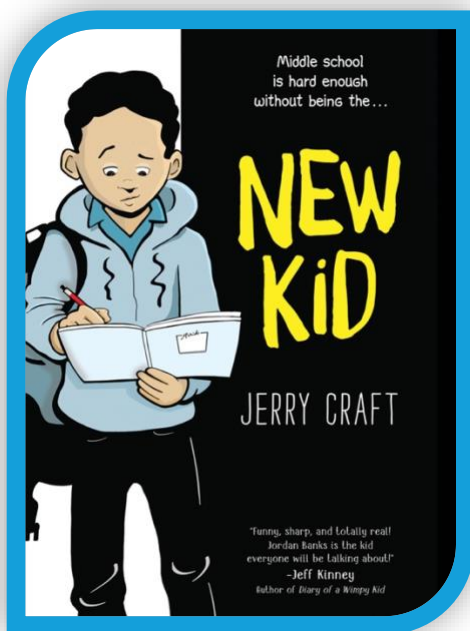




Book of the Month

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.



New Kid

Jerry Craft (Author)

ISBN: 978-0062691194

Publisher: Quill Tree Books

Year Published: 2019

Age Range: 8–12

Book Themes

Identity, Race and Racism, Microaggressions, Acting as an Ally, Similarities and Differences

About the Book

Seventh grader Jordan Banks loves nothing more than drawing cartoons about his life. But instead of sending him to the art school of his dreams, his parents enroll him in a prestigious private school known for its academics, in which Jordan is one of the few kids of color in his entire grade. As he makes the daily trip from his Washington Heights apartment to the upscale Riverdale Academy Day School, Jordan soon finds himself torn between two worlds—not really fitting into either one. Can Jordan learn to navigate his new school culture while keeping his neighborhood friends and staying true to himself?

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads 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?
- When you first meet Jordan, what is your impression of him? How does your impression change as you get to know him?
- How does Jordan feel about his new school? Why does he feel that way?
- What examples of stereotypes and bias do you notice throughout the book? How did some characters act as allies to those who were targeted?
- What do you notice about the differences between Jordan's neighborhood and the environment at Riverdale Academy Day School?
- How does the book explore the importance of names? When the teacher confuses Deandre with Drew, how does it make Drew feel? What do you think is going on?
- When Jordan has dinner with his Gran'pa, how do the foods he eats (learning to eat pepper steak in addition to his all-time favorite shrimp lo mein) make him think of friendships at school? What are Jordan's reflections?
- How did you feel when the book ended? What do you think will happen next for Jordan?
- Why do you think the author wrote the book?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Identity and Race

The book explores the story of Jordan, who attends a new school and is one of very few Black students (or any students of color) in the school. His school is predominately White and upper middle class/wealthy while his neighborhood is mostly people of color and people of mixed income. Jordan struggles to find his place in the school because his race and culture are an important part of his identity. We see Jordan seek out Black and other students of color, while still establishing friendships with some White students. At his new school, Jordan is the target of bias, stereotypes and microaggressions on a regular basis. Talk together about your family's racial and ethnic identity(s) and how race and ethnicity may impact your experiences and points of view. You can also talk about how students of the same race may have similar experiences—as Jordan, Drew and Maury do—and that they also have different perspectives and experiences. Therefore, a person's perspective is made of many things, including their race and ethnicity. Talk with your child about what aspects of their identity are important to them and the ways that they may (or may not) experience bias. You can also discuss the extent to which they feel accepted in their family, community and school for who they are.

2. Living in Two Worlds

In the book, Jordan is straddling between two worlds. The neighborhood where he lives is predominately people of color and mixed income families and the private school where he now attends is predominately White people who are upper middle class/wealthy. There is a "culture clash"

for Jordan, and he has to learn to “fit in” to each world. Talk with your child about how Jordan feels being in both of those worlds. Ask them for examples in the book where this “culture clash” is most noticeable (e.g., students at the private school making assumptions about Jordan, his neighborhood friends calling him “private school”). Ask your child what impact they think “being in two worlds” has on Jordan throughout the book. Then ask your child if this is something to which they can relate, and if so, how it impacts them. Ask your child if they have ever felt this way, and share any insights you have about living in two worlds from your own life. Talk with them about how sometimes people don’t feel safe or comfortable sharing all aspects of their identity (culture, race, religion, language, sexual orientation, etc.), so it is understandable that might have to act differently in different places. At the same time, stress that people should be able to show all the aspects of who they are and not have to hide any of them.

3. Microaggressions

Throughout the book, we see many examples of microaggressions that Jordan and other characters experience. Ask your child if they know what **microaggressions** are. Define as follows:

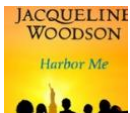
The everyday slights, indignities, put-downs and insults that people of color, women, LGBTQ populations and other marginalized people experience in their day-to-day interactions. Microaggressions can appear to be compliments but often contain a “metacommunication” or hidden insult to the target group. Microaggressions are often outside the level of conscious awareness of the people who say them, which means they can be unintentional. Microaggressions may be communicated verbally and/or nonverbally.

If needed, break the definition into parts and talk about each part separately. Talk about examples of microaggressions from the book. Two examples are:

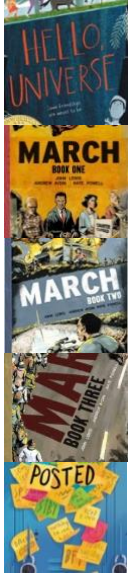
- Andy tells Ramon (a Latino student who is from Nicaragua) that his mother probably makes better tacos than the school’s cafeteria. Andy assumes that Ramon’s mother cooks and also assumes they are Mexican, but they are not.
- Ashley and Ruby assume Jordan lives with his Mom only. They are making an assumption that because he is Black, his Mom is a single Mom, but he lives with both his Mom and Dad.

Ask your child if there are other examples of microaggressions from the book. You can also talk with them about microaggressions they have experienced personally, witnessed or used themselves. You can model this by sharing your own experiences of using a microaggression. You can explain that even though you may not have intended it, harm was done to that person and you understood the impact of your words or actions later on. Emphasize that even if microaggressions are unintentional, they still have an impact on the target. Together you can watch some of MTV’s [Look Different Microaggressions videos](#). After watching the videos, discuss what happened in each video, what was the underlying message, and come up with a way to respond. Share your own experiences with microaggressions, and anything you might have done to address them.

Other Books You May Like



Harbor Me by Jacqueline Woodson, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/harbor-me



Hello, Universe by Erin Entrada Kelly, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/hello-universe

March: Book One by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/march-book-one

March: Book Two by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/march-book-two

March: Book Three by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/march-book-three

Posted by John David Anderson, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/posted

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on identity, race and racism, microaggressions and acting as an ally.

Curriculum Resources

Experiences with Race and Racism, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/experiences-with-race-and-racism.

Microaggressions in Our Lives, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/microaggressions-in-our-lives.

Websites

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.)

Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about

As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.

Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all

This resource provides information about how to promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school community.

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.

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.

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-](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)

[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)

Race & Racism, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid[217]=217&tid[218]=218&tid[219]=219&tid[220]=220&tid[221]=221)

[8=1&tid\[217\]=217&tid\[218\]=218&tid\[219\]=219&tid\[220\]=220&tid\[221\]=221](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid[217]=217&tid[218]=218&tid[219]=219&tid[220]=220&tid[221]=221)