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LOST FOR WORDS? JAMBO BOOK CLUB OFFERS A LIBRARY OF BIPOC STORYBOOKS TO TEACH CHILDREN EMPATHY

*The Right Bedtime Story With A Kiss Goodnight Can Make Kids Better Equipped
With Values Of Respect, Justice, Tolerance, Love For An Equitable Tomorrow*

Atlanta, GA (March 22, 2021) – Take a look at your child’s bookshelf. Count how many stories feature a child of color. How many feature a character of Asian heritage? On the Autism spectrum? If the answer is none or only a few, consider a subscription to **Jambo Books** (\$34.99/month) at <https://jambobooks.com/> to improve your family’s window of the world.

Every month Jambo sends multicultural books with characters who represent all children. These days, when parents may not have the words to explain the racial strife splashed across the news, stories from Jambo Books’ vast library encourage conversation. Being tucked in at bedtime, after a story is read, is a great opportunity to help little ones tie the story to the outside world.

CNN, The Washington Post and The New York Times have all reported on the uptick in popularity of diversity and inclusion in children’s books. “While representation has rarely been a problem for white families with young kids, it hasn’t always been so easy for parents of black, Latino, Asian and other nonwhite children to find their skin colors and cultures represented in the pages of children’s books,” reported CNN in the midst of the summer of 2020 as it aired reports of nationwide protests condemning the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many more citizens of color.

During one of their CNN reports, Jambo co-founder Mijha Godfrey was asked for her recommendations for smart and fun books featuring black characters for the 4 and under set. “Godfrey said that children pick up their values from their families and the stories that are read to them. Her company, which launched in May 2018, believes that it’s important for children to read stories about children that look like them and children who do not look like them.”



In the last year, as the pandemic brought families indoors, parents and grandparents discovered the relevance of a Jambo monthly subscription. Suddenly, moms and dads had a baseline within the storybooks to explain the big concepts of tolerance, diversity, love and inclusion to preschoolers and beyond.

How does a subscription work? Jambo Book Club sends your child two to three beautiful high-quality books each month that star a child of color in an engaging story. The stories are chosen to emphasize that all people – Black, Asian, Hispanic, Autistic to suggest a few -- are equal, even though we differ on the outside.

The monthly arrival sparks joy for grownups as well as the addressee! “Jambo arrives on your doorstep in a box printed with artwork by a seven-year-old contest winner,” describes bloggers Nell Voss and Sylvia Holstein of *Picture This Post*. Their box “contained two books wrapped in brightly colored tissue paper that made the experience feel like receiving a gift. In the thoughtful note that accompanied the books, the founders shared some personal stories about moments that were cause for gratitude in their lives lately. They explain

that Jambo’s purpose is to push beyond stereotypes and tokenism to promote stories with protagonists that aren’t always given the leading role.”

There’s no doubt that storybooks give children an outlet for empathy. Sometimes it’s a lot easier to look at our own actions through the lens of fictional characters in a book. The ability to learn about diversity through reading has been studied extensively, as researchers try to tap into what lifelong readers know as the magic of reading.

Back in 2013, researchers studied how the types of books folks read that could affect how they related to others. According to an article in the *Scientific American*, researchers at the New School in New York City “found evidence that literary fiction improves a reader’s capacity to understand what others are thinking and feeling.” The article further argued that literary fiction can “support and teach us values about social behavior, such as the importance of understanding those who are different from ourselves.”

So, as the story goes, if the protagonist is having a tough time with something in their life, the reader can often relate and ponder his/her own challenges and how to deal with them. One pediatrician discovered this is true for toddlers — only more so. Dr. Alan Mendelsohn, an associate professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine, stated: “...the children have an opportunity to think about characters, to think about the feelings of those characters. They learn to use words to describe feelings that are otherwise difficult, and this enables them to better control their behavior when they have challenging feelings like anger or sadness.”

Among the hundreds of titles in Jambo’s curated library, one of its best-selling picture books caught the eye of *The New York Times* in the article, “2 Picture Books Celebrate the Poetry and Promise of Black Lives.”

In *The ABCs of Black History*, Times writer Jabari Asim describes the careful play on words by Rio Cortez (a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet). “Black lives matter,” she proclaims on the “M” page, emphasizing the word “matter.” “Every breath, every dream —/Every thought, each idea, each impossible scheme.” In rhyming couplets, she leads readers on a journey through Black life that acknowledges pain and struggle while building confidence with examples of triumph.” Not surprisingly, her celebration of Blackness is worldwide, as in this nod to Caribbean carnival: “J is for J’ouvert, when the drummers drum-drum/from Trinidad, Grenada and Haiti they come!”

Writer Asim then puts the spotlight on the all-important pictures. “Lauren Semmer’s illustrations are warm and friendly, rendering Black characters in a range of dynamic shades.”

Finding children’s books with characters that more accurately represent the rich diversity of modern America is difficult. In fact, a recent university study found that only 14% of children’s books published in 2015 had a nonwhite main character. Today’s America is diverse and growing more so by the day. A Jambo subscription offers every child the benefit of inclusive values from his/her earliest reading experiences.

Headquartered in Atlanta, GA, Jambo’s Godfrey has had a front row seat to the horrors of ongoing discrimination, killings and everyday bias. On her website’s blog, <https://blog.jambobooks.com/7-childrens-books-with-strong-asian-american-female-characters/>, she purposely featured *7 Children’s Books with Strong Asian American female characters*.

“On March 16, an all-too-familiar tragedy struck in my hometown, Atlanta. Whenever there is a hate crime, especially one that ends lives, I feel broken.” She continued, “The brokenness I feel makes me want to cover the world in books. Books where people of color are the stars of their own stories, where they follow their own dreams rather than being the subject of others’ fantasies. These great kids’ books for ages 0-13 are a great place to start introducing your kids to female Asian-American characters who take center stage. These are all books with a female Asian-American character written by women authors of Asian descent.”

Join The Jambo Book Club

Jambo offers six different children's book subscriptions across ages newborn to thirteen so that monthly book selections are just right for the budding reader. All plans include shipping. Choose the age bracket, then choose the length of the subscription:

Ages 0-2

Ages 3-4

Ages 5-6

Ages 7-9

Ages 10-13

Mixed Ages

Month to Month • \$34.99

3 Month Prepay • \$104.50

6 Month Prepay • \$208.99

12 Month Prepay • \$418.00

With hundreds of books carefully curated by Jambo's team, here's a small taste of the kinds of books you'll find for all families to kickstart conversations about diversity, inclusion, bias and multiculturalism:

Jambo's Recommended Books with East Asian Characters

Eyes that Kiss in the Corners by Joanna Ho

The Last Marshmallow by Grace Lin

A Big Bed for Little Snow by Grace Lin

Up to My Knees! by Grace Lin

Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and Other Scary Things by Lenore Look (a series)

Jambo's Recommended Books with South Asian Characters

The Night Monster by Sushree Mishra and Sanket Pethkar

American as Paneer Pie by Supriya Kelkar

Super Satya Saves The Day by Raakhee Mirchandani and Tim Palin

Serpent's Secret: Kiranmala and the Kingdom Beyond by Sayantani Dasgupta (a series)

The Best At It by Maulik Pancholy

Jambo's Recommended Books with Hispanic Characters

Abuela by Arthur Dorros

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal

Brick by Brick by Heidi Woodward Sheffield

Dactyl Hill Squad by Daniel Jose Older

One Day House by Julia Durango and Bianca Diaz

Subscriptions make a wonderful newborn, big sibling, birthday, great report card or holiday gift. Whichever title a grownup chooses, each award-winning book subscription box arrives with a personalized letter in a **JambArt box** beautifully decorated with art that celebrates the joy of childhood.

ABOUT JAMBO BOOKS

Jambo means "hello" in Swahili. Jambo Books is a subscription service for children's books starring children of color in prominent roles. Every book is thoughtfully curated from many sources, with the focus being on children of various colors and cultures in situations where popular children's literature rarely places them—as the main character! Jambo makes it easy to add multicultural books to the home library. Discover more at jambobooks.com.

