-and-education-resources>
- The Purpose and Power of Protest <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/purpose-and-power-protest>
- Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>