

## Representation

In hearing the stories of our role models today we can see the importance of seeing ourselves reflected in the world around us through things such as books and education. Seeing our own stories gives us a way to understand ourselves and our world in terms that we can identify with. It allows us to feel a sense of belonging in our society. Seeing ourselves reflected in positive ways in media (such as books and movies) and education helps us to build a positive self-image.

It is also important that we hear the stories of others. It helps us to better understand others and gives us insight into ourselves as well. Learning the stories of others leads us to be more empathetic and less biased. It allows us to better understand our world, the people in it and others in our communities. Learning the stories of people who are not like us promotes unity, compassion, love and humility, just like today's Bible verse calls us to be.

In our country we have what is called a single narrative which Curtis Acosta referred to in the quote at the end of our profile of him. That means that the stories we read, the movies we see, the history we learn in school, are primarily told about people who are white from the perspective of people who are white. Here are some statistics from 2016-2017 collected by a researcher, Robin DiAngelo, that illustrates this.

Congress: 90% white

Governors: 96% white

Top military advisers: 100% white

President and vice president: 100% white

Current POTUS [President's] cabinet: 91% white

People who decide which TV shows we see: 93% white

People who decide which books we read: 90% white

People who decide which news is covered: 85% white

People who decide which music is produced: 95% white

Teachers: 83% white

Full-time college professors: 84% white

Owners of men's pro-football teams: 97% white

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/democracy/2017/06/30/no-i-wont-stop-saying-white-supremacy/>

We can work to change our society so that it better reflects the voices of all the people in it. One way we can start this is to look in our own lives and at our own homes. Whose voices are you hearing?

## Day One Activity- Representation Scavenger Hunt

The activity below is designed for you to explore your own bookshelves. But, you don't have to do this activity at home. If you are able, you can visit your local library and pick a random sample of about ten(10) children's books that feature people (not animals). Otherwise, skip to the second page and try to answer the same questions based on what you find in your Google search.

### Home Library (or Public Library)

How many books can you find that feature a person of color? How many of these books feature a person of color who is the main character and not a side kick or minor character?

Which different races are represented in these books (Black, Asian, Chicanx/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, etc.)?

How many books can you find that feature a person who has a physical difference (for example, someone who is in a wheelchair, or is deaf, or blind)?

How many of your books feature female main characters? How many feature male main characters?

How many books explore religions or cultural traditions that are different from your own?

## **Online search (Representation Scavenger Hunt, Continued)**

Search online for children's books lists. You can use search words such as, "top children's books," or "top children's chapter books." You will find lots of different lists. Follow a link to one of these and look at the books they highlight. If the list is too long, just look at the first ten (10) that feature people (not animals). You will have to base your observations on the covers if you are not familiar with the books. It's not a perfect research method, but you will still get a pretty good idea.

How many books can you find that feature a person of color? How many of these books feature a person of color who is the main character and not a side kick or minor character?

What different races are represented in these books (Black, Asian, Chicanx/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, etc.)?

How many books can you find that feature a person who has a physical difference (for example someone who is in a wheelchair, or is deaf, or blind)?

How many of your books feature female main characters? How many feature male main characters?

How many books explore religions or cultural traditions that are different from your own?

**You can make these same observations about the movies and TV shows you watch.**

**Take time this week to share something you found from your scavenger hunt with people in your household. It could be a book, or online video of a book, or video/show. The key though is that it needs to feature (as in have a main character) someone who is not well-represented in media and literature. A couple examples of this would be a person of color or someone who has a physical difference.**