

BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

#1 RECOMMENDATION FOR MULTI AGE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS:

Something Happened In Our Park: Standing Together After Gun Violence

Authors: Ann Hazzard, Marianne Celano, and Marietta Collins

Illustrated by Keith Henry Brown

Recommended for children ages 5 – 10

PICTURE BOOKS

Smoky Night by Eve Bunting. Illus. by David Diaz.

K–Gr. 3.

Outside young Daniel's apartment building, rioters smash windows and loot stores, while inside, Mama explains the violent behavior to him. After fire forces the family from its apartment into a shelter, the opportunity arises for Daniel and his mother to befriend their Korean neighborhood grocer. This 1995 Caldecott Medal winner is an excellent choice for sparking lively discussion.

Why Did It Happen: Helping Children Cope in a Violent World by Janice Cohn. Illus. by Gail Owens.

K–Gr. 4.

A young boy, Daniel, becomes fearful, confused, and angry when his older friend, the neighborhood grocer, is injured during a robbery. An introduction for parents, as well as adult characters who are portrayed sensitively, will aid adults with discussions.

Grandmother Bryant's Pocket by Jacqueline Briggs Martin. Illus. by Petra Mathers.

Gr. 1–4.

At her grandparents' farm in the summer of 1787, after her beloved dog dies in a barn fire, Sara overcomes her grief and nightmares with the help of her grandmother's herb-filled "pocket." This is a good story for children who have generalized fears.

A Little Bit of Rob. by Barbara J. Turner. Illus. by Marni Backer.

K–Gr. 4.

The importance of family members' sharing their grief and memories is addressed in this story. Young Lena and her parents go crab fishing for the first time since her older brother, Rob, died. While on the boat, Lena finds Rob's sweatshirt, and, while grieving silently, puts it on. Her parents realize how much they all need each other, and all three stay up until dawn sharing memories and tears.

NONFICTION PICTURE BOOKS

Dealing with Weapons in School and at Home by Lorelei Apel.

Gr. 2–4.

Part of the Conflict Resolution Library series, this is a very basic introduction to the subject for beginning and intermediate readers, with some good safety advice.

One April Morning: Children Remember the Oklahoma City Bombing by Nancy Lamb. Illus. by Floyd Cooper.

Gr. 2–4.

Children involved in the bombing recount the tragedy and, along with teachers and other adults, discuss the grieving process and their opinions about suitable punishment. This book is especially useful for those children who have heard about the incident.

Guns: What You Should Know by Rachel Ellenberg Schulson. Illus. by Mary Jones.

K–Gr. 3.

It's never too early to begin a gun safety program, and this book is a useful introduction to firearms and what they can do. It offers some thought-provoking material, including a brief introduction to the gun control controversy that may be more appropriate for older children.

BOOKS FOR MIDDLE READERS

One-Eyed Cat by Paula Fox.

Gr. 4–7.

Eleven-year-old Ned is anxious to shoot the air rifle that was given to him for his birthday. Against his father's wishes, he takes the rifle outside at night and fires just once; however, he suffers emotionally over the likely consequences of his action for a long time.

Just One Flick of a Finger by Marybeth Lorbiecki. Illus. by David Diaz.

Gr. 3–7.

A boy, terrorized by a bully, brings a gun to school to scare him off, but instead accidentally shoots both himself and a friend. An urban setting, rap-style text, and bold illustrations will attract readers.

Wringer by Jerry Spinelli.

Gr. 4–7.

Nine-year-old Palmer dreads his tenth birthday. In his town, boys of that age traditionally become "wringers" who strangle wounded pigeons at the annual pigeon shoot. Palmer's

sensitive, nonviolent personality creates inner struggles as well as struggles with his father, who has won awards for being a sharpshooter. A Newbery Honor Book, this story lends itself easily to discussions on a variety of topics.