



## WHY DOES REPRESENTATION MATTER FOR ALL CHILDREN? (Yes, ALL kids!)

**It's a way we can love our neighbors.** Think about a time there was a glaring difference between you and the main character - did it jar you out of enjoying and "losing yourself" in the story? Now imagine if you experienced this jarring disconnect with most books you read. We can love our neighbors well by understanding that by including a diversity of lead characters, we ensure that ALL readers will be able to enjoy getting lost in a book.

**Books are springboards and bridges of understanding.** Books open up our world to all sorts of different other "worlds" - especially those who are different from us. Use those moments of, "I wonder why...?" to dig deeper and learn about another person's experiences or different cultural customs and traditions!

**Books shape our imagination.** "If you hear something repeated frequently enough, you start to believe it." (*I'm looking at you, beauty and fashion ads.*) The same applies to books - what messages are we sending to our kids (and to the children of others) about subtle things, like who holds which jobs? Who encapsulates which character traits? Who is belittled, who is praised, and why?

**Finally, God Himself says it matters.** Revelation 7:9: "After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." In America, we are blessed to see a microcosm of God's Big Picture Diversity. Let's not waste that blessing - let's teach our children to honor it, live well in it, and appreciate the beauty of it.

## HOW TO DO IT

### Turn on your "Are these characters diverse? lens".

Once you become aware of this, you'll notice it more and more.

### Seek out books featuring peoples' experiences which might differ from your own.

(And remember, books can be a springboard!)

- + Check out LRJ's Highlighted Book List, curated by Charnaie, a mom who loves connecting people with diverse and inclusive books.
- + Search online, using terms like "chapter books featuring Hispanic characters".
- + Librarians know their stuff! Ask for help finding books - or for now, you may be able to call and discuss book titles with a librarian over the phone.

As you read these books with diverse representation, try to notice how frequently they take the role of a supporting vs. main character. Also, is this character/people group represented in a positive light? As Luther explains in his explanation to the Eighth Commandment: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything."



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