

Cornerstone

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**"We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams."
~Jimmy Carter**

Multiculturalism is about perspective. It's about keeping in mind that someone else's understanding of what is going on is very likely different than our own. That the nuances of our daily interactions have been grown from seeds sown generations ago in countries that are not this one, from people who did not know our comforts, and whose defenses were built around threats we can not see. Awareness of the deep soil from which our garden blooms will give us greater appreciation for the blooms we see. *JV*

Children's Books That Promote Multicultural Perspectives

Is There Really A Human Race? By Jamie Lee Curtis, 2006.

A simple, but profound story about why we're all in a rush to "win" the race when it's much more fun to enjoy the course. All ages.

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson by Bette Bao Lord, 1984.

A little girl moves from China to America in 1947. She finds it difficult to make friends because she can't speak English, but as the country watches Jackie Robinson make a difference she finds hope and inspiration. 2nd – 6th grade.

The Sandwich Swap by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Abdullah, 2010.

Lily and Salma are great friends until they let their differences drive them apart. A wonderful story that teaches the power of our sameness over our differences. K-2nd grade.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak, 2007.

Liesel is a girl growing up in Nazi Germany. Stealing books becomes the beginning of a journey that helps her find purpose in a life that is spinning out of control around her. 7th grade to adult. *JV*

In today's society, the meaning of culture has greatly expanded. It has grown to encompass not just where one is born and the traditions of that area, but also one's ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Even within each of these areas are more differences based on family dynamics and personality traits. In essence, multiculturalism describes the myriad ways that culture is expressed and it is as varied as the stars in the midnight sky. Recognizing the differences that multiculturalism brings can be challenging, but it also affords us the opportunity to learn about and explore that which makes our world dynamic. *CR*

America is a melting pot! For those of us in the social sciences and helping professions, it is important for us to understand the challenges and strengths that influence minority race families and families from different ethnic backgrounds. In their 2000 article *Biracial youth and families in therapy: Issues and Interventions*, authors Milan & Kelley suggest that there is little empirical data about bi-racial and bi-ethnic children and families. They conducted a study to determine if bi-racial/ethnic children and families are at greater risk for mental health issues than families that come from a single race or culture. Their study included over 6,000 participants, and the results suggest "bi-racial/ethnic children and families in the United States may be particularly vulnerable to psychological dysfunction."

They conclude that because a significant part of culture are stories that told through the generations, helping professionals can attain a greater understanding of the client's multi-culture by listening to their stories and personal experiences. They recommend that professionals focus on the social construction of meaning with these family systems, specifically using the meaning of traditions and generational stories as a way to help the system heal. *AT*