

**a
kids
play
aboutTM
racism**

by Khalia Davis

**adapted from *A Kids Book About Racism*
by Jelani Memory**

**Seattle Children's Theatre in partnership with
Bay Area Children's Theatre & Alliance Theatre**

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vision

We are in a time when adults are using words that have a lot of weight and intense meaning. Words like *white supremacy*, *decolonization*, *injustice*, and *racism* are being lauded all over news programs, talk shows, and social media. **Black Lives Matter** posts, statements of support, and call-to-action documents are even circulating through different artistic and educational institutions. These are big words that reveal a lot of ugly truths about the foundation of our country. And through the normalization of police brutality, the massive turnout for protests around the world, and the reconciliation of many white people in positions of power coming to terms with the fact that they have been complicit in the continuation of racism against black people, CHILDREN have watched. CHILDREN have listened. And now, CHILDREN deserve time to process. They deserve acknowledgment of their point of view. We need to embrace them in these conversations and show them that even we, adults, don't have all the answers but are doing the work to learn. But how do we break it down so that these really BIG words become small relatable truths they can understand? How do we create an inclusive experience that welcomes their curiosity and amplifies their voices? We use the art of theatrical storytelling with Jelani Memory's book as our vehicle and point of entry.

—Khalia Davis

A Kids Play About Racism adaptor & director



about the artists



Khalia Davis (she/her) is a bicoastal multidisciplinary artist splitting her time between the San Francisco/Bay Area and New York, who has directed and devised new works with prominent theaters such as Bay Area Children's Theater, Atlantic Theater Company's Atlantic for Kids, New York City Children's Theater, Spellbound Theatre, and more. Ms. Davis recently served as the Director of Inclusion and Education with Brooklyn Children's Theatre restructuring their children's musical theater programming through an anti-racism lens and currently teaches with New York City Children's Theater, the Atlantic Acting School, and for Disney Theatrical Group leading music and movement workshops and facilitating audience and community engagement. She is also an Artistic Associate for the nationally-known arts education organization The Story Pirates. As a performer, she has worked regionally and toured nationally on both coasts. Recently awarded the 2019 Emerging Leader Fellowship with TYA/USA and the NYCCT Leader Fellowship for 2019/2020. She holds a BA in Theater Arts from the University of Southern California. To learn more about Ms. Davis, check her out at www.khaliadavis.com.

Jelani Memory (author of *A Kids Book About Racism*) is a Husband, Father, & co-founder of A Kids Book About, and a software company called Circle. He intentionally puts his energy and love into that exact priority order in his Twitter bio. At 17 years old, Jelani should have been on top of the world. He was the most popular kid in his high school, a star athlete in basketball and soccer, and his grades were stellar. Yet, he was deeply depressed and realized that there must be something external—bigger than him—that could give life meaning and joy. From there, purpose has been at the center of Jelani's life and ultimately led him to start a software company called Circle and an amazing publishing company called A Kids Book About.

Jelani is a black man married to a white woman and they have a blended family of six kids and the topic of race comes up often in life and in conversation with the kids, so Jelani wrote a straightforward book about it called *A Kids Book About Racism*. That book sparked conversation and interest from all of his adult friends because it gave kids and adults permission to talk about such a difficult topic. What started as a small project is now a series of a dozen books around racism, feminism, body image, cancer, belonging, gratitude, and launching 30 new books every year!



To listen to interviews with adaptor/director Khalia Davis, cast member Davied Morales, and composer/sound designer Jason Ellington hosted by *TIMEOUT with Brodrick Ryans* click on this [LINK!](#)

the cast



DAVIED MORALES as
Jelani



ANGEL ADEDOKUN as
Delight



MOSES GOODS as
Rage & Voiceover



RAPHEAL HAMILTON as
Love & Dad



ISAIAH CHRISTOPHER-LORD
HARRIS as Panic



JESSENIA INGRAM as
Disgust



REGAN SIMS as
Grief & Mom

practice exploring your emotions

Children don't often make the connection between what they feel and the emotions that they display. With their limited language and experience dealing with intense feelings, it makes sense that children may rely on nonverbal cues to communicate (pointing, screaming, crying, etc). One way to help children identify and express their feelings is by sharing with an adult or playing an activity that helps them explore. When difficult situations arise, it can help children explain—and their parents understand—just how they feel when they can't find the words. To start building those skills visit our activity pages!

reciprocal value in conversation

by **Nikki Toombs**

On December 31, 2019, with seconds to go, voices around the world made proclamations that the year 2020 would be one of perfect vision. As the countdown ensued and the last notes of *Auld Lang Syne* ushered in yet another January, none of the predictions made from futurists, academics, or the government could forecast the global reckoning and revelations to come. 20/20, a term typically used to reflect one's visual acuity, would now metaphorically reflect the world's account of a deadly pandemic—one that has claimed the lives of so many. The reality is that this pandemic has separated families, promoted fear, evoked anger, revealed truths, challenged policy, and shut down the world. The PANDEMIC I speak of is called **racism** and it did not begin to reveal its ugly truth in 2020. For over 400 years, we have witnessed the normalization of legalized oppression of people of color, while many have continued to turn a blind eye. We must not only open our eyes but also open our mouths and start to have these difficult conversations about **race**, specifically with our children.

I must warn you that this is not radical discourse of finger pointing and judgement (at least that is not the intent). It is neither a placated account made more palatable to those who have grappled with this very difficult conversation. It is; however, a sincere offering of my experiences in discussing race, prejudice and the Black Lives Matter movement with my children, and supporting those in my sphere who have sought ways to engage these topics with their children. I am no expert or teacher of all things race. But I am a student of the world who navigates as a woman of color, charged with leading four young minds (my children) to make wise decisions that

will impact our world. More importantly, I am a part of a communal movement of those who have not always followed the precepts of what is appropriate to say or appropriate to do, but we continue to seek opportunities to learn more in order to do better.

Therefore, the question becomes when it is appropriate to have conversations with your kids about racism. My husband and I started these conversations as early as kindergarten after noticing the shift in our children's interactions when meeting new friends. We would start with questions that could range from something as simple as, "How was your day?" to "Who did what and why and how did that make you feel?" We soon discovered that at some point, the questions would begin to come from them. I recently recall



when my seven year old son entered my bedroom as my husband and I were watching, what was then, a peaceful demonstration on television. As he peered at the screen, he asked me why the people were marching. I began to explain to him that a man named George Floyd died. He turned and then asked, "Was he sick?" My reply was "...no, the police killed him and that's why all of those people are marching." He then said, "Are those people his family?" I smiled at him, envious of his innocence as pure as the lamb in a John Donne metaphysical poem and replied, "They are now!" And just when I thought the line of questioning was over, he asked "why are they yelling black lives matter!" I said, "Because sadly, for some reason, there are those who believe that they don't." He gave an inquisitive stare, which shifted to resolve and exited the room. These conversations have an entirely different tone when speaking to my twenty year-old son whose simple drive to the grocery store requires two checklists: one with a list of items needed, and the other a mental checklist of do's and don'ts to make it home safely. Then there is my teenage daughter whose most upsetting account of racism or prejudice is witnessing her school administrators and teachers target black students for their dress code, hairstyles, and

argot. Nevertheless, the last conversation is one of an entirely different tone. It is bittersweet as I whisper in the ear of my differently abled (special needs) son who is completely unaware of the perils of the world. Each tear is a shared emotion of gratitude and grief. But what also grieves my spirit is that due to the unfair treatment of people of color, social justice movements, such as **Black Lives Matter**, must exist to both advocate and remind. **The Black Lives Matter** movement has been fighting to be heard since 2013's urgent need to bring attention to police brutality. The impetus for this movement was the death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012. Despite their valiant efforts, more and more lives are lost to police brutality and the saga continues. There are those who feel the need to remind us that all lives matter—and they do. But this dismissive response and inability to acknowledge black lives further complicates the notion that "they" truly believe that black lives are a part of the ALL lives they tout. There is reciprocal value in these types of conversations, and we imbue our allies and all to do something differently. My hope is the suggestions listed below will serve as a starting point in an effort to retain that innocence that celebrates the beauty of the world and not the perils of humanity.

- 1 My first recommendation to start these tough conversations with young impressionable minds is to do just that, **START** somewhere. As the quote states, "there are two mistakes one can make along the road to truth... not going all the way, and not starting." –Buddha
- 2 Acknowledge **your** own blind spots or microaggressions before having these conversations. Be open to evaluating your lens of perspective before influencing theirs.
- 3 Choose your words carefully. Words have the power to embolden or dishearten. Which will you be responsible for? Our children are watching, listening, and responding.
- 4 Identify teachable moments. Nurturing these moments help to impart tolerance and understanding. Our children look to us to find meaning in this world, so take advantage of those opportunities.

- 5 Discover parallels through avenues of interest like gaming, sports, and arts.
- 6 Utilize technology. Depending on the age, utilize social media as a catalyst for discussion. Though radical thinking and misinformation can be found on some platforms, there are organizations and reputable institutions, that post responsible content that can jumpstart the conversation.
- 7 Find mirrors and windows through literacy. Conversations about race are not just about how others see you, but how you see yourself in the world. Find the mirrors and windows of opportunity to teach them about themselves and those around them. Cicely Lewis, founder of the literacy initiative **READ WOKE**, provides a comprehensive **LIST OF BOOKS** that are authored by or have main characters who are people of color.
- 8 The Arts. The arts promote confidence, ensemble ethic, unity, and empathy. Young learners can create their own art (visual or performance) or attend an artistic experience and use it as the impetus for discussion.



#BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.

WE ARE EXPANSIVE. We are a collective of liberators who believe in an inclusive and spacious movement. We also believe that in order to win and bring as many people with us along the way, we must move beyond the narrow nationalism that is all too prevalent in Black communities. We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front.

WE AFFIRM the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.

WE ARE WORKING for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise.

WE AFFIRM OUR HUMANITY, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

The call for Black lives to matter is a rallying cry for **ALL** Black lives striving for liberation.

overcoming racial bias

a written expression by
Jason Turner

rac·ism /rā sizəm/
noun

1. prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

When one group of humans who have white colored skin says that they are better than another group who have dark colored skin, because they think their color is better, it makes them racially biased or racist. One way a racist makes a person they do not like feel really bad, is to call them names or leave them out of activities or even try to hurt them or beat them up.

My name is Jason and I am African American. When I was growing up, I went to schools here in Washington that had a lot of White kids attending them. Some of those kids learned to dislike races of people that were not like them. Some of them even called me names or pushed me around. Some of these kids may have learned this kind of behavior from their parents or maybe the friends that they hung around. Fortunately, most all of the white people I went to school with were very nice to me and I became friends with most all of them.

The other good thing is that I have the talent of singing and playing the piano. I learned how to play piano by playing “by ear.” That’s when you hear a song and you sound out the notes on the

piano until you have learned the entire song. It is a great natural gift to have, especially if you can do it well. I learned how to read and write notes later as I got older and continued to develop my talent. One of the great things about the ability to play music when I was younger was, if I was ever bullied or called names by a racist person, I could always trade my sadness for happiness by writing or playing a happy song on the piano.

Music can help change sadness into joy and give hope to people who are suffering. When black people and people of all races marched against racism with Dr. Martin Luther King and other freedom fighters during the civil right era of the 1960s, they sang songs of hope. They sung “We shall overcome” and “Ain’t gonna let nobody turn me around.” These kinds of songs brought encouragement to the entire nation. Some racist people started changing their views about equality and racist policies and ideas were changed for the better.

There are still racist people in the United States today, but with hope and determination, we can all do our part to end racism once and for all. One of the ways we can start to change things is, when we see someone being racist to someone we can speak out against it.

And anyone who is a songwriter (like me) or an artist or an author, they can write songs, paint pictures, or write books that encourage all people to rid themselves of racial against other races or groups that they don’t like. Getting to know people we don’t know is a good way to learn about things in that culture we are unfamiliar with. This opens the door to good communication.

When I get sad about racism in the news or in my surroundings, I can play a song by Marvin Gaye or a

jazz song by John Coltrane or an old Negro Spiritual by Paul Robeson. These songs are designed to help African Americans and White Americans to remember the struggles behind us and encourage us to meet the challenges ahead of us.

So let music or art and literature help soothe and repair any hurt or bad feelings you may have due to racial tension you may have witnessed or experienced, and let us encourage each other to move forward in peace and hope. And let’s move toward a racist free America. I believe that this can be achieved in the not-too-distant future. How about you?

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

–Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



short activity

In the following short activity you will need a piece of paper, writing utensil, and a device to play music online. Choose one of the following songs via the links below, and play it softly in the background while you and your child write or draw to the following question: What helps you find courage in your life? Perhaps art, a place, or family? Let the music notes guide the way to inspiration!

1. *What’s Going On?* Marvin Gaye

LISTEN

2. *Change is Gonna Come* Sam Cook

LISTEN

3. *Moanin’/Jazz messengers*

LISTEN



theatre activities

(pre-k to kindergarten)

frozen pictures exploration

In this activity participants will have the opportunity to create tableaux, frozen pictures with their bodies to explore emotions. After embodying the emotion through physicality participants will have the opportunity to add sound to their frozen pictures. This is a fun way to plays!

MATERIALS NEEDED: You will need a little bit of room to move around and make sure you are wearing clothing that is comfortable to physically move about.

STEP 1: build tableaux

Utilizing emotions discussed in the play or in the list below, use your whole body to create an expressive statue of what an emotion looks like. Once you create a statue, show and discuss with each other and repeat the same process for each emotion.

- LOVE
- HAPPINESS
- HOPELESS
- NERVOUS
- ANGER
- SMALL
- HURT



STEP 2: build opposite emotion

Create a statue for the opposite emotion, show each other and discuss. Use the list below as a starting point, but feel free to use other emotions and their contrast.

- LOVE /// HATE
- HAPPINESS /// SADNESS
- HOPELESS /// HOPEFUL
- NERVOUS /// EXCITED
- ANGER /// PEACE
- SMALL /// BIG
- HURT /// HEALED

BONUS

Add sound to the statues. Create a sound for each emotion while you hold your statue.

CONCLUSION

Reinforce the discoveries about the emotions expressed. In the future you can use this exercise as a reminder in situations where expressing emotions might be difficult for the child.

family band (level 1)

In this activity participants will use their imaginations to turn everyday household items into musical instruments. From there create a song with all of the members of your house. A great way to use items in your environment to create art with your community. Want more of a challenge? For more arts and crafts build your own instruments in the next activity: [Family Band \(Level 2\)](#)

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Drums: Gather pots, pans, and different kitchen utensils (Wooden spoons, Rubber spatulas, metal spoons.) Mix and match different sized pans with different textured utensils to create unique sounds.

Cymbals: Grab two pot lids for clapping together.

Water Xylophones: Fill 3-5 cups with different levels of water. Use pencils, or silverware and tap to gently explore the tones your unique xylophone creates. Bonus: Add food coloring to help differential tones, and to add some fun color!

STEP 1: pick & gather instruments

Explore your house for materials from the above list and stay open to other items you might find in your home.

STEP 2: perform

Create a short piece of music with everyone in your house. Explore the performance element of playing an instrument. Focus on the tempo. As you play, imagine feeling (sad, angry, happy, etc.). How does that change the way you play your music? Tip: This is a great outdoor activity (it can get a little loud inside).

CONCLUSION

Share your favorite part of this activity? If you could learn to play an instrument what would you choose and why?



family band (level 2)

Are you ready to build your own musical instrument? Using creativity and items found around your house, construct instruments and create a song with your family.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Kazoo: You will need paint, a toilet paper roll, scissors, elastic band, and wax paper.

1. Paint and design your toilet paper rolls.
2. Cut out a piece of wax paper big enough to wrap around one end of the toilet paper roll.
3. Secure the wax paper with an elastic band.
4. Puncture a hole in the middle of the toilet paper roll with the pointed end of your scissors.
5. To play sing through the open end of the kazoo.

Maracas: You will need a paper towel roll, a piece of plastic wrap, tape, markers and/or stickers, popcorn kernels (or dry beans/rice).

1. Put a doubled-up piece of plastic wrap over one end of the paper towel tube, and tape in place.
2. Pour a tablespoon of dry beans, rice or popcorn kernels into the open end of the tube.
3. Seal the end with a doubled-up piece of plastic wrap. Tape plastic wrap in place.
4. Decorate tube as desired with markers tape, or stickers. Shake back and forth to create a fun rhythm!

Rainstick Variation: Crumple up a long, thin piece of aluminum foil and insert it into the paper towel tube to create a rainstick.

STEP 1: build your instruments

Using the guide above, build your own musical instruments. Stay open to other items you might find in your home. Bonus: Find inspiration by playing music of your choosing while you gather and build your instruments.

STEP 2: perform

Create a short piece of music with everyone in your house. Tip: This is a great outdoor activity (it can get a little loud inside).

CONCLUSION

Share your favorite part of this activity? If you could learn to play an instrument what would you choose and why? Share a short video of your family band to our social media!



literary activity

(pre-k to kindergarten)

story & emotional reflection

After watching the show hold a conversation about what you just saw, how you feel, and how you relate to the characters. Here are different prompts to guide family members of all ages through drawing and discussion exercises.

MATERIALS NEEDED: You will need an open mind, and the conversation start list below. Optional: coloring materials and paper.

STEP 1: read questions

Read through the questions on the Conversation Starter list.

STEP 2: ask what inspires you

Ask a question from the list and have everyone take a moment to respond.

STEP 3: draw your responses

Children, parents, and caregivers are encouraged to draw their answers to the questions as they talk about them.

STEP 4: compare & discuss

Share drawings with each other and discuss any similarities and differences between participants.

conversation starters

- What's one thing you remember from the show? How did that moment make you feel?
- There were a lot of big emotions in the show. If you were one of those emotions today, which one would you be?
- Can you remember a time where you felt small? In that moment what would help you feel big again?
- Share a piece of music. How does that song make you feel?



visual art activities

(pre-k to kindergarten)

rainbow people

Create a rainbow of friends by using a variety of colors to bring your artwork to life. The goal is to have children color these faces via a multicultural lens using a variety of colors.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils and print out the activity image sheet.

Bonus: Multicultural Crayola crayons and skin tone pencils can be found online and are a great addition to your art supplies!

STEP 1: draw or print

Print the image or draw your own interpretation of the image.

STEP 2: discuss

After you see the performance discuss how the characters are all different, and how many different colors of people there can be.

STEP 3: color time!

Use the conversation as inspiration and begin to color! Try to color every face a different shade. Compare your sheets and admire the beauty of everyone's differences.

CONCLUSION:

Hang this up on your fridge or a window for neighbors to enjoy!

"Being different is actually good! Like really really 1000% good! Because being different means we have so much MORE to offer each other. Things like help, ideas, strength, skills, creativity, life, patience, respect, community, love, knowledge, experience, perspective, insight, diversity, wisdom, empathy, and originality. That whole being different thing, it makes us better. Much better!"

—from *A Kids Book About Racism*
by Jelani Memory



my own two hands

Reflect on people who make a difference in your world. Think of how you can make a difference in the world. On a piece of paper trace your hands or print out the sheet, and write and draw within the outlines of the hands.

MATERIALS NEEDED: For this activity you will need a piece of paper, writing utensil and drawing tools: any crayons, markers, colored pencils, and/or paint. Bonus: You can print “My Own Two Hands” activity sheet and use hand paint!

STEP 1: brainstorm

After gathering the materials, if you do not print the activity sheet, grab your piece of paper and trace both your hands.

STEP 2: activate via action

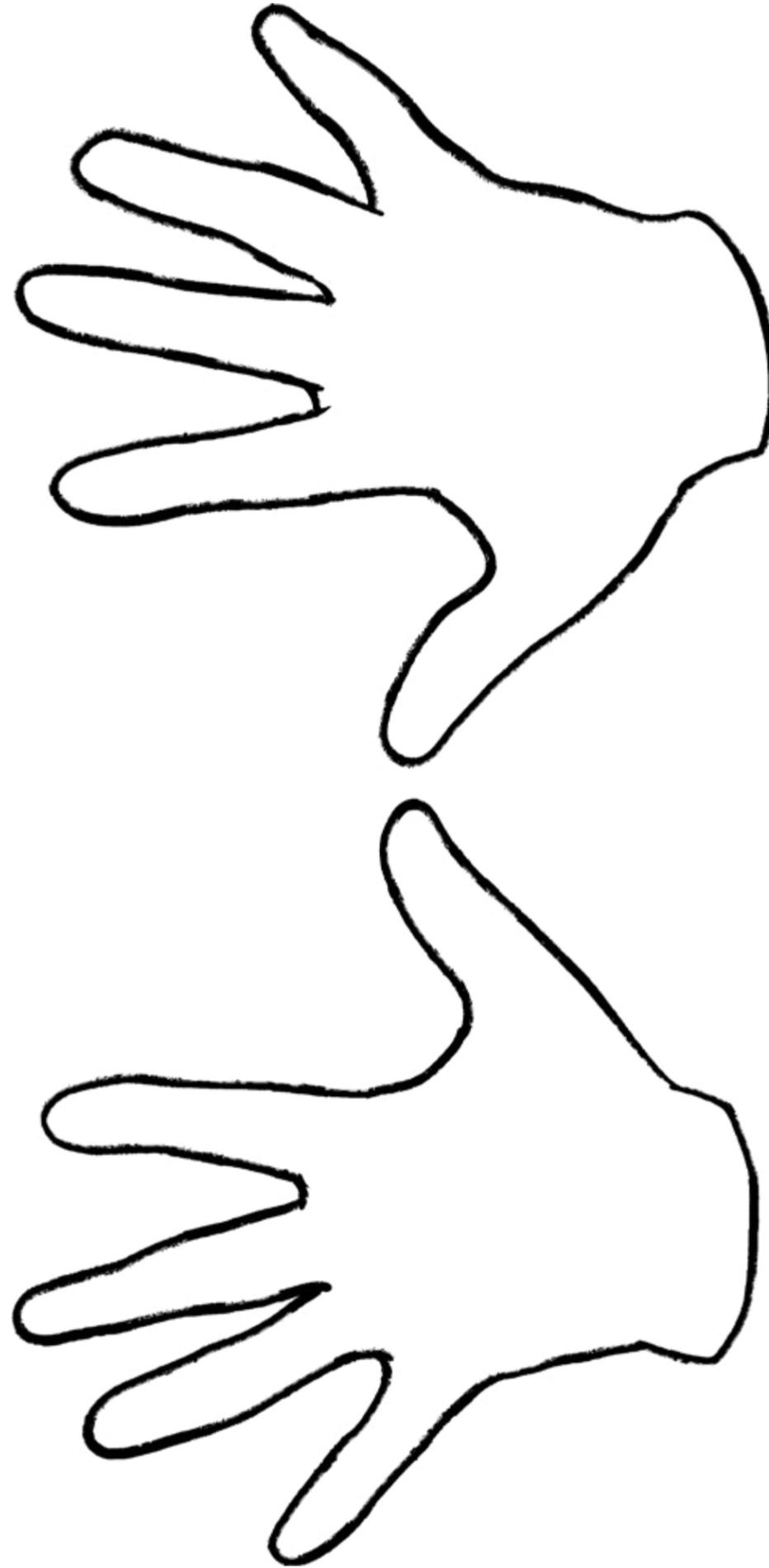
Think about people in your life who use their hands to change the world. Discuss something you can do to make the world a better and kinder place. Draw a picture of each within your hands (traced hands on paper) or within or within my the Two Hands activity sheet.

STEP 3: share

Once you have finished, share with each other!

BONUS:

Hang up the image in the house to be reminded of how you will use your two hands to change the world.



**Make a better place
With my own two hands
Make a kinder place
With my own two hands.**

I, _____
**can change the world
With my own two hands.**

visual art activity

(first to second grade)

celebrating being different

Participants will draw a self portrait/create a visual art piece that celebrates themselves, add on words that can describe themselves and their awesome qualities, and share with each other. Afterwards, participants are encouraged to display their art piece in a special place where they'll see it each morning and can start each day with a visual reminder of their greatness.

MATERIALS NEEDED: For this activity, you can either print out page 21 or use any paper or materials you have for drawing! While this activity was designed in mind for 1st–2nd graders, it's something that people of all ages can participate in, and we encourage grown-ups to join and do this activity to deepen the experience and connection!

STEP 1: creating visual art

Take this time to draw a self portrait. You could make an image that reflects what you look like, trace your hand and draw things you love around it, anything you want that creates an image about you using whatever is available to you such as crayons, markers, pens, paint, or pencils. **Bonus:** You can also add depth to your image by gluing or taping materials such as pipe cleaners, cotton balls, faux feathers, small pieces of fabric or paper cut into unique shapes or designs, or use unique materials such as nail polish to add a variety of textures to your art. *Make sure you're checking in with your grown-up on what materials are okay to use before you start!*

STEP 2: writing descriptions

Now looking at your visual art, start naming some words or descriptions about yourself and things you LOVE about yourself! Let's write some of those words down—you can either find spaces in your visual art to add the words or use a different piece of paper for writing. *You can get help from your grown-up in writing down some of the words or how to spell them if you'd like.*

Try to include different types of things including things you love about your personality, your mind, your body. Below is a brainstorm list if you need some starting ideas.

Brainstorm ideas:

- Your hair, eyes, laughter, voice, the color of your skin, your hands, your strength, how much you know about something, things you love to do, things that make you feel happy, things that your body helps you do like dancing or playing...
- Think of words that you can use to describe yourself! Words like funny, brave, kind, silly, friendly, thoughtful, determined, powerful, strong, curious...

STEP 3: share & celebrate!

Share your drawing and words with another person—show them the visual art you created and tell them about it. Read the different words you came up with. Say the words "I am ___" and then insert the description words you wrote down for your art.

CONCLUSION:

Find a place to display your artwork where you can see it every day and when you wake up each morning, take a moment to look at your self-portrait and read aloud all of the words you wrote about yourself to start each day remembering how amazing you are!



Words that Describe Me:



theatre activity

(first to second grade)

exploring and acting out emotions

Participants will brainstorm a list of emotions (together or individually) and can use the book or play as a starting place for inspiration. Participants will turn their bodies into frozen statues of each emotion using their bodies and facial expressions to express that emotion and will then explore what those emotions might look like and sound like if we add movement/sound to them with the game “Cross the Room.” The activity closes with a conversation (prompts provided) to reflect and share about some different times or ways that participants feel those different emotions.

MATERIALS NEEDED: An open space for some light movement is needed. For the game “Cross the Room,” participants will need a space where they can cross from one side of the room to the other side safely and free of any obstacles/tripping hazards with a designated point of “ending” at each side of the room (this activity could also happen outside with an object designating end points to create a parameter). *While this activity was designed in mind for 1st-2nd graders, it’s something that people of all ages can participate in, and we encourage grown-ups to join and do this activity to deepen the experience and connection!*

STEP 1: brainstorm a list of different emotions

You can start with emotions you noticed from the book or play if desired by discussing parts you remembered from the book/play or even looking at different pages in the book for inspiration.

Examples: angry/rage, excited, happy, sad, afraid, delighted, panic/anxious, love, disgust, grief, joy, jealous, calm/relaxed.

STEP 2: create emotion statues

Let’s use our bodies and facial expressions to act out different emotions. We will pick one emotion from our list and then count down from 3-2-1 and turn our bodies and facial expressions into a frozen statue of that emotion.

Example: show me a frozen afraid statue in 3-2-1 freeze!

Make observations on what you notice/see in the frozen statues.

Example: “Wow, I notice that your shoulders have curled in and your hands are covering your face. You’re leaning away and your eyebrows are scrunched together.”

Repeat activity going through the different emotions on your list. You can take turns making observations about each other’s frozen statues and also acknowledge the similarities/differences and diverse ways that each person’s frozen statue looks for the same emotion and model curiosity and celebration of that.

Bonus: You can also fold in other characters to act out in statues such as a dragon, painter, puppy, ice cream cone, etc. if you want! Additionally, you could also play with combinations of emotions and characters such as a “happy puppy,” etc.

STEP 3 “cross the room” game – acting out emotions with movement/sound

Now that we’ve acted out different emotions through frozen statues, let’s see what happens when we add some movement and sound to those emotions!

We’re going to play a game called “Cross the Room” where you will be on one end of our room here (mark a spot) and then whenever I say the words, “cross the room,” you will move across the room to the other side here (mark a spot).

After you cross the room, I’ll know that you’re ready for the next round because your body will be still, your voice will be off, and you’ll be focused on me waiting for me to say the words “cross the room” again. (you can try a practice round of participants crossing the room without any acting prompts to ensure that they understand the game).

Wonderful! Now that we’re ready I’m going to add some fun acting prompts to our game.

Insert different emotions and acting prompts for your participants to change the way they use their bodies, facial expressions, and even voices to cross the room. If it’s helpful, you can share ideas encouraging participants to think about the different speed each thing might move as, the different sound it might make, the different way it might move across the room, etc.

Tip: Give the acting prompt first and then finish with the action words “cross the room” so that your participants are always clear on when it’s time to begin moving.

Example: “You are feeling really happy and excited—cross the room!”

When participants cross the room, you can point out a couple of observations on the ways you see them using their bodies/facial expressions to act out that prompt.

Example: “Now you are feeling really brave and proud—cross the room!”

Example: “Show me how you’re feeling right now today—cross the room!”

Bonus: You can also fold in any combination of prompts that your participants will enjoy!

- You could pull specific moments from the book or play to ask them what emotion the character was feeling then, or ask them to cross the room on how one part of it made them feel, etc.
- You can make the prompts complex by folding in the combination of a character (animal, inanimate object, etc.) with an emotion.

Examples: a scared dragon, a silly turtle, a jealous flower, an angry sandwich, a sad ice skater, a happy painter, etc.

Remember that it’s not about “getting it right” when acting out an emotion, but rather having fun exploring what that character/emotion feels like in our bodies. Folding in something silly like “an angry sandwich” encourages playfulness and imagination because we don’t know how sandwiches might move so we get to create that ourselves!

Closing: You can ask participants what it felt like to act out so many different things. What was their favorite part? Which characters did they have the most fun with?

You can repeat this game anytime you’d like and take turns with who gets to call out the prompt and decide what everyone should act out!

Continued on next page >>>

STEP 4: conversation – connecting emotions with situations & experiences

Using the emotion brainstorm list we created together, let's explore different times or ways that we feel each emotion.

“What makes you feel _____?”

“I feel _____ when....”

“Sometimes I feel _____ when....”

“When I feel _____ I want to....”

“When I feel _____ it helps me to....”

Bonus: Afterwards, fold these conversations into a game of either creating frozen statues or using “cross the room” as an opportunity for participants to act out what they’ve shared with you if they seem interested. Sometimes it helps us lean into or process our emotions from a specific experience or situation if we have the opportunity to act it out and share that with our family and feel accepted and validated in those emotions.

For example, if a participant shared something like “*Sometimes I feel sad when I don't get to go over to my friend's house,*” we could say something like, “*Oh wow, that does feel sad. Do you want to make a frozen statue together of how it feels when you don't get to go over to your friend's house?*”

Closing: Find ways to revisit these activities at any time and take a moment to create space for them to explore and share their own feelings, reactions, or creativity with you!

“I Am an Activist”

I am _____

I feel _____

I love _____

I need _____

I want _____

I fear _____

I dream _____

I think _____

I am an Activist

“Soy Activista”

Soy _____

Siento _____

Me encanta _____

Necesito _____

Quiero _____

Temo _____

Sueño _____

Creo que _____

Soy Activista

For one example, here's an “I Am an Activist” poem created by Brodrick Santeze Ryans:

“I Am an Activist”

I am SEEN

I feel HEARD

I love KNOWLEDGE

I need JOY

I want PEACE

I fear INJUSTICE

I dream IN COLOR

I think POSITIVE

I am an Activist

literary activity

(first to second grade)

“i am an activist” poem

Participants will create their own “I Am an Activist” poem using the prompts provided and share their poems with each other and discuss similarities and differences.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Use a writing utensil and the design prompts below to create your own “I Am an Activist” poem. While this activity was designed in mind for 1st–2nd graders, it's something that people of all ages can participate in, and we encourage grown-ups to join and do this activity to deepen the experience and connection!

STEP 1: create your own “i am an activist” poem

Use the prompts on the left and complete the sentences. If you need some inspiration, you can always use your visual art and words that you created in the previous activity as a starting place. Feel free to use any language you would like for this!

STEP 2: share your poem

Share with your family and listen to each other's poems. What similarities did you notice between the poems? What differences did you notice between the poems?

STEP 3: add visuals and share!

Take your poem and see if you can create the same lines but using emojis as whatever you put in the “_____” blank lines or for any of the words.

Share it on social media with **#Iamanactivist**

STEP 4: act out your poem

As a bonus option, you can take all of the amazing acting you've worked on and use the awesome “I am” poem you created and bring it to life in a short play!

Work together to come up with a frozen statue or simple movement for each line. Maybe for a couple of the lines you create a frozen statue and for a couple of lines you create a simple movement.

CONCLUSION:

You can share your play if you'd like to! Maybe you do a theatrical play for your family all together, maybe you do a video call with family/friends to show them your play, or maybe you record a video of your play to share with your family/friends.

Remember to take a bow and celebrate all of your amazing work!

visual art activity

(third to fifth grade)

costume sketch

Participants will create costume sketches for the characters that are in *A Kids Play About Racism*. Participants will do this using the provided sketch, and their own coloring and drawing materials. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to do this activity as well. All participants will share what they drew and why after everyone has finished.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Use the coloring page added to the Audience Guide. Crayons, colored pencils, or any coloring/drawing materials that participants have at home with them. If there is some scrap fabric or old clothing that you don't mind cutting, use it and get creative.

STEP 1: create your own interpretation

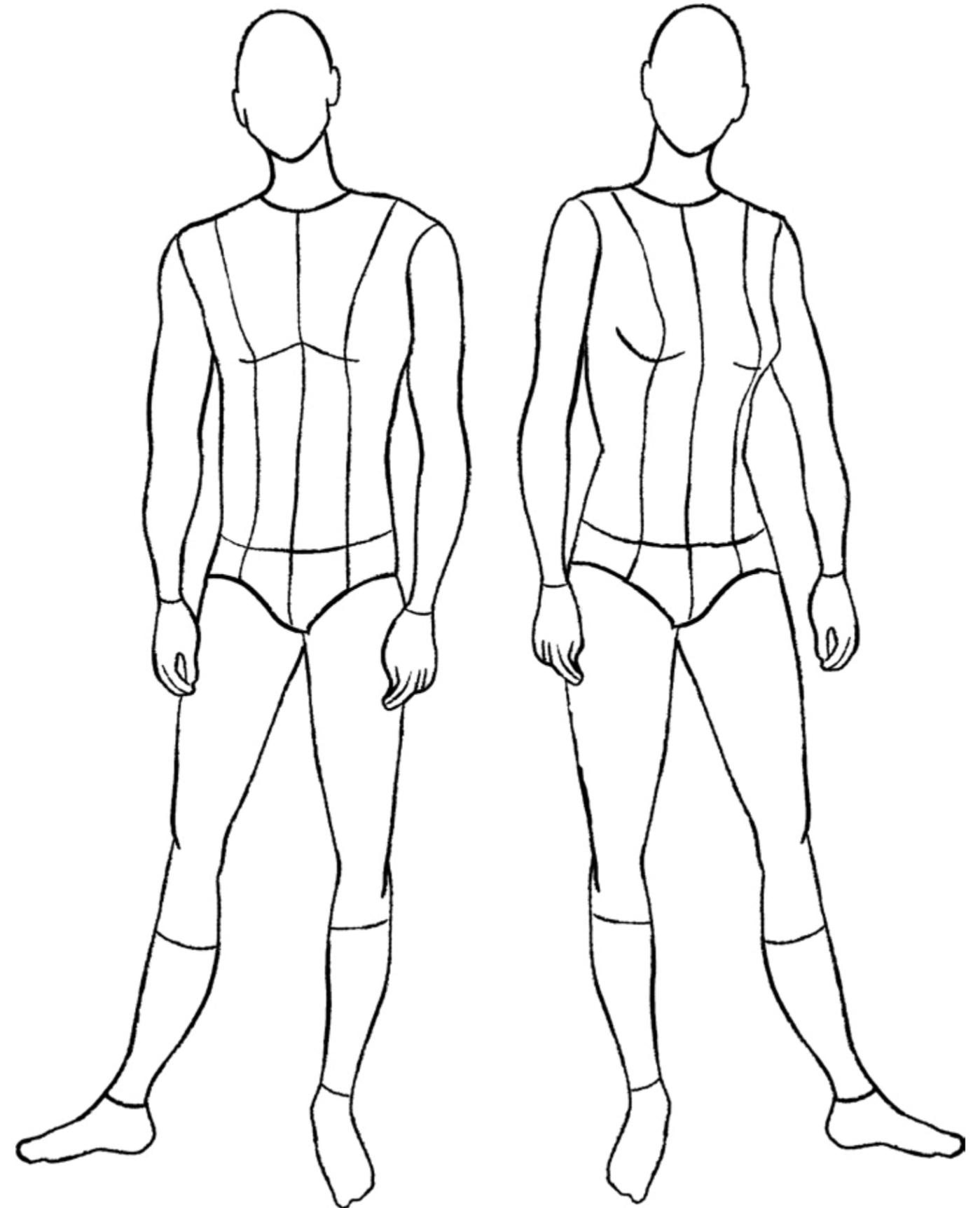
Prompt students to use the character guidelines in the guide to create costumes for each character based on how they feel that character should be dressed. Encourage the student to do costumes for Jelani and the emotional character in the show.

STEP 2: share and discuss

Share the drawings with each other. Give students/participants time to share the costume concepts that they drew/colored and why? Ask participants questions about these costumes.

CONCLUSION:

In closing parents/guardians can take this activity even further. Ask the students to search around their space and find materials that they can use to create the costume concepts that they just came up with. Have them model each costume, discuss with them how it makes them feel to create their own costumes and share the costumes and costume sketches on Facebook/Instagram and other social media platforms with adult supervision using the **#AKPARcostume**. Don't be afraid to let your creativity run wild.



theatre activity

(third to fifth grade)

emotional quirks

Emotional Quirks is a spin on the improv game Party Quirks. The idea is to assign participants an emotional trait, have them act those traits out as the rest of the group tries to figure out which emotion they are.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Emotions either on a piece a paper to call from, or on a notecard to give to participants. Your face and body and a creative attitude.

STEP 1: emotions together

Start off by having participants form a circle so that you can explain the rules of the exercise. While participants are in the circle, call out different emotions and have them demonstrate these emotions. For students that may have difficulty doing physical activities, have them demonstrate these emotions using their voice and with sounds. This is a great moment to reflect back on the emotions in the show. How was Jelani expressing emotions and how did the character emotions make you and Jelani feel?

STEP 2: practice

Have participants practice this exercise in small groups while monitoring them and assisting when needed.

STEP 3: party quirks

Set up emotional quirks just like you would party quirks. Explain that one person will be throwing a party and there will be three guests at the party. Each guest is a different emotion. The participants who are acting out the emotions will continue to act these emotions out until the party host has figured out which emotion each person is playing.

CONCLUSION:

Ask participants why they assigned the actions and sounds that they did to each emotion. You can also ask students if there were any emotions that were hard for them to act out or guess.

literary activity

(third to fifth grade)

an activist haiku

Participants will create a Haiku about ways to be an activist or about an activist that inspires them. This activity is also to help students identify people who have helped to change the social justice climate and identifying ways that they can do the same.

MATERIALS NEEDED: The haiku outline is provided on the next page; provide materials to write with.

STEP 1: haiku set-up

Explain to students and participants that during this exercise they will be writing a Haiku about activists and ways to be an activist. Every haiku has 5 syllables in the first line, 7 syllables in the second line, and 5 syllables in the last line. You can look up the following activists for inspiration and discussion Martin Luther King Jr., Malala Yousafzai, Mahatma Gandhi, Greta Thunberg, Angela Davis, Nelson Mandela, just to name a few.

STEP 2: brainstorm inspiration words

Have students/participants write down as many words as they can associate with activism. Have them include words that pop in their heads when they hear the words activists, advocate, and leaders. These will be the words that students/participants will use to help build their Haikus.

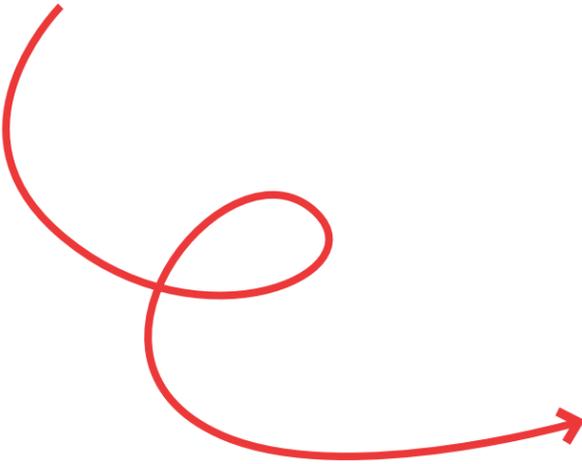
STEP 3: your own poem

Have participants take the words that they have come up with and turn them into a Haiku poem. Remembering that there should be 5 syllables in the first line, 7 syllables in the second line, and 5 syllables in the third line. Encourage students/participants to come up with a title for their poems.

CONCLUSION:

After all participants are done creating their poems encourage them to share what they have created with the group and each other. If there are participants that want to go even further encourage them to share their Haikus on Facebook, Instagram or any other social media forms that are being monitored by adult supervision. Use the **#AKPARSeattle** so that our team can see and share in the encouragement.

Haiku outline on the next page



your activist haiku

Inspiration Words:

TITLE: _____

Line 1 (5 syllables)

Line 2 (7 syllables)

Line 3 (5 syllables)

how to take action

Children notice and think about race from a very young age therefore it's never too early to talk about race. Adults often worry that talking about race will encourage racial bias in children, but the opposite is true. Silence about race reinforces racism by letting children draw their own conclusions based on what they see and learn from others in society. Adults can play a powerful role in helping children of all ages develop positive attitudes about race and diversity. Having conversations about race, action, accountability while working together can build skills to promote a more just future- but only if we talk about it. Taking action could be a small step, as having a conversation or as big, as volunteering your time with an organization. The following are ways to facilitate conversation and action as a family.

CREATE ART

You can create art or use art to take action and build awareness in your home or community. One simple way is to print out a Black Lives Matter visual from online and decorate/color in, write in, etc.

CREATE A ROAD MAP

Together make a list or, if you are feeling creative, draw a roadmap on the steps you will take together to impact change in your home and/or in your community. Place it somewhere visible where your family can reference.

ENGAGE AND PROMOTE

Inspire others by taking a picture or video of any activities in this guide and posting on social media. Sharing could encourage other families to participate and inspire accountability by starting a conversation in their home.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

The following prompts can support and empower families to normalize learning through conversation.

- Share and discuss with your child something that you experienced, observed, or learned that changed a previous thought, belief, or outlook for you. Teaching children by modeling behavior or experiences can empower children to learn that it's okay to be wrong or make a mistake. What is important is what you do after and how you learn from the situation. If you need help beginning this conversation, you can use a sentence starter like this "Before/when _____, I didn't know _____ but then when I saw/read/listened to or experienced _____ I realized _____ and now I do/say/think _____."

- Post Play 3-2-1 with family-Ask members of the family to consider the following questions at the end of the play:

What are 3 things I've learned?

What are 2 things I want to learn?

What is 1 question I still have?

Bonus: You can always use this format of conversation after you see a play or read a book.

ENCOURAGE A CULTURALLY DIVERSE LENS

- Fill your library and/or read books that are written and created by BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Color authors. Discuss the book or materials together! Bonus: Pick a day where you will share a special meal together to discuss the book and things they've noticed or learned.
- Pick one new movie/documentary that is age appropriate each week that you can watch together to learn and discuss the story and culture.

- Find organizations and community groups in your area that are dedicated to racial equity and social justice. Together create an action plan of how you will help and support this cause; donating, volunteering, or engaging on a regular basis as a family.

SELF-REFLECT MEDITATION

Self-care is a form of action. In order to care for others, you have to care for yourself, and meditation is a great way to take action!

guided meditations

Take a moment of mindfulness with these easy to do meditations for all ages. It is recommended to engage in these activities for 1-3 minutes depending on the age and attention spans of participants.

MATERIALS NEEDED: A quiet room in the house and internet access to listen to guided meditation. Use the following list, or pull from a variety of other meditations at [Insight Timer for Kids](#).

[Three Wishes for the world Seated Meditation](#)

[Healing Hands Guided moving Meditation](#)

[Befriending Difficult Emotions Guided Seated Meditation](#)

STEP 1: pick a meditation

Using the list above to pick a guided meditation.

STEP 2: find a quiet space

Find a quiet room in the house free of distractions.

STEP 3: meditate

Start in a comfortable seated position, sitting up nice and tall. Listen to the guided meditation and follow along as they lead you through breath and visualization work to calm the mind.

STEP 4: reflect

Talk with your family about how it felt to meditate and practice mindfulness.

STEP 5: keep it up!

Meditation can be tricky the first time around. Be patient with yourself and adjust where you need to. Continue to practice weekly. Even 1 minute can make a world of difference.

list of resources

The following are resources for adults getting ready for conversation with children:

[TOLERANCE.ORG](#)

[RACECONSCIOUS.ORG](#)

[EMBRACERACE.ORG](#)

[TEACHINGFORCHANGE.ORG](#)

[AORTA.COOP](#)

Additional Resources compiled by TYA/USA in collaboration with other organizations:

[LINK TO RESOURCES](#)

a special thanks

This Active Audience Guide and its activities were created at **SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE** in partnership with:

- Bay Area Children's Theatre
- Alliance Theatre
- Northwest African American Museum

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PRODUCING THEATRES

Adventure Theatre MTC / Alliance Theatre / Arts on the Horizon / Atlantic for Kids / Bay Area Children's Theatre / Children's Theatre of Charlotte / Chicago Children's Theatre / Children's Theater of Madison / Children's Theatre Company / Childsplay / Coterie Theatre / Dallas Children's Theater / Dare to Dream Theatre / Des Moines Performing Arts / Duluth Playhouse / Filament Theatre / First Stage / Honolulu Theatre for Youth / Imagination Stage / La Jolla Playhouse / Magik Theatre / Metro Theater Company / Nashville Children's Theatre / New York City Children's Theater / Oregon Children's Theatre / Orlando Repertory Theatre / Orpheum Theatre Group / Pink Umbrella Theater Company / ReNew Productions / Rose Theater / Seattle Children's Theatre / The Children's Theatre of Cincinnati / The Growing Stage-The Children's Theatre of New Jersey / The Gottabees / The Kennedy Center / The Open Eye Theater / TheaterWorksUSA / TheatreWorks Silicon Valley / Trike Theatre / Trusty Sidekick Theater Company / Wheelock Family Theatre at Boston University

JONATHAN SHMIDT CHAPMAN AND THE TEAM AT TYA/USA

thank you!