**Selected Books and Other Resources**

***Your Freedom and My Freedom Are Bound Together***

Throughout the freedom struggle, people of all ages, faiths, and races showed up for marches, meetings, and protests because they knew they were fighting for more than individual opportunities to vote, go to school, use public facilities, and so on. Everyone knew they were also working to transform our communities and to bring our country closer to fully embracing our founding ideals. They recognized what Dr. King called their “mutuality,” so they were working for each other. The marchers, boycotters, protesters, and activists also were determined to keep showing up, in spite of fire hoses, attack dogs, clubs, and even murder, because they knew they were fighting for what was right: dignity, opportunity, and justice in a free and peaceful nation. Now it is our turn to commit to the struggle and to remind ourselves that this is a movement that has the potential to free everyone from the lie that claims some of us are better than the rest and the lie that being better than someone else makes anyone a winner. Let us learn to listen. Let us find our part in the freedom song. Let us join together in harmony for the benefit of all.

To join together effectively, we must understand each other, and we must also feel understood. To promote understanding and to affirm the rich diversity in our community, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition offers a list of resources each year in our program book. This selection for readers of all ages, written by Lexi Anderson, Louise Lawarre, Vivian Rodgers, and Martha Viehmann, is just a small sample of the resources that you can find at The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The Coalition is pleased to support our local library with an annual contribution that ensures that books about Dr. King and the civil rights movement are widely available. We also offer resource lists from past years on our website, [MLKCoalition.org](http://MLKCoalition.org).

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**Books for Adults**

*Begin Again: James Baldwin’s America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* by Eddie S. Glaude (2020). Glaude provides glimpses of Baldwin’s life and writing to reveal the lessons this great thinker offers America today. The book is not always easy reading as Glaude presents intellectually complex and psychologically challenging ideas. He is crystal clear, though, about the lie of white supremacy and its impact on Baldwin, which is what makes this book so relevant.

*Brown White Black: An American Family at the Intersection of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Religion* by Nishta J. Mehra (2019). In her book, Mehra shares the many layers of diversity she and her family represent. As the daughter of Indian immigrants, a Hindu student in a private Episcopal school in Memphis, she was a brown girl living in a white world. When she came out as lesbian and later married a white woman, she and her wife faced new challenges of not matching what a couple “should look like.” When they adopted a black child, they faced the rigid ideas of what race, gender and sexuality should look like. Mehra writes with passion, humor, and deep insights, offering her readers an understanding of the many challenges and misunderstanding those who are not white, straight and cis-gender experience on a daily basis.

*Dear White Friend: The Realities of Race, the Power of Relationships and Our Path to Equity* by Melvin Gravely(2021). Successful Black Cincinnati businessman Melvin Gravely talks directly to his “dear white friend” as he writes frankly about race and racism in the United States. Without shame or blame, he lays out the realities of the myriad ways racism shapes our daily lives. He asks white people to understand how racism functions, why it is important to care, and what all of us can do to change it.

*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee (2021). Named one of the best books of the year by *Time* and the *Washington Post*, *The Sum of Us* points to racism as the root problem of public policy-making that creates a “zero-sum hierarchy” in the US. Through stories and hard data, she shows how the closing of public pools, the housing crisis, and worker rights have their roots in racism. Her focus in on how these inequalities hurt white people as well as People of Color, the “sum of us.” Her call to solidarity invites us to see a way out of the seemingly intractable issues that plague us as a nation.

*How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith. (2021). Beginning in his hometown of New Orleans, teacher and poet Smith leads the listener on an unforgettable tour of monuments and landmarks—those that are honest about the past and those that are not—that offer an intergenerational story of how slavery has been central in shaping our nation’s collective history, and ourselves. A deeply researched and transporting exploration of the legacy of slavery and its imprint on centuries of American history, *How the Word Is Passed* illustrates how some of our country’s most essential stories are hidden in plain view. Smith writes in a descriptive and emotion-laden style that takes the reader with him on his travels, to see with his eyes the hard, and sometimes beautiful, stories we have not been told.

*I’m Still Here: Black Dignity In a World Made For Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown (2018)

Brown combines autobiography with commentary and reporting to illustrate the ways that she as a Black woman is unseen or mis-seen by white employers and co-workers. The book is affirming for readers who share her experiences, eye-opening for those who are more likely to have been doing the misunderstanding. Because Brown works for non-profits and religious organizations, she is especially insightful about the current white impulse toward “racial reconciliation.”

*Citizen Outlaw: One Man’s Journey From Gangleader to Peacekeeper* by Charles Barber (2019). A dramatic story of a young natural leader who creates one of New Haven, Connecticut’s, most successful gangs before the age of 20, serves decades in federal prison, and then returns to his home to work in street outreach programs. William J. Outlaw III chose Charles Barber to write his story and connected Barber with many others who give a full picture of Outlaw’s life. One of the most compelling aspects of the story is Barber’s afterword that discusses the criminal legal system and the programs that actually work to reduce crime.

*To God Be the Glory! We Must Never Give Up: This Is My Story: Growing Up Black in America* by Charles Wiley (2003). Wiley captures an era in history, illuminating the racism and injustices that many Black people endure in modern America. He also describes the emotional pain he suffered. But Wiley is a fighter and will not let the plagues of racism and injustice, so deeply woven into the fabric of our country, go unchallenged. A native of Lincoln Heights, Wiley was one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit that resulted in Cincinnati’s collaborative agreement. “We must never give up” is his motto. His book serves as an inspiration to people of all races, young and old. Mr. Wiley’s book was released again in 2021 in paperback and audio format.

*Hood Feminism: Notes From the Women That A Movement Forgot* by Mikki Kendal

The central thesis is that mainstream feminism in the United States has been anything but inclusive, despite being "a movement for all women." It specifically calls out white feminists for refusing to acknowledge Black women and other women of color and the issues that come with not being white. It specifically examines issues such as gun violence, hunger, poverty, education, housing, reproductive justice, and more.

*White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism*by Robin DiAngelo

This book covers the fact that white people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This environment of racial protection builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress. It talks about how our country protects whites as a group through institutions, cultural representations, media, textbooks, movies, advertising, and larger discourse.

*Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, and So Much More* by Janet Mock (2014). Mock’s memoir describes her path to becoming a woman. It includes both raw description of the challenges of her childhood and her desperation to raise the money for gender confirmation surgery and matter-of-fact information about the social, emotional, and physical aspects of transition. An affirming book for trans people and essential reading for the cis people who care about them.

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**Books for Tweens and Teens**

*One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia (2010). The Gaither Sisters spend a month in Oakland, CA, with their mother, who walked out when the youngest was just a baby. Their mother never asked them to visit, and she doesn’t offer the girls the kind of mothering they each long for. Instead, she sends them off to the center run by the Black Panthers. Through the eyes of the oldest sister, 11-year-old Delphine, we see how the girls gain a broader understanding of the world and their place in it and eventually come to understand their mother better, too.

*Hurricane Child* by Kheryn Callender (2018). Twelve-year-old Caroline Murphy wonders if she even has a right to exist. At school, she is friendless and the target of bullying; at home, she longs for her absent mother. When a new girl becomes her friend, Caroline faces a new challenge: does her friend feel the way she does? Does she dare speak up? Set in the US Virgin Islands where stories about spirits and enslaved people claiming their freedom provide a backdrop to this coming of age story.

*Loretta Little Looks Back: Three Voices Go Tell It* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illus by Brian Pinkney (2020). This novel is made up of monologues—individual voices creating dramatic scenes. The poetic writing brings to life the everyday experiences of hard-working Black folk in Mississippi from the share-cropping, Jim Crow days of 1927 to the year when the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenged the Democratic National Convention to recognize the will of the voters of their state (1968). Engaging characters bring the history to life and root it in the loving care of family.

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**Books for Children**

*Change Sings: A Children’s Anthem* by Amanda Gorman, illus. By Loren Long (2021). The young poet who inspired us on inauguration day wants everyone to remember that we all have the power to change the world. Vibrant illustrations and examples of everyday actions that make a difference create are sure to appeal to children. Gorman references big dreamers, and Long includes a mural of Dr. King in the background, making this a great read aloud choice for MLK Day!

*Kamala and Maya’s Big Idea* by Meena Harris, illus. by Ana Ramirez Gonzalez (2020). Kamala and Maya have a big idea for the courtyard in their apartment building. They talk to their neighbors, turning “no into “maybe” and “maybe” into “yes.” An encouraging story about how little people can do big things through the power of organizing.

*The Night Is Yours* by Abdul-Razak Zahariah, illus. by Keturah A. Bobo (2019). From a father’s perspective, readers follow a little girl who goes into the cool summer night to play with her friends outside her apartment. She approaches nature with wonder and solitude with confidence. The rich colors and varied textures of Bobo’s illustrations bring the night alive.

*Brown Baby Lullaby* by Tameka Fryer Brown, illus. by AG Ford (2020). A toddler’s evening with Momma and Papi. Simple rhymes and a sprinkling of Spanish language describe the varied actions and emotions of a youngster. The warmth of the illustrations evoke the family’s love. For younger children who can’t yet sit through four short lines of poetry per page, look for board books by Richard Van Camp, including *Little You* and *We Sang You Home,* which also focus on family love and feature brown babies.

*Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race* by Megan Madison, Jessica Ralli, and Isabel Roxas (2021). This picture book helps parents talk about race and racism with their preschool children, providing facts to help youngsters understand what they observe about people and our skin.

*Sharice’s Big Voice: A Native Kid Becomes a Congresswoman* by Sharice Davids, illus. by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley (2021). As a child, Sharice loves to talk but learns to listen. Then she learns that with hard work, she can get better at something. Finally, she learns that she needs to find her own path, which is to help others. Her autobiography for young readers is inspiring, encouraging, and funny. The illustrations bring color and energy to the story.

*Shirley Chisholm Dared: The Story of the First Black Woman in Congress* by Alicia D. Williams and April Harrison (2021). Another inspiring story about a woman who didn’t just find her path, she cleared a path for others, like Congresswoman Davids, who would follow her. This biography is a well-crafted story with expressive illustrations. The vivid personality of Shirley St. Hill Chisholm shines through this story, inviting readers to connect and to learn about what it means to be human. For those readers who want factual and short non-fiction books, the Juvenile Biography section of the library offers cartoon-style accounts as well as short works illustrated with photographs. See for example *John Lewis: Congressman and Civil Rights Activist* by Grace Hansen (2022).

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**Podcasts**

*Reparations: The Big Payback.* Ericka Alexander and Whitney Dow creatively explore the what, when, why, how, and who of reparations.

*Asian Enough.* Jen Yamato, film reporter for the *LA Times,* and her co-hosts interview Asian American and Asian Canadian guests about the joys, complications, and more of life as a person of Asian heritage in North America. The conversations touch on the diversity of Asian identity and immigrant experiences as well as the impact of stereotypes and the limited representation in popular culture. Each episode includes a “confession” about a time when the hosts and the guests didn’t feel “Asian enough.”

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