

Talking to our children about racism and diversity

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Introduction

This booklet is intended to help parents and children talk together about diversity, as well as racism and other kinds of bigotry. It offers some guidelines for discussion about these difficult issues. It includes some concrete examples of children's questions and concerns and, as a starting point, some suggestions for answering them. It is especially for parents whose children are between five and eight years old, but it should be helpful for anyone concerned about helping children become open-minded adults.

"There is no escape from the racial conflicts with which children must cope...avoiding the problem isn't helpful. Too much parental protection from life's realities may hamper a child's later ability to cope with life as it is."

Alvin Poussaint, M.D., What Parents of All Races Should Do to Raise Their Children Free of Prejudice and Free to be Themselves, Parents Magazine

"Sean's family is so weird," a six-year-old announces. "His mom is black and his dad is white. Isn't that weird?"

"Alan says that Christians are best," confides a seven-year-old. "How come they're better than us?"

As parents, we may wish we never had to face such questions. It is almost certain that we will.

searching for answers

Segregated lunch counters, movie theaters, water fountains, and restrooms are no longer a part of the American landscape. Discrimination in employment, housing, education, and public facilities is now illegal. Americans worked long and hard to right these wrongs. As a nation we can be justly proud of our accomplishments. However, prejudice and bigotry of all kinds still flourish in America.

Try this experiment. The next time you visit your child's school, look at the children, teachers, and parents around you. Does everyone look pretty much like you? Who are your friends and neighbors? Do most of them look like you too? Some of us are fortunate enough to enrich our lives by close association with people from a wide range of races and cultures, but most of us still live lives of racial and ethnic

isolation. We do not talk much about important things to people who are different from us. Our distance and silence feed the misunderstanding, fear, and hostility that keep bigotry alive.

what can I do?

As parents, we may look to teachers, politicians, or religious leaders to eliminate racism. They certainly can make great contributions toward a just society, but we also have a vitally important contribution to make. We can talk openly with our children about race, ethnicity, religion, and bigotry. We can answer their questions about these complicated topics, and we can begin a dialogue that will continue throughout their lives. The quality of our children's future is at stake. **In the 21st century, the ability to communicate and work with people from different racial and ethnic groups will be as essential as computer skills.** The United States is already one of the most diverse societies in the world. Our children will inherit an even more diverse society. We need to help them learn to live and work closely with people whose race, religion, or culture may be different from their own.

By speaking openly about similarities and differences between people, we can raise children whose lives are not constricted by fear. By joining with them to recognize and talk about discrimination, we will help our children become adults who work to end it. By encouraging our children to reach across racial and ethnic show_example.cfm?es, we will enable them to lead richer, fuller lives and to recognize the humanity of all people. but I'm not prejudiced□

"I'm not prejudiced. I treat all people with respect and dignity, and I expect my children to do the same. Why do I have to do more?"

"Since kids are naturally prejudice-free, won't talking about it just make things worse?"

but I'm not prejudiced....

Unfortunately, it is not enough to set a good example. Nor can we shield children from bigotry. A society that continues to discriminate against racial and ethnic groups nurtures prejudice in each new generation.

If we avoid these subjects with our children, we actually run the risk of strengthening prejudices we want them to reject. Children are barraged by images and ideas we don't control-on the playground, on television, and in school. However free from prejudice we may be, our children, even very young children, can absorb the biases they encounter outside of our homes.

talking with children openly and honestly-an ongoing process

Experiences we have (or don't have) as children shape our attitudes and feeshow_example.cfm?gs as adults. During childhood, our attitudes are molded directly and indirectly by the race, ethnicity, and status of the people around us (i.e. teachers and classmates, parents, colleagues and friends, salesclerks, doctors, nurses, waiters, house cleaners, construction workers, the unemployed, the homeless, etc.). By age twelve we have a complete set of stereotypes about every ethnic, racial, and religious group in our society.

We can choose to actively influence our children's attitudes. With our encouragement children will test and think through their beliefs about race, ethnicity, and religion. They are unlikely to ask the necessary hard questions without our help. It is up to us to take the initiative!

Children care about justice, respect, and fairness. Squabbles about sharing, concerns about cliques, and problems with playmates-the daily trials of childhood-reflect their active interest in these social issues. So do the questions children ask, when they feel safe enough to ask them.

One important gift we can give our children is to create a family in which difficult issues like racism are openly discussed. By talking openly and listening without censure, we can learn about our children's concerns and help them find connections between larger social issues and their own life experiences.

when do I start?

You can start at the beginning. Children ask questions as soon as they can talk. Even toddlers wonder about similarities and differences between people. "Why is Kenny's hand dirty?" a white three-year-old asks as he shares a sink with a black child. Preschool children ask questions born of basic curiosity about the world. Simple answers delivered without upset, shock, or anger will provide them with the information they need. "Kenny's hands aren't dirty. His skin is a different color than yours." You can use questions like these as a starting point for simple conversations and games that encourage children to notice and enjoy the ways we are all different and the ways in which we are all the same. The answers children require will change as they grow and develop.

between the ages of five and eight-a critical period

Five-to eight-year-olds begin to place value judgements on similarities and differences. They often rank the things in their world from "best" to "worst." They like to win and hate to lose. They choose best friends. They get left out of games and clubs, and they exclude others-sometimes because of race, ethnicity, and religion.

When children begin school, their horizons expand and their understanding of the world deepens. We can no longer shelter them quite as effectively. Even for graduates of preschool or day care, attending elementary school means more independence in a less controlled environment. Children are exposed to a wider range of people and ideas. They also experience more bigotry!

Between five and eight, children are old enough to begin to think about social issues and young enough to remain flexible in their beliefs. By the fourth grade, children's racial attitudes start to grow more rigid. Our guidance is especially crucial during this impressionable, turbulent time.

what about teenagers?

Adolescents and pre-teens may ask some of the same questions as younger children, but their ever evolving minds and their broadening experiences allow them to understand more complex answers. We can talk with them about history and social context. We want to encourage them to find their own voice and help them make the transition to becoming thoughtful and compassionate adults.

answering those hard questions-some guideshow_example.cfm?es

It can be hard, but infinitely rewarding, to talk honestly with children about diversity, racism, and prejudice. Here are some basic guideshow_example.cfm?es that can help meet this challenge.

1 Our own feeshow_example.cfm?gs about the questions children ask can have as much impact as the words we choose to answer them.

We may have to conquer some hurdles of our own before we can discuss racism comfortably with our children. Their comments are sometimes embarrassing and their questions can force us to face issues we would rather avoid. We can help our children sort through the confusing and complex issues of race only if we start by understanding ourselves and our own feeshow_example.cfm?gs. What are our attitudes towards different races and ethnicities? Where did they come from? How do they affect our behavior?

One of our most difficult hurdles is our own prejudice. Most of us have some. How do we really view white people, black people, Asians, Hispanics, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Native Americans and the other racial, ethnic, or religious groups that populate the United States and the world? Do I cross the street to avoid teenagers of a race or ethnicity different from my own? Do I pay more attention to my change if the salesclerk is different from me? Do I avoid driving through some neighborhoods just because of the color of the people who live there?

Even when we are members of a group that suffers from discrimination, we may perpetuate prejudice

directed at other groups. If we can face our own biases, and if we work to overcome them, we are less likely to pass them on to our children.

2 In the long run, our most helpful responses are those that show respect for our children's curiosity and encourage them to keep actively grappling with our complicated world.

One useful way of thinking about our children's difficult questions is to view them as "teachable moments." They provide not only a chance to educate and shape values, but an opportunity to equip our children with tools for sorting through complicated social problems. Our children will learn not just from the content of our conversations, but from the fact that these conversations occur at all.

Children sometimes prefer to share their fears and concerns with one parent. If this is the case in a two-parent family, it is important for both parents to be aware of, and talk together about, the questions children raise. If we are comfortable openly discussing difficult issues, we foster openness in our children too.

3 Understanding as much as we can about what prompts our children's questions is a good beginning.

The more we know about why our children ask particular questions, the more likely it will be that we will help them find meaningful answers.

4 "I don't know" or "Let me think about that for a while" are valid answers.

Racism is a complicated and persistent problem. Sometimes we need time to clarify our own thoughts and fears before we can be of help to our children. Unfortunately, we and our children will probably be wrestling with racism for many years to come. Most of the time we can think of their questions as the beginning of an ongoing conversation.

Sometimes children's concerns are pressing. Hurt fears, anger, and worries all need immediate attention. Sometimes we may decide to talk with other parents or teachers about an incident. We will preserve our children's trust if we involve them in decisions about what actions need to be taken, or at least let them know about our intentions.

5 When our children ask hard questions, we are given an opportunity to glimpse how they experience the world.

In turn, we can use these opportunities to sort through complicated or confusing issues together.

what you might say when...

What we sometimes find shocking or uncomfortable about our children's questions is that they often reflect a starkly unvarnished version of what they see. Their vision may not be pretty. We've collected some of the questions and concerns we hear from parents about their children's growing awareness of race, ethnicity, and religion.

Our answers are only suggestions and guides. Clearly, there is no single right response.

AFTER HER FIRST DAY OF KINDERGARTEN, MY DAUGHTER MENTIONED THAT KARLA, THE ONLY SPANISH SPEAKING CHILD IN HER CLASS, "TALKS WEIRD." WHY WOULD SHE SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

This is a wonderful opportunity to help your daughter understand that "different" and "weird" do not mean the same thing. Explain that people from different parts of the world, or even different regions of this country, sound different. You can introduce the idea that if your family moved somewhere else, your

language or accent could sound different to the people who live there.

Young children, still in the process of learning their own language, are often fascinated by other languages and accents they hear around them. This is a great time to encourage excitement and curiosity about languages. "I'd like to learn Spanish," is a possible response. Expressing admiration for Karla is another. "I think Karla's doing something really hard. Her family speaks Spanish and she's learning English. I think that's great."

Perhaps you can share with your daughter the languages you, your family and friends may know. You or a bishow_example.cfm?gual friend can teach her words or songs in different languages. She might like to make up her own language. If she is really excited and interested in language, you can find language tapes especially for children that might be fun for her.

WHEN WE WERE DRIVING HOME FROM THE PARK, MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD SUDDENLY SAID, "MOM, I WISH I WERE WHITE." WE LIVE IN A MIXED NEIGHBORHOOD BUT I THOUGHT HE HAD A POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM AND A STRONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY. I FELT LIKE A FAILURE.

You haven't failed your son. Most of us work hard to give our children a sense of pride in themselves and their heritage. If that heritage is devalued by society, the task is harder. Before you worry too much, it would be helpful to find out what his remark means to him.

Try to understand what prompted his comment. Has he been excluded from friendships or activities because of his race? Was his comment inspired by television or incidents in your neighborhood? Did it come out of some other experience?

Those of us who are not part of a dominant culture have probably all wished, on occasion, to be part of it-or at least to be afforded the same privileges. Expressing that wish does not mean that we always, or even often, feel that way. Nor does it mean that we lack either self-esteem or a strong, positive, cultural identity. See if you can view his statement as part of a lifelong conversation about what being African-American means to you, to him, and to others.

AFTER WATCHING A NEWS REPORT ABOUT A RACIALLY MOTIVATED CRIME-THE BURNING OF A CROSS ON THE LAWN OF A KOREAN-AMERICAN FAMILY-MY SON TURNED TO ME AND ASKED, "WHY DON'T WHITE PEOPLE LIKE US?" I WAS SPEECHLESS.

One of the best things you can do is to support your son's feeshow_example.cfm?gs of shock and horror. Share your own horror about this particular incident and all hate crimes in general.

After that, your son's question can be a springboard for talking about stereotyping. "White people don't all think and feel the same way. Neither do Korean Americans, Jews, Latinos or any group. Look at you and Jason Li. You like soccer. He likes baseball. You're different in lots of ways, even though you're both Korean-American."

You can also use this as a chance to talk about race hatred in the world, how you feel about it, and what the solutions might be. Even though we may sometimes feel discouraged and disillusioned about the world, it is important to give our children hope. Remind your son that even though race hatred exists, there are many people, of all races, working to prevent it.

MY SON AND HIS OTHER BLACK FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS BICKERING WITH THE CAMBODIAN CHILDREN ON OUR STREET AND USING RACIAL SLURS. IT MAKES ME SAD. AFRICAN-AMERICANS HAVE EXPERIENCED SO MUCH RACE HATRED IN THIS COUNTRY-I'VE BEEN THE OBJECT OF IT MYSELF. HOW CAN A CHILD OF MINE DO THIS?

Watching children act out any kind of bigotry is painful. That the children belong to racial or ethnic groups who have themselves been the target of race hatred is more painful still. We have a sense that both groups have suffered enough and should be working together instead of against each other. It is an

opportunity to talk with your son about the history of racism in this country-and all the different groups who have been targeted.

Perhaps you can tell him about your personal experiences with racism. "I know what it feels like to have people be mean to me because of my race, and I never want anyone in our family to do that to someone else. It's wrong and it's hurtful." Sometimes children tease other children out of fear or ignorance about the other child's race or culture. Sometimes we pass on our biases to our children without even knowing that we are doing so. This may be a good time to examine your own feeshow_example.cfm?gs about racial and ethnic groups different from our own.

If children recognize the essential humanity of children who are different from them, they are less likely to tease. The more you populate your lives with people of different races and ethnicities, the more accepting your son will be of people different from him. Perhaps you and your son can try to learn more about Cambodia together. Does your library have any books for children about Cambodia? Perhaps you can make an effort to reach out to the Cambodian families on your block.

MY SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER CAME HOME FROM A FRIEND'S HOUSE AND SAID, "ALAN ASKED ME WHY I CAN'T BE CHRISTIAN BECAUSE CHRISTIANS ARE THE BEST. ARE THEY BETTER THAN WE?" I WAS ANGRY THAT SOMEONE SAID THAT TO HER AND CONFUSED ABOUT HOW TO REPLY.

Of course you were angry! All children need to feel good about themselves and who they are. That sense of well-being is threatened when they are faced with a racial, ethnic, or religious slur.

You might talk with her like this. "Our family is a different religion from Alan's family. His religion isn't better than ours, and ours isn't better than his. They're just different. Maybe we can invite Alan to celebrate one of our holidays with us some time so he can learn more about it."

By addressing the issue calmly and directly, you can help your daughter decide what she can reply if anyone says that to her again. By encouraging her to invite Alan to share in your holidays, you communicate your sense of pride about your religion. In addition, you and she might decide that you will call Alan's parents to talk about Alan's comment. Perhaps both families can talk together about their respective religions. If Alan's parents are closed to this kind of discussion, you can share your feeshow_example.cfm?gs about their response with your daughter.

In any case, you can try to help your daughter understand that no race, religion, or ethnicity is "better than" another, and that we are lucky to live in a country where people are allowed to choose their religion. While your daughter's experience is painful, perhaps you can use it to help her think more about your family's religious beliefs and how they are similar to and different from the beliefs of others. This can also be the beginning of your family's exploration of the rich variety of religions in the world.

MY SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER TOLD A RACIST JOKE AND COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS FUNNY. I WAS ANGRY AND EMBARRASSED. WE'RE NOT RACIST. WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Most seven-year-olds love jokes and riddles. This is a time when their sense of humor is becoming developed and refined. At this age a racist joke is an experiment, not a malicious act. A thoughtful response to hurtful humor will help your child grasp the power of language to evoke both pleasure and pain. Try to explain why the joke could hurt someone's feeshow_example.cfm?gs and let her know that you don't like humor that makes fun of people. You might want to connect it to how she would feel if someone made fun of her because of the color of her hair or eyes.

This is an example of a situation that may need immediate attention. If your daughter hurt another child's feeshow_example.cfm?gs with this joke, you probably want to encourage her to apologize. Depending on what you and your child decide together, you might want to talk to the other child's parents, discuss what happened, and let them know how you are handshow_example.cfm?g it.

A CHILD IN MY SON'S SECOND GRADE CLASS IS THE PRODUCT OF A BI-RACIAL MARRIAGE.

MY SON WAS SHOCKED TO SEE SEAN WITH HIS PARENTS AND COMMENTED THAT THEY WERE "STRANGE". I FELT CONFUSED AND REALIZED THAT I HAVE SOME DISCOMFORT WITH MIXED MARRIAGES. I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS OPEN-MINDED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

In order to help our children overcome their biases, first we have to understand our own. Try sorting through your own feelings about mixed marriages by asking yourself questions like these: Why am I uncomfortable? Where do these feelings come from? Are they based on my experience? Do they come from my parents?

When you talk with your son, you can explain that Sean's parents are from different races and that Sean is a mix of those two races. One way to help your son expand his concept of an acceptable family group is to introduce him to the rich variety of people in the United States. Share with him the racial, ethnic or religious mixes in your family or among people you know. Help him understand that, with the exception of Native Americans, we are a nation of people whose families originated from different countries all over the world. At this point, most people in America represent some combination of race, religion and/or ethnicity.

MY SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER CAME HOME FROM A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND ASKED WHY JESUS WAS WHITE. SHE WANTED TO KNOW IF GOD WAS WHITE TOO. WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

Never having come face to face with God, we can't vouch for God's color! Answering a six-year-old's questions about religion is always complicated because they think in terms of what they can see, touch, and feel. How you answer this question will depend heavily on your own religious and cultural beliefs.

To help your child be free of bias, the most important thing is to encourage him or her to be open to, and have respect for, religions and cultures that are different from your own, and to accept that there is more than one way to think about or worship God.

One answer might go something like this: "In fact, no one really knows what God or Jesus looks like. In the part of the world where the story of Jesus takes place, most people have brown skin. The pictures that we see of Jesus today are based on pictures made hundreds of years ago in Europe where most people were white, so it is natural that they drew Jesus as a white person.

"Some people hold the belief that they were made in God's image and thus they reflect God's 'appearance.' Some people don't believe in God at all. I think that we need to decide for ourselves what we believe about God and Jesus."

MY WIFE AND I ARE AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND LIGHT SKINNED, AS IS OUR EIGHT-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER. SEVERAL OF HER AFRICAN-AMERICAN FRIENDS HAVE BEEN TEASING HER ABOUT BEING "WHITE." SHE CAME HOME CRYING THE OTHER DAY. I FEEL SO BADLY FOR HER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

It must have been very painful for your daughter, and painful for you as well. You can reassure your daughter that she is as African-American as any of her African-American friends. "Most of us are a mix of races. We come in all sorts of skin colors-some light, some dark and all shades in between! What makes us African-American is not just our color, but the fact that we all have at least one parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, etc. who came from Africa!"

Talking about your ancestors will give you the chance to explore with her the history of African-Americans in this country. There are some wonderful books, enhanced with illustrations and photographs that illustrate the wide range of differences in African-Americans-not only physical differences such as skin color, facial features and body types, but differences in talents, occupations and class as well.

You and your daughter might decide that you should talk with the parents of the children teasing her. Perhaps they can have a similar talk with their children about diversity within the African-American

community.

MY HUSBAND, MY SIX-YEAR-OLD SON, AND I ARE MEMBERS OF THE NAVAJO NATION. ONLY A FEW OTHER NATIVE PEOPLE LIVE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. THE KIDS ON OUR BLOCK SOMETIMES CALL MY SON A "REDSKIN." THIS DOESN'T SEEM TO BOTHER HIM, IN FACT, HE'S A WASHINGTON REDSKIN FAN. I FIND THE USE OF THE WORD "REDSKIN" TO BE HORRIBLY OFFENSIVE. MY SON IS STILL SO YOUNG. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN TO HIM WHY IT'S SO HURTFUL. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

It's painful that people who wouldn't dream of using words like "kike" or "nigger" still use without thinking words like "redskin"* that are so hurtful to Native Americans. However, all of these terms are classified as "offensive" or "derogatory" in most modern dictionaries. That the use of "redskin" is legitimized in popular culture as the name of a sports team is insulting.

Perhaps you can explain to your son that, historically, certain terms have been used in a mean way to hurt groups of people and therefore should not be used at all. It might be helpful to talk about some of the terms that are used to belittle other groups. You can categorize all of these as words that people need to be educated not to use.

You mention that there are a few other Native People in your neighborhood. Perhaps you can work together with them to devise ways of educating the children in your community about respectful ways of referring to American Indians, and other cultures as well. As a group, you might be able to work through the schools to teach children about the history of Native People in this country.

As your son grows and you pass along the traditions of Navajo culture, you could begin to talk to him about the effect the Europeans had on all Native American cultures, and how you all still experience that effect. It helps to remember that you don't have to cover everything in one conversation. If you think of your conversations with your son as part of an ongoing dialogue, you have an opportunity to help him understand more and more as he grows and develops. You might decide that talking about the historical use of the word "redskin" is too scary for a six-year-old, but something that an older child can handle.

Even though he's still quite young, sharing your [feeshow_example.cfm?gs](#) about these issues and listening to what he has to say will create an atmosphere that encourages him to question what he sees in popular culture.

some things we can do to raise children who are comfortable with diversity

- Populate our lives, and the lives of our children, with friends of diverse backgrounds. Some of us are fortunate enough to live in integrated neighborhoods. Others may want to consider [enrolshow_example.cfm?g](#) their children in after school or weekend activities such as sports leagues that are integrated.
- Choose books and toys that include persons of different races and ethnicities.
- Visit museums that feature exhibits about a variety of cultures and religions.
- Celebrate cultural events and attend religious services with friends of different faiths.
- Invite others to share your cultural and religious experiences.
- Get involved in your child's school.

Additional Reading

The following is a list of books and articles for parents, teachers and other adults who would like to read more on the topic.

Beardslee, William R., *The Way Out Must Lead In: Life Histories in the Civil Rights Movement*, Westpoint, Connecticut, Lawrence Hill & Co., 2nd Edition, 1983.

Block, Gay & Grucker, Malka, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*, New York, Holmes & Meier, 1992.

Children's Foundation, A Professional Handbook for Family Day Care, 725 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20005, 1990. Examines personal attitudes, applies anti-bias concepts to family day care, includes equity activities for teachers and parents and a resource guide to equity materials.

Clark, Kenneth Bancroft, Prejudice and Your Child, Middletown, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 1988. Discusses racial awareness and prejudice in children. Originally published in 1963.

Comer, James and Poussaint, Alvin F., Raising Black Children, New York, Blume, 1992. Two leading psychiatrists confront the educational, social, and emotional problems facing black children, question and answer format.

Derman-Sparks, Louise and the ABC Task Force, Anti-Bias Curriculum Tools for Empowering Young Children, 1992, originally published in 1989. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426, 800-424-2460. Shows adults how to stand up for what's right and how to empower children so they can too.

Harding, Vincent, There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America, New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1981.

Hopson, Darlene Powell, Raising the Rainbow Generation: Teaching Your Children to be Successful in a Multicultural Society, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993. Designed for parents, teachers, and other care givers of children under twelve.

Matiella, Ana Consuelo, Positively Different: Creating a Bias-Free Environment for Young Children,

Santa Cruz, California, Network Publications, 1991. Suggested for teachers, parents, and other care providers of children to age 10.

Reddy, Maureen, T., Crossing the Color show_example.cfm?e, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994. Discussion of interracial marriage in the U.S. with case studies.

McCracken, Valuing Diversity: The Primary Years, 1993, National Association for the Education of Young Children, see address above under Derman-Sparks. To inspire teachers to creatively find ways to value diversity within and beyond the classroom.

Milord, Susan, Hands Around the World, 365 Creative Ways to Build Cultural Awareness & Global Respect, Williamson Publishing, Charlotte, Vermont, 1992. Invites children and parents to experience some of the traditions that shape people's lives everywhere.

Neugebauer, Bonnie, Editor, Alike And Different: Exploring Our Humanity With Young Children, 1992, National Association for the Education of Young Children, see address above under Derman-Sparks. Discussion about making the most of multiculturalism and diversity in the classroom to prepare children for the 21st Century.

Schaefer, Charles E., How To Talk To Your Kids About Really Important Things, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994. Suggested for children four to twelve, includes a chapter on race and diversity.

Takaki, Ronald T., Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian-Americans, Boston, Little Brown, 1989.

There are several versions of the origination of the term "redskin", including one that has its roots in the era when bounty hunters murdered Indians for profit. they had to produce a piece of "red" skin to prove that it was an Indian that they killed.