

Ideas to bring racial diversity into our children's ministry

Introduction

Here you will find some examples of books and resources that can help to reflect and include diversity and equality in our children's space. These encourage children to find themselves in the story of God and to see others in it too.

But **diverse resources are just a small part of being a diverse and equal church**. It is not the only thing to do. Diversity, justice and equality need to be embedded into the culture; in the way we teach, the way we talk to people, how we treat others and in standing up for one another.

You may find it helpful to download the simple 'Diversity Audit' to reflect on where you are as a church, home or school currently. [Click here](#) for the download and more information.

As you look through these resources remember they are a tool and something to include rather than an answer to racial justice.

This resource includes:

- Practical resources you can buy or include: Children's Bibles, books, videos, craft and toys.
- Key thoughts when planning groups or sessions.

Inspiration

This resources was partly inspired by "*7 changes to consider making to your Sunday School to address racial inequality*" by [Together@Home](#). You can see the resource using the link and you'll see elements threaded through here.

[Click here to view.](#)

Links to shops

We have included links so you don't have to search for each item. Other stockists are available. Why not see if your local bookshop has them and if not, see if they will consider stocking it?

All blurbs in "... " are taken from the page in the link.

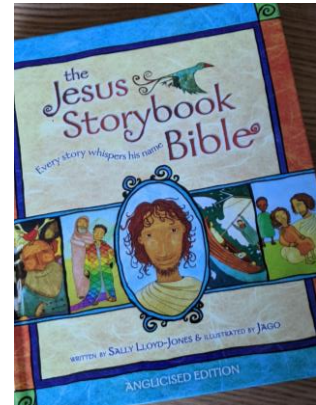
Children's Bibles

These are a few Bibles that include either images that try and reflect the ethnicity of the biblical characters and/or includes a range of ethnicities throughout.

The Storybook Bible

Author/illustrator: Sally Lloyd-Jones/Jago

"The Jesus Storybook Bible gives you the full colour, illustrated collection of 44 best loved Bible stories you need to introduce your children to a lifelong love of the wonders of the Bible. Each story, from The Creation, through Noah, Daniel and more, to Jesus and onward to the promise of a new and perfect Heaven, is retold in breath taking colour and straightforward words ideal for children to hear, read and understand."



Key things to know:

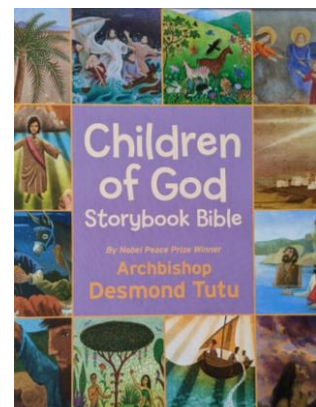
- The illustrations within this Bible try to better reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the characters.
- The stories are slightly longer because Jesus is woven across all the stories to help see it as one story. Theology and explanations are also woven in.

[Click here to view](#)

Children of God: Storybook Bible

Author/illustrator: Archbishop Desmond Tutu/illustrators from around the world.

"The Children of God Storybook Bible gives a beautifully illustrated and simply told collection of more than fifty of yours - and Archbishop Desmond Tutu's, favourite Bible stories. Engagingly retold for young children, easy to read and speak words and phrases make the well loved stories memorable and meaningful to young readers."



Key things to know:

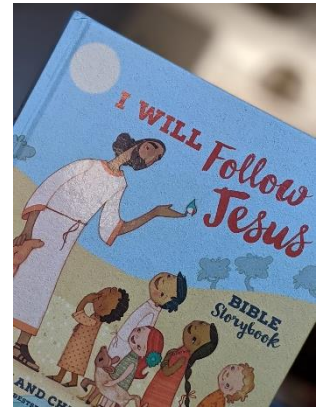
- Each story is illustrated by a different artist, which means we see different ethnicities, styles and traditions represented within the stories.
- This Bible includes both stories and key passages. Each is written in child friendly language and includes a very simple prayer.

[Click here to view](#)

I will Follow Jesus: Bible Storybook

Author/illustrator: Chelsea Smith, Judah Smith/Alexandra Ball

“I Will Follow Jesus Bible Storybook points children to a relationship with Jesus at a young age by showing them exactly who He is and why He came to earth. Kids will learn about Jesus characteristics and purpose through Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments. Each story is also accompanied by a concrete takeaway statement, such as Jesus is grace, Jesus is love, and Jesus is your friend.”



Key things to know:

- The Bible characters within this Bible try to better reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the characters. There are also a range of other illustrated people who reflect a whole range of backgrounds and contexts.
- This Bible has stories written with children in mind and are accompanied by short reflections and story examples to help apply key messages from the Bible story.

[Click here to view.](#)

Children's Books

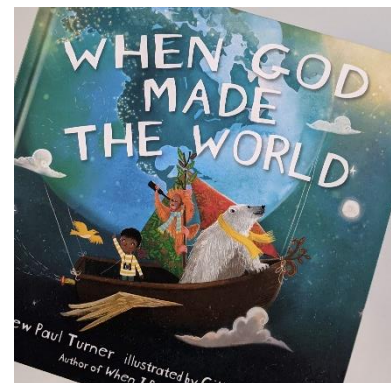
Some of these books specifically focus on diversity and others are telling a story with diverse characters within it. The books listed here all have a Christian focus but there are many other fiction and non-fiction books that are diverse. 'The dinosaur department store' is a brilliant example!

When considering books don't just buy new ones, but also go through the books you have to see if any need to be removed.

When God made the World

Author/illustrator: Matthew Paul Turner/Gillian Gamble

"A different kind of creation book, Matthew Paul Turner's 'When God Made the World' focuses on the complex way that God created our vast and scientifically operating universe, including the biodiversity of life on our planet and the intricacies of a vast solar system."



Key things to know:

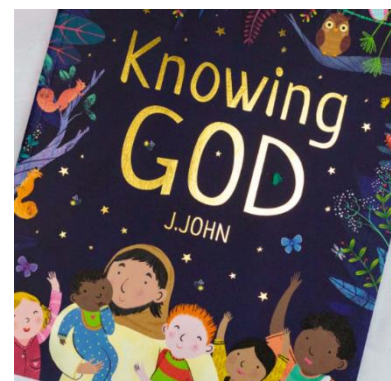
- The main character is black, but the illustrations includes people from different ethnicities and also includes other differences such as a wheelchair user and someone who has vitiligo.
- Through poetic language this book moves through creation focussing on the beauty of what we can see and the complexity behind it.

[Click here to view.](#)

Knowing God

Author/illustrator: J. John/ Morena Forza

"Instead of merely telling stories of what happened in the Bible, Knowing God distills powerful Theology into simple words and ideas. It shows all those stories from the Bible are so important, and it shows what it can mean to really know God."



Key things to know:

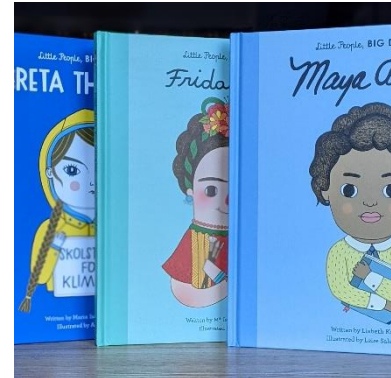
- The people illustrated show racial diversity throughout the book.
- This book shows knowing God as an adventure as it introduces young children to the basics of faith in story form.

[Click here to view.](#)

Little People, Big Dreams

Author/illustrator: Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara/various illustrators

“Discover the lives of outstanding people, from designers and artists to scientists and activists. All of them achieved incredible things, yet each began life as a child with a dream. Told as a story, with a facts and photos section at the back, this sweet series for kids celebrates triumph over adversity through some of history’s favorite characters.”



Key things to know:

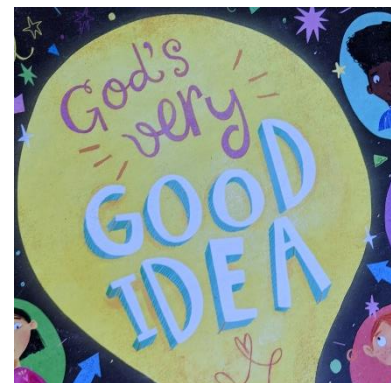
- This series of books originally focussed on women from all kinds of backgrounds who made a difference. While this focus is still clear it has expanded to tell the story of men and women from different backgrounds, who overcame and who made a difference in many areas of life.
- These books aren’t specifically Christian but it does include some Christians within their series.

[Click here to view.](#)

God’s very good idea

Author/illustrator: Trillia J. Newbell/Catalina Echeverri

“Exploring how God made everybody different in all sorts of ways, God's Very Good Idea is a timely, bright, and inspiring book with a unique message: That because God made everyone unique, special and in his image, we should love everyone like we love God.”



Key things to know:

- Due to the focus on God making us unique the illustrations in this book reflect that in race, gender, age and disability.
- This book takes you on a journey from God creating humans to current day arguments around difference to what God has planned for us now and in the future.

Videos

These are a couple of short videos that are helpful to share with children to help them understand this issue. These videos aren't specifically Christian but they help us to understand and convey the issue to different ages.

With both we'd recommend watching with an adult and having a comfortable space to talk and question together afterwards.

A Kid's book about Racism

- The author reads his book to us. It very simply but powerfully outlines what racism is. This is best watched with an adult and with space to talk and question together afterwards.

[Click here to view.](#)

A Kid's book about belonging

- A similar style to the video above. The issue being addressed here is when you don't feel like you belong. This is best watched with an adult and with space to talk and question together afterwards.

[Click here to view.](#)

Craft Materials

Whether diversity is visible or not within your spaces, you can demonstrate it through the craft materials you offer. For some this will help to normalise that there are differences and encourage them to recognise and include diverse people. For others it will mean they can create themselves, their family and/or friends in a more realistic way.



Some ideas include:

- Skin tone felt tips, crayons, paint etc
- Paper skin tones – hands, bodies, faces, paper, masks
 - Do think through how people can add features to them, pens will not show clearly on darker paper so do consider stickers, glue etc.
- Dough, clay, pipe cleaners

Toys

Often toys in are churches have been donated or are second hand. This is brilliant. We do not need to buy lots of dolls to reflect as many ethnicities as possible. But it is helpful to reflect on how diverse your toys are.

Although this resource focusses on racial diversity, do consider how disabilities, gender roles, different common languages etc can also be represented.



Some things to think about:

- What do our dolls, small world people etc reflect?
- Are our books diverse in their illustrations, cultures and author's background?
- Is there diversity in our jigsaws, puzzles etc that show people, places, jobs, cultures?
 - A jigsaw of the world can be an excellent conversation starter.
- Does our play food and equipment suggest a certain cultures food?
 - You can be creative with salt dough or loose parts play to extend it.
- Can you include instruments from different cultures?

Planning groups and sessions

These are a few key things to consider as you plan your sessions and groups. Many of these are not exclusive to children but relevant to everything we run. In your planning of the year, term and sessions keep these in mind and take time to look back and review as well. Not every element you do or use will be diverse, but are you fostering diversity across sessions, series and terms?

Curriculum

Consider how you include key issues around diversity, justice, equality and forgiveness within your plans. You might run a specific series, but always consider how key issues are threaded through as well. For example when something happens...how do we help our children respond?

Stories

Tell faith stories from around the world. Wherever possible include an actual image or illustration of the person. Alongside verbal stories consider wall displays etc.

Music

Be creative in finding songs from all over the world. Some you might learn together others might form a multicultural background music list. If you use worship videos to watch or learn actions from, can you find ones that represent more than one ethnicity?

Videos

Whether it's a Bible story, an action song, a lesson, a cartoon...consider who is being represented and who is not? Look for variety across the videos you share.

Artwork

Consider who is being represented and who is not. And, ask if you are sharing different cultures, places and representations of God etc.

Maps

This might seem simple but having a globe or map within your space means you can show people where these stories were or are happening. You can also use it when talking about current news stories etc and use it to help you pray for specific countries and places.