From Tolerance to Acceptance: The Role of Children's Literature

AMS Conference 2012 - Friday, March 16th,

Workshop Session 3

Children's Literature can serve several purposes:

- Helps children identify with a character
- Serves as a lens through which a child considers personal actions, beliefs, emotions
- Helps children refine their own views of self and their world
- Passes on a society's knowledge, ideas, taboos
- Fosters interest and inquiry and involvement in the world
- Informs, instructs, enlightens
- Supports language and literacy development
- Exposes children to a variety of literary genre: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, traditional literature
- Creates potentially powerful images of human beings (Absorbent Mind and Sensitive Periods!)
- Serves as an introduction to what the world may look like through others' eyes
- Helps children explore other cultures

Potential pitfalls:

- Evidence of bias, stereotyping
- Inaccuracies and lack of authenticity
- Overt or subtle motives of the author or illustrator
- Inaccurate or misleading images
- A single book about a group denies the group's diversity
- Social or moral issues inappropriate for early childhood
- Negative portrayal of character qualities

References:

Machado, Jeanne M., Early Childhood Experiences in Language Arts, 6th Edication, Delmar Publishers, 1999

Mendoza, Jean and Reese,Debbie, Examining Multicultural Picture books for the Early Childhood Classroom: Possibilities and Pitfalls, http://ecrp.uiuc.edu

Reutzel and Cooter, Teaching Children to Read, 3rd Edition, Merrill Publishing, 2000

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Using the criteria listed previously, evaluate the book that you have chosen. Possible topics of conversation:

1. Illustrations

2. Language/Vocabulary

3. Theme

4. Appropriate for age group and Montessori environment

5. Questions you might ask

6. Supplemental activities you could create

Other thoughts/ideas

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Possible Books for Consideration:

1. Whoever You Are, Mem Fox
2. Three Cheers for Tacky, Helen Lester
3. A Mother For Choco, Keiko Kasza
4. The Sandwich Swap, Queen Raina Al Abdullah
5. God's Dream, Desmund TuTu
6. It's Okay to be Different, Todd Parr
7. Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman
8. One Green Apple, Eve Bunting
9. Hey, Little Ant, Phillip Hoose
10. The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi
11. My Pal, Victor/Mi amigo, Victor, Diane Gonzales Bertrand
12. Different Just Like Me, Lori Mitchell
13. And Tango Makes Three, Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
14. Stellaluna, Janell Cannon
15. Leo the late bloomer., R. Kraus
16. We'll Paint the Octopus Red, S. Stuve-Bodeen
17. Memoirs of a Goldfish, Devin Scillian
18. Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon, Patty Lovell and David Catrow
19. The Dot , Peter Reynolds
20. One, Kathryn Otoshi
21. Zero, Kathryn Otoshi
22. Only One You, Linda Kranz
23. Let's Be Friends, P.K. Hallinan (Board Book)
24. Sara's Secret, Suzanne Wanous
25. Owen & Mzee: Best Friends (Board Book) Told by: Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu
26. Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship Told by: Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu
27. Owen & Mzee: The Language of Friendship Told by: Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, and Dr. Paula Kahumbu
28. Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber
29. You are Special, Max Lucado (Available in Board Book and hardback)
30. Daddy, Papa, and Me, Leslea Newman (Board Book)
31. What I Like About Me, Allia Zobel-Nolan (Board Book)
32. Jonathan & Papa, Susan K. Bagette (Board Book)
33. Molly's Family, Nancy Garden
34. A Tale of Two Daddies, Vanita Oelschlager
35. The Colors of Us, Karen Katz (Available in Board book and hardback)