



Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of early childhood and elementary aged children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

Fish for Jimmy

Katie Yamasaki (Author and Illustrator)

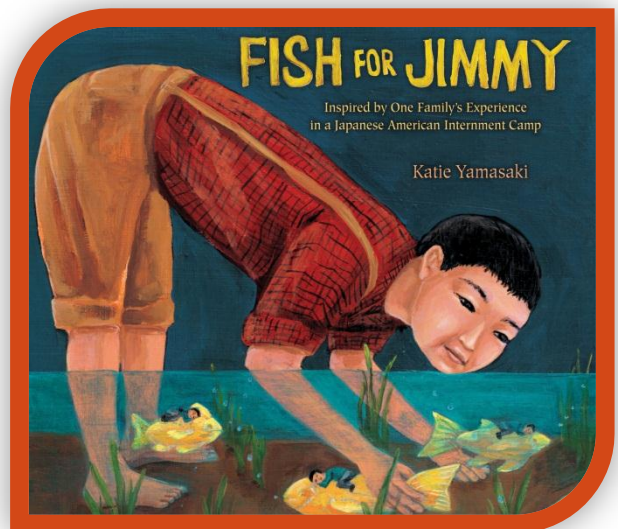
The world has become a scary and confusing place for Taro and his brother, Jimmy. First, three men come to the door to take their father away. Then Taro, Jimmy and their mother, along with other Japanese families, must leave their home to move far away, where they live in a barrack that is surrounded by a fence with locked gates and armed guards. Jimmy can't eat the unfamiliar food and is becoming listless and frail. Taro refuses to just watch his brother suffer. He is determined to help.

ISBN: 978-1452111902

Publisher: Holiday House

Year Published: 2013

Age Range: 7–11



Book Themes

Prejudice, Discrimination, Japanese-American Internment Camps, Family

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with children prior to reading the book. Do not focus on students' retention of all the words; instead make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind children of their meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point out to students when they appear in the story. See also ADL's [Glossary of Education Terms](#).

- appetite
- badges
- barracks
- bias

- bombed
- descent
- desolate
- discrimination
- freedom
- guards
- internment camp
- Japanese
- owners
- prison
- released
- shears

Preparation for Reading

Prior to reading the book, you will need to provide some context and background for students about the Japanese Internment Camps during World War II. In an age-appropriate way, explain that on December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, which is in Hawaii. Many U.S. soldiers were killed and the next day, the United States declared war on Japan. President Franklin Roosevelt signed an Executive Order which required 120,000 American citizens of Japanese descent to leave their homes and businesses and to live in internment camps. Those forced into internment camps not only lost their homes, their jobs and their possessions, but from 1942 to 1945, also lost their personal liberties and freedoms guaranteed by the United States Constitution. Many years later, the U.S. government admitted they made a mistake, publicly apologized for the internment and offered each individual camp survivor some compensation.

To learn more, you may also want to read aloud the last page of the book ("Dear Reader," p. 33) in which the author describes how *Fish for Jimmy* is based on a true story from her family's history and provides some historical context.

Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask pre-reading questions:

- What is the title of the book?
- What do you see and notice on the cover of the book?
- What do you think the book might be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout the reading to check comprehension and keep the students engaged:

- What kind of store did Jimmy and Taro's father own? (page 4)
- At the internment camp, what did the cook notice about Jimmy? (page 13)
- What did Taro do with the shears (scissors) he borrowed from the camp garden? (page 21)

After reading the book aloud, ask some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What happened in the story?
- What were Jimmy and Taro like? What kinds of things did they like to do?
- Why did their parents originally leave Japan to come to the United States?
- How do you think Taro felt when the three men took his father away and he told Taro "You must help your mother and take care of Jimmy until I return?"
- How would you feel if you were in Taro's shoes?
- What was the internment camp like?

- How did Jimmy feel being at the internment camp? How do you know?
- What do you think about Taro and his family and others having to live in internment camps?
- Why do you think Jimmy wasn't eating?
- Why did Taro have trouble sleeping at night?
- Why do you think Taro snuck out to get his brother Jimmy some fish to eat?
- What did the fish symbolize? (You may have to explain what symbolism is.)
- When Taro was fishing, what do you think was meant by "he felt the fresh air of freedom?"
- How did Jimmy feel when he ate the fish that Taro caught for him? How do you know?
- How did Taro fulfill his promise to his father?
- Who was your favorite character in the story and why?
- What do you think might happen next in the story?
- What is the message of the story?

Extension Activities

Below are activities that you can do with children in order to extend the learning from the book.

1. Write and Illustrate Additional Pages of the Book

In the last scene of the book, Jimmy's and Taro's father is released from prison and joins them at the internment camp. Taro shows him how he found fish for Jimmy every week. Read aloud the last few pages of the book and ask students: *What do you think happens next in the story? How long do you think Taro and his family stay at the internment camp? What happens when their father is there? Do you think Taro keeps sneaking out to get fish for Jimmy? What happens when they go home? Have students imagine what would happen in the book if it continued for a few more pages. Instruct them to take their ideas and write and/or draw the next scene or two as they imagine it. If younger students want to write but cannot do so, you can transcribe for them. When completed, students can share their drawings and pages of the book with the rest of the class and you can invite family members in for a whole class reading.*

2. What is Prejudice and Discrimination?

Ask students: *What do you think about the internment camps? Why do you think that happened?* Explain that during this period of time, people of Japanese American descent had to live in internment camps because of discrimination. There was a fear of Japanese-American people because of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and assumptions that all Japanese-American people were dangerous, disloyal and posed a threat. Explain that this was one of the most terrible episodes in U.S. history that targeted people simply because of their Japanese heritage. Ask students: *What is prejudice?* Define **prejudice** as judging or having an idea about someone or a group of people before you actually know them. Prejudice is often directed toward people in a certain identity group (race, religion, gender, etc.). Then ask: *What is discrimination?* Define **discrimination** as unfair treatment of one person or group of people because of the person or group's identity (e.g. race, gender, ability, religion, culture, etc.); discrimination is an act that can come from prejudice. Ask students: *How was prejudice and discrimination happening during this time period for Japanese-American people?* Explain that even after the internment ended, discrimination did not end. Individual people had prejudice against Japanese Americans and discriminated against them, before, during and after the internment. Ask students: *Can you think of any other times in history or during the present day*

when groups of people have been discriminated against? Brainstorm a list and have each student choose one (or have them work in groups) to conduct research on the topic and present it to the rest of the class.

3. Explore Feelings Through Pictures

In several parts of *Fish for Jimmy*, various feelings are conveyed through the use of the book's vibrant illustrations. Go through different pages of the book that contain these pictures and share them again with students. Examples include:

- page 3: Jimmy and Taro swimming
- page 5: Jimmy and Taro's mom working at the grocery store
- page 8: Taro talking to his dad as he leaves for prison
- page 14/15: Jimmy, Taro and their mom in the cafeteria eating
- page 17: Jimmy not playing
- page 18: Taro lying in bed at night
- page 24/25: Taro fishing
- page 28/29: Jimmy, Taro and their mom eating fish
- page 31: Jimmy with his Dad

While showing the illustrations to students, ask: *How is _____ feeling in this scene? What do you see? How do you know?* Encourage students to notice facial expression and body language in order to understand what emotions are being conveyed by the illustrations. Generate a list of feelings that are reflected throughout the book and record them on the board/smartboard. Have students use these words of feelings to create their own portraits that convey a specific feeling or have them create emojis (smileys) based on the feelings words.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on anti-bias teaching strategies, racism and people who are Asian-American.

Curriculum Resources

"Voices of Japanese-American Internees," *Curriculum Connections*, www.adl.org/education-outreach/lesson-plans/c/voices-of-japanese-american-internees.html.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Hate, Genocide and Holocaust, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/hate-genocide-holocaust.html

People, Identity and Culture: Asian, Asian-American, South Asian and Pacific Islander, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/people-books.html?subpeople=asianasian-americansouth-asiansouth-asian-americanpacific-islander

Race and Racism, www.adl.org/education-outreach/books-matter/race-racism.html