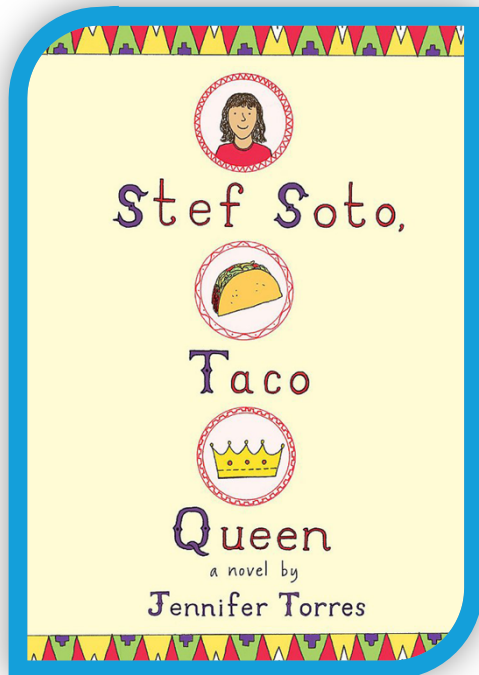




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: 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, and encourage social action. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



Stef Soto, Taco Queen

Jennifer Torres (Author)

ISBN: 978-0316306867

Publisher: Little Brown Books for Young Readers

Year Published: 2017

Age Range: 8–12

Book Themes

People, Identity and Culture, Pride, Taking a Stand, Friendship, Teasing and Bias

About the Book

Estefania "Stef" Soto is itching to shake off the onion-and-cilantro embrace of Tia Perla, her family's taco truck. She wants nothing more than for Papi to get a "normal" job and for Tia Perla to be a distant memory. Then maybe everyone at school will stop seeing her as the Taco Queen. But when her family's livelihood is threatened, and it looks like her wish will finally come true, Stef surprises everyone (including herself) by becoming the truck's unlikely champion. In this fun and heartfelt novel, Stef will discover what matters most and ultimately embrace an identity that even includes old Tia Perla.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- When you first meet Stef, what are your thoughts about her? How did those thoughts change as you got to know her throughout the book?
- Why do you think Stef sometimes feels embarrassed by Tía Perla? Can you relate to her feelings and if so, how?
- What is Stef's friendship like with Amanda, Arthur and Julia? What are your friendships like? Can you relate to anything in the story about friendship?
- When Stef realizes she met Viviana Vega without knowing it was her, she says, "By lunchtime, I'm not the girl whose dad drives a taco truck, I'm the girl who has met Viviana Vega." What do you think Stef means by this? Why is Stef's reputation important to her?
- When Papi speaks at the City Council meeting, what is going through Stef's mind? Why do you think she decides to speak as well?
- Why do you think Stef changed the name of the food truck to "The Taco Queen?"
- What do you think will happen next in the story?
- How does Stef change throughout the story? What do you think is the overall message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Friendship

The book explores friendships that Stef has with Amanda, Arthur and Julia. Talk with your child about the friendship between Stef and those friends; each of those relationships are different and unique in their own way. Ask your child what those friendships in the book are like—what kinds of things do they do together, how they help each other, what they do when they have problems. Then talk with your child about their own friendships, what they appreciate and like about those friendships and what is difficult. You can talk in more depth about Stef and Julia's relationship, which has a more complicated history. When they were little, Stef and Julia were very good friends and then they stopped being friends. In the book, you see that Julia isn't very nice to Stef. In school, Julia teases and makes fun of Stef. When the two of them finally talk about what happened between them, it turns out that Julia felt Stef "ditched me for Amanda." This shows how there are often different perspectives on why a friendship ended. Exploring opposing points of view is another aspect of friendship that you could explore with your child.

2. Standing Up for What You Believe In

When the city proposes new regulations for food trucks, Papi and some of the other owners of food trucks are very concerned it will have a negative impact on their business, their livelihood. They speak before the City Council to make their case about why those rules are a problem. As Stef watches her father speak, she becomes increasingly upset about the risk of losing their truck and how the new rules are unfair. She feels compelled to speak. Stef makes a very persuasive speech, and, in the end, they win some of the points in their argument and some of the proposed rules don't pass. Explain to your child that this is an example of "standing up for what you believe in." Talk about how it was brave for Stef to stand up in front of all those people and make that speech. Define brave as "to have or show physical, emotional or moral strength in the face of difficulty, danger or fear." Elicit and explain that despite her fear, Stef spoke anyway because she felt it was that important. Ask your child

if they've ever been in a situation like this and share any experiences you've had in standing up for what you believe in. You can have a general conversation about what's important to them and what might be worth standing up for in the future.

3. National Hispanic/Latin American Heritage Month

Explain to your child that September 15-October 15 is National Hispanic/Latin American Heritage Month—an annual celebration of the history, achievements and contributions of Latin American people in the U.S. Explain that the reason a month is dedicated to honoring Latin American people, history and culture is because sometimes when history is discussed and taught, Latin American people are not included due to bias and exclusion. This is also true for other themed months like Women's History and Black History Month. You can explain that this book focuses on a Latin American family and explores their particular story—their history, their connection to immigration, their culture and their lives. Make sure to emphasize this is just one story about Latin American people. Explain that while there are similarities within identity groups, there are also many differences. You can also discuss the importance of overcoming obstacles and how difficult it can be when people hold stereotypes (the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way)—in this case those stereotypes could be about Latin American people and people who are immigrants. Discuss why stereotypes are incomplete, unfair and harmful. Talk about the importance of challenging stereotypes by reading or watching many different stories, and encouraging all people to express themselves, explore their interests and follow their dreams.

Other Books You May Like



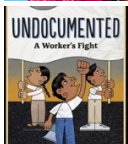
El Deafo by Cece Bell, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/el-deafo



Front Desk by Kelly Yang, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/front-desk



Gaby Lost and Found by Angela Cervantes, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/gaby-lost-and-found



Undocumented: A Worker's Fight by Duncan Tonatiuh, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/undocumented-a-workers-fight

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity and culture, people who are Latin American and immigration.

Curriculum Resources

Identity-Based Bullying, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/identity-based-bullying
Who Am I? Identity Poems, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems

Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

Myths and Facts about Immigrants and Immigration

www.adl.org/education/resources/fact-sheets/myths-and-facts-about-immigrants-and-immigration

A list of common myths about immigrants and immigration and the facts.

National Hispanic Heritage Month

www.adl.org/education-outreach/curriculum-resources/c/educational-resources-in-spanish.html

A curation of PreK-12 educational resources curriculum and other resources that help bring the themes of Hispanic Heritage Month to your classrooms.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

Safe and Inclusive Classrooms for All

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/safe-and-inclusive-schools-for-all

Tips to foster a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment.

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See "[What Bullying Is and Is Not](#)."

Children's Books

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

People, Identity & Culture: [Latino/Hispanic](#), [Latino-American](#), [Hispanic-American](#)
[Social Justice](#)