

The Conflict Center's Book Talk Guide FOR CAREGIVERS!

BOOK BASICS

That's Not My Name!

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Viking Books for Young Readers, 2022

Grades PreK-1



ABOUT THE BOOK

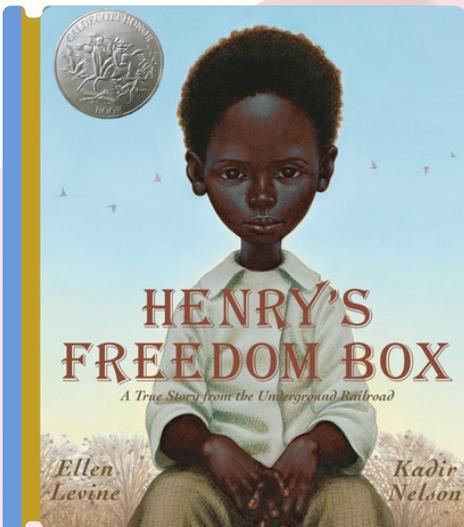
Mirha is so excited for her first day of school! She can't wait to learn, play, and make new friends. But when her classmates mispronounce her name, she goes home wondering if she should find a new one. Maybe then she'd be able to find a monogrammed keychain at the gas station or order a hot chocolate at the cafe more easily. Mama helps Mirha to see how special her name is, and she returns to school the next day determined to help her classmates say it correctly--even if it takes a hundred tries.

WHAT THE BOOK TEACHES: THE BIG IDEAS

- Names are a part of identity. Therefore, it is important to get people's names right.
- When others don't pronounce someone's name correctly or when they try to change someone's name, it can make that person feel sad, angry, unwelcome or excluded.
- Names are sometimes a significant part of someone's cultural identity, reflecting their ethnicity, culture, religion, race, family/ancestors or language.

WHAT ARE "MIRROR AND WINDOW" BOOKS?

Children's books are often referred to as "mirrors and windows." Coined by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop in 1990, "mirrors" refer to books where children can see themselves in the characters and stories; those mirrors reflect various aspects of their identity. "Window" books help children look "outside," to learn about other people, identities and experiences of those who are different from them, helping children learn more about the world outside themselves. Reading for Peace understands the importance of mirrors and windows when selecting books to read with children.



QUESTIONS TO SPARK CONVERSATION

- (Pre-reading) Let's look at the cover together. Who do you see? What do you think the title of the book means?
- How does Mirha feel about starting school? Do you remember how you felt on the first day of school, and what was that like?
- What happens when Mirha says in class, "My name is Mirha?" What do the other kids do?
- How does Mirha feel when they don't get her name right or change her name to something else? How can you tell how she feels?
- Has anything like that ever happened in your class? How did you feel?
- Why does Mirha tell her Mama that she wants to change her name?
- What does her Mama tell Mirha and how does that make Mirha feel? What does Mirha decide to do?
- What is the book trying to say about our names?

NUGGETS FOR LEARNING



Talk: Discuss the importance of names. Talk about names and how names are connected to identity. Explain and elicit that our names are used every day and are an important and meaningful part of who we are. Share the story with your child about how they were named and whether their name reflects something about your family's culture, religion, race, family/ancestors, ethnicity or language. Discuss how in the book, Mirha was upset that others were not pronouncing her name correctly. Talk about how Mirha felt when that happened and ask about whether your child has experienced or seen something like that happening. Together discuss what they can do to be sure to get people's names right, by learning it and practicing it. Also, reinforce the idea that what may be "difficult to pronounce" for one person may be easy for another person, depending on their cultural background. Explain that we should not say that someone's name is "difficult to pronounce" but rather say we may need "more practice" in pronouncing it.

Create: My name. Talk with your child about their name, how they feel about it and what it means to them. Make the connection to their identity and together, create something with their name on it to display in their room, on the refrigerator or somewhere else at home. This could be a name drawing, collage or puzzle; a song you make up about their name, labeling toys, clothes and other belongings with their name displayed on them, or creating an acrostic poem (a poem where the first letter of each line spells out their name when read vertically) using their name or nickname.

Explore: Being a friend and ally. Ask: What happens when others don't get Mirha's name right or try to change her name to something else, like to a name they may already know? Explain that while the other children didn't mean to hurt Mirha's feelings by changing her name, it felt hurtful to Mirha. Then talk about Mirha's feelings about when this happens and encourage them to name as many feelings as they can related to Mirha's experience. Ask them about whether they've experienced or seen names used in a negative way. Engage them in a conversation about how sometimes children are teased or bullied based on their name and how this feels to the target and others. Then explore ways they can address this (i.e., not participating, reaching out to that person, saying something about the teasing/bullying) by being a friend, classmate and ally to that student.

ABOUT READING FOR PEACE

Reading for Peace is a volunteer-led program that brings small-group storytime to elementary schools across the Denver metro area. Each week, volunteers read and discuss books with students that are thoughtfully chosen to support social-emotional learning and build connection. The experience is deeply meaningful for both children and volunteers alike. Learn more at <https://conflictcenter.org/reading-for-peace-program>

WHAT'S ON OUR SHELF? SIMILAR TITLES:

