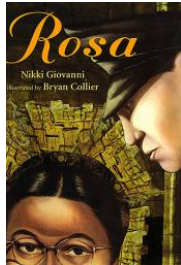


## Suggested Reading List Civil Rights Pilgrimage August 3-6, 2023

Ages 4+

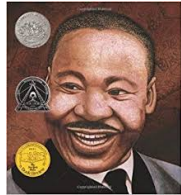


*ROSA*

Nikki Giovanni, Bryan Collier (illustrator); History, 2005

*Rosa*, a picture book biography, written by acclaimed African-American poet Nikki Giovanni, deals with the historical realities of discrimination, focusing on Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, and also mentions the Emmet Till lynching. Much of the context of these events is left unexplained, so an adult will be needed to fill in the gaps.

Traveling home from work on a segregated city bus in Montgomery, AL, African-American Rosa Parks is ordered by the driver to give up her seat to a white passenger. Sitting in the neutral section between the white and black sections of the bus, Mrs. Parks refuses to get up. The driver calls the police, and Mrs. Parks is arrested. When word spreads about her act of defiance, other community leaders get together to organize a boycott of the buses until the segregation is ended. Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks in Montgomery refuse to ride the buses for almost a year, until finally they achieve their goal.



*MARTIN'S BIG WORDS: THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.*

Bryan Collier (illustrator), Doreen Rappaport; Nonfiction History, 2001

This picture-book biography is an excellent and accessible introduction for young readers to learn about one of the world's most influential leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Doreen Rappaport weaves the immortal words of Dr. King into a captivating narrative to tell the story of his life. With stunning art by acclaimed illustrator Bryan Collier, *Martin's Big Words* is an unforgettable portrait of a man whose dream changed America—and the world-forever.

*CHILD OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT*



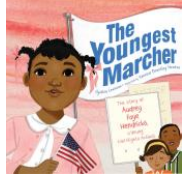
Paula Young Shelton, Raul Colon (illustrator); Nonfiction History, 2009

In this Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Book of the Year, Paula Young Shelton, daughter of Civil Rights activist Andrew Young, brings a child's unique perspective to an important chapter in America's history. Paula grew up in the deep south, in a world where whites had and blacks did not. With an activist father and a community of leaders surrounding her, including Uncle Martin (Martin Luther King), Paula watched and listened to the struggles, eventually joining with her family—and thousands of others—in the historic march from Selma to Montgomery.

## Ages 6+

### *THE YOUNGEST MARCHER: THE TRUE STORY OF AUDREY FAYE HENDRICKS, A YOUNG CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST*

Cynthia Levinson, Vanessa Brantley Newton (illustrator); Nonfiction History, 2017



9-year-old Audrey Faye Hendricks wants to help in the 1960s protests for civil rights. Every time she speaks up, she gets shushed, until the time she stands up when adults are too scared to try. She becomes the youngest person to get arrested during the marches, and she spends a week in jail in Birmingham.

The text mentions child protesters going to jail, being attacked with water hoses, and having run-ins with the Ku Klux Klan. Parents should be prepared to have age-appropriate discussions about civil disobedience, race relations, and participating in protests.

## Ages 9+

### *THE WATSONS GO TO BIRMINGHAM*

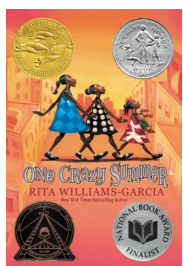
Christopher Paul Curtis; Historical Fiction, 1995



Ten-year-old Kenny introduces readers to his family; his parents, little sister Joetta, and tough, cool, delinquent-wannabe Byron. When Byron's antics escalate, though they are mild by today's standards, his parents decide he needs a dose of the iron hand of Grandma Sands. So they load up the car and head off to Birmingham for the summer. Humorous incidents abound, but when the Watsons arrive in Alabama, they find themselves caught up in something far more serious than dealing with a mildly delinquent adolescent. Racists bomb Grandma Sands's church, and Kenny's little sister is feared dead. Kenny, who witnessed what

happened, sinks into depression and believes that only magic can heal him. But when his parents don't know how to help him, he finds comfort in the words of the person he least expected.

Parents need to know that the language and writing are rich, capturing the immediacy of a young boy's thoughts, but the style sometimes overwhelms the story. This first-person account, written in the slang of a 10-year-old boy, examines how he and his family react to a pivotal moment in civil rights history.



### *ONE CRAZY SUMMER*

Rita Williams-Garcia; Fiction, 2010

Eleven-year-old Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern. She's had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. But when the sisters arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with their mother, Cecile is nothing like they imagined. While the girls hope to go to Disneyland and meet Tinker Bell, their mother sends them to a day camp run by the Black Panthers. Unexpectedly, Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern

learn much about their family, their country, and themselves during one truly crazy summer.

### **Ages 10+**

#### *BROWN GIRL DREAMING*

Jaqueline Woodson; Poetry, 2014

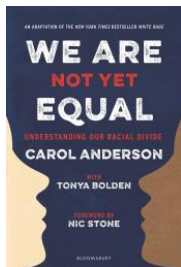


*Brown Girl Dreaming* is a memoir in verse that depicts Jaqueline Woodson growing up in different places during a unique time in American history. She's born in Ohio, to which her father's family traces a proud lineage, but raised in the South, where she encounters the sweetness of life with grandparents as well as the sting of Jim Crow. She moves back to the North and navigates a noisier place with hard edges and warm friends. How can she reconcile her different worlds? Will she be able to find her voice, not only so she can stand out but so she can make sense of the topsy-turvy world around her?

### **Ages 12+**

#### *WE ARE NOT YET EQUAL: UNDERSTANDING OUR RACIAL DIVIDE*

Carol Anderson, Tonya Bolden; Nonfiction History, 2018



*We Are Not Yet Equal: Understanding Our Racial Divide* is the young adult adaption of Carol Anderson's *White Rage*, a winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. The book examines five milestones of progress by the black community (Reconstruction, the Great Migration, Brown vs. Board of Education, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts, and the election of Barack Obama) that were met by such racist and violent responses from white citizens, lawmakers, and judges that those hard-earned successes

were rolled back. Violence is constantly in the background of the book (lynchings, murders, the burning of black homes and businesses). Several instances, including the lynching and mutilation of a pregnant woman, are graphically described. This is a riveting and timely history of America's racist past and present.

#### *MARCH: BOOK ONE* (also available *BOOK TWO* and *BOOK THREE*)

John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, Nate Powell (author/illustrator)

Nonfiction History, Graphic Novel, 2013



*March* follows real-life U.S. Representative John Lewis (D-Ga.) from his early days on his family's Alabama chicken farm, where he objected to the way his beloved birds were killed, through his education about the birth of the civil rights movement, up to his experiences as a nonviolent student protester. Much of this graphic novel focuses on the sit-ins at Nashville department-store lunch counters in 1960 and how they led to a confrontation on the steps of the town's city hall. *March: Book Three*

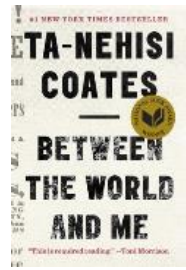
begins with the story of the bombings at 16th Street Baptist and culminates in the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Parents need to know that *March* is a powerful look back at the early days of the civil rights movement in the American South. Both a history and a memoir of Congressman John Lewis' early life, this first of a planned trilogy emphasizes the power of nonviolent protest and shows how people can band together to effect social change. It contains some violence, including beatings by police and the murder of a 14-year-old boy, but these scenes are not graphic or lingered upon. Bigoted characters use the "N" word throughout the book, but there's no other objectionable language.

## ADULT

### *BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME*

Ta-Nehisi Coates; Memoir, 2015

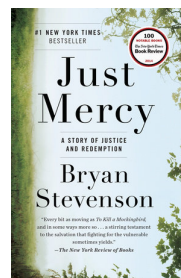


In the one hundred fifty years since the end of the Civil War and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the story of race and America has remained a brutally simple one, written on flesh: It is the story of the black body, exploited to create the country's foundational wealth, violently segregated to unite a nation after a civil war, and, today, still disproportionately threatened, locked up, and killed in our streets. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all — regardless of race — honestly reckon with our country's fraught racial history and free ourselves from its burden?

*Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates's attempt to answer those questions, presented in the form of a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son — and readers — the story of his own awakening to the truth about history and race through a series of revelatory experiences: immersion in nationalist mythology as a child; engagement with history, poetry, and love at Howard University; travels to Civil War battlefields and the South Side of Chicago; a journey to France that reorients his sense of the world; and pilgrimages to the homes of mothers whose children's lives have been taken as American plunder. Taken together, these stories map a winding path toward a kind of liberation — a journey from fear and confusion to a full and honest understanding of the world as it is.

### *JUST MERCY: A STORY OF JUSTICE AND REDEMPTION*

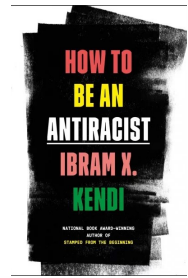
Bryan Stevenson; Nonfiction 2015



*Just Mercy* is an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of justice. Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machinations, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.

*HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST*

Ibram X. Kendi; Nonfiction 2019

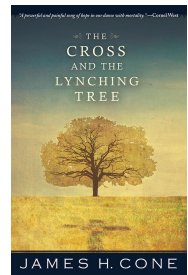


From NPR: “Kendi has gifted us with a book that is not only an essential instruction manual but also a memoir of the author's own path from anti-black racism to anti-white racism and, finally, to antiracism [...] Arranged chronologically, the book opens with the meeting of Kendi's parents — and moves through his first memory of experiencing racism, to high school, college, grad school and the present day. At no point does Kendi fail to identify the mistakes he made along the way — such as overcompensating for colorism during his undergraduate years.

Frustrated with friends who were enraptured by his light-skinned girlfriend but ignored her darker roommate, Kendi "pledged to date only Dark women." He reflects, "I hardly realized my own racist hypocrisy: I was turning the color hierarchy upside down, but the color hierarchy remained." This transparency serves as an invitation to all of us to accept and grow from our racist behavior. It is one of many components that makes *How to Be an Antiracist* so accessible.

*THE CROSS AND THE LYNCHING TREE*

James H. Cone; Theology 2011

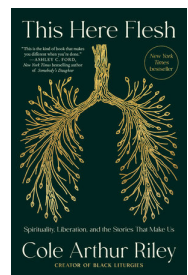


From Orbis Books, “The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. In this powerful new work, theologian James H. Cone explores these symbols and their interconnection in the history and souls of black folk. Both the cross and the lynching tree represent the worst in human beings and at the same time a thirst for life that refuses to let the worst determine our final meaning. While the lynching tree symbolized white power and black death, the cross symbolizes divine power and black life God overcoming the power of sin and death. For African

Americans, the image of Jesus, hung on a tree to die, powerfully grounded their faith that God was with them, even in the suffering of the lynching era.”

*THIS HERE FLESH*

Cole Arthur Riley; Nonfiction 2023



Riley’s powerful reflection about “discovering the sacred in her skin.”

From her publisher, “n these deeply transporting pages, Arthur Riley reflects on the stories of her grandmother and father, and how they revealed to her an embodied, dignity-affirming spirituality, not only in what they believed but in the act of living itself. Writing memorably of her own childhood and coming to self, Arthur Riley boldly explores some of the most urgent questions of life and faith: How can spirituality not silence the body, but instead allow it to come alive? How do we honor, lament, and heal from the stories we inherit? How can we find peace in a world overtaken with dislocation, noise, and unrest? In this indelible work of contemplative storytelling, Arthur Riley invites us to descend into our own stories, examine our capacity to rest, wonder, joy, rage, and repair, and find that our humanity is not an enemy to faith but evidence of it.” And one of Leigh’s favorite books to boot.

*Speeches, Essays & Sermons from Dr. King*

**“Eulogy for the Martyred Children”** — Dr. King’s sermon at the funeral for three of the little girls killed on 15 September 1963 by a bomb as they attended Sunday School at the 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham. (REQUIRED)

18 September 1963 • Birmingham

[Click here.](#)

**“Our God is Marching On!”** — Dr. King spoke before the capitol building in Montgomery following the bloody march from Selma to Montgomery.

25 March 1965 • Montgomery

[Click here to read King’s reflection.](#)

**“The Drum Major Instinct”** — Preached at Ebenezer Baptist on 4 February 1968, two months before his assassination.

4 February 1968 • Atlanta

[Click here to read King’s sermon.](#)

**“Letter from Birmingham City Jail”** — An essay written while serving a sentence for participating in civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham. Eight prominent “liberal” clergymen called on King to slow his public demonstrations in favor of the court system. King responded directly in this letter to Christian ministers. (REQUIRED)

August 1963 • Birmingham

[Click here — and please take time to read this critical essay.](#)

*Other*

**“The Artificial Ni\*\*\*r,”** Flannery O’Connor in *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. One of O’Connor’s most celebrated stories, published in 1955. The title refers to statutes popular in the Jim Crow South depicting minstrelsy characters. O’Connor referred to her own writing as “parable,” and this, a story of a rural Georgian venturing into Atlanta with his grandson, is no different.

[Click here to read the O’Connor masterpiece.](#)

**“The Inaugural Address”** — Governor George Wallace’s 1963 speech celebrating segregation in Alabama, remembered for Wallace’s passionate defense of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever” (penned by Wallace’s speechwriter and Klansman Asa Carter). (REQUIRED)

14 January 1963 • Montgomery

[Segregationist logic at its most toxic, click here to view.](#)