

Coretta Scott King Award 2001 Discussion Guide



American Library Association
Social Responsibilities Round Table

Coretta Scott King Task Force

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www.ala.org/srrt/csking

The Coretta Scott King Award *Discussion Guide* was prepared by the 2001 CSK Award Jury:

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The **Coretta Scott King Award Seal** was designed by internationally known artist Lev Mills in 1974. The symbolism used in designing the seal centers around Dr. King's teachings and doctrines, the purpose for which the Award was founded.

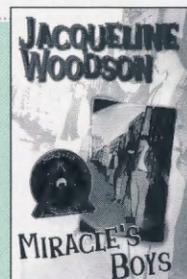
The basic circle represents continuity in movement, revolving from one idea to another. Within the circle is the image of a black child reading a book. The five main religious symbols below the image of the child represent nonsectarianism. The superimposed pyramid symbolizes both strength and Atlanta University, where the Award was headquartered at the time the seal was designed. At the apex of the pyramid is the dove, symbolic of peace, one of Dr. King's doctrines. The rays shine toward peace and brotherhood.

The CSK Award: A Living Legend

For over thirty years, books by African American writers and artists have been honored by receiving the Coretta Scott King Award. This Award promotes understanding and appreciation of the culture of all peoples and their contributions to the realization of the American dream. The Award is designed to commemorate the life and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and to honor Mrs. Coretta Scott King for her courage and determination to continue the work for peace and world brotherhood. The multidimensional characteristics of the authors' and illustrators' works reflect the African American experience from both the historical and contemporary perspectives. Opportunities to celebrate the rich and powerful experiences through these books lie in the hands of the adults in children's and young adults' lives.

This *Discussion Guide* is, therefore, dedicated to those teachers, parents, librarians, booksellers and caregivers who are committed to enriching the lives of children and young adults with quality literature. Three broad thematic categories characterize this year's winners: "Heroes and 'Sheroes,'" "Family Stories," and "Contemporary Urban Culture."

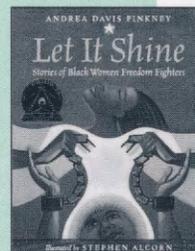
2001 Coretta Scott King Awards



2001 Author Award Winner

Miracle's Boys
Jacqueline Woodson

G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS

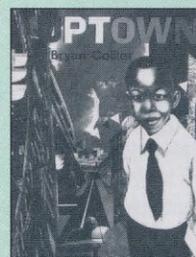


Honor Book

*Let It Shine:
Stories of Black Women
Freedom Fighters*
Andrea Davis Pinkney

illustrated by Stephen Alcorn

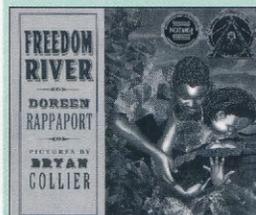
HARCOURT



2001 Illustrator Award Winner

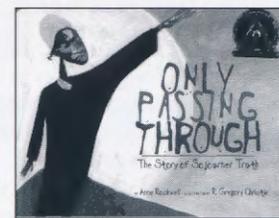
Uptown
Bryan Collier

HENRY HOLT



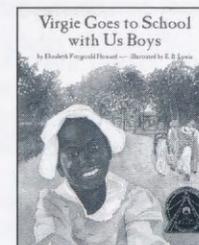
Freedom River
illustrated by
Bryan Collier
text by Doreen Rappaport

JUMP AT THE SUN/HYPERION



*Only Passing Through:
The Story of Sojourner Truth*
illustrated by
R. Gregory Christie

text by Anne Rockwell
KNOPF/RANDOM HOUSE



*Virgie Goes to School
with Us Boys*
illustrated by
E.B. Lewis
text by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard
SIMON & SCHUSTER



HEROES AND 'SHEROES'

Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters
by Andrea Davis Pinkney
Illustrated by Stephen Alcorn
HARCOURT

Only Passing through: The Story of Sojourner Truth
by Anne Rockwell
Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie
KNOFF/RANDOM HOUSE

Freedom River
by Doreen Rappaport
Illustrated by Bryan Collier
JUMP AT THE SUN/HYPERION

Though enslaved by laws and prejudice, Americans of African descent did more than just dream of freedom and equality. They did more than just escape to the North or to Canada before the Civil War. They did more than just yearn for civil rights and equality in the century after the Civil War. Some risked their lives to return to the South to guide others. John Parker was a slave who bought his freedom and became a conductor on the Underground Railroad. His story is told in *Freedom River* by Doreen Rappaport. On a night so quiet that you could hear the sounds of crickets, John risked his life to guide a family from the slave state of Kentucky to the free state of Ohio. Collier's dramatic collage illustrations convey the fear and loneliness of the nighttime journey. His efficient use of hues creates a deep sense of tension and inspiration.

Some spoke out in the northern states against the horrors and injustices of holding people in bondage and tearing families apart. In *Only Passing Through*, Anne Rockwell tells the story of a slave girl named Isabella who finally gained her freedom in New York state through the efforts of a white family who opposed slavery. Years later in 1843, she, too, had a dream. She took the name Sojourner Truth and began to travel all over the North speaking out against slavery. Christie's powerful paintings accentuate faces and hands and his use of bold colors and strident brush strokes convey the intensity of Sojourner's spirit. The primitive art stylistically interprets the struggle and portrays the historical circumstances in compelling ways for the young reader.

Many joined sit-ins, fought for education, founded organizations, and sat down on segregated buses. Andrea Davis Pinkney, who grew up in a family of civil rights activists, selected ten African American women who made a lasting impact in the 19th and 20th centuries. They represent a vast spectrum of famous and not so famous individuals. Sojourner Truth, Biddy Mason, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ella Josephine Baker, Dorothy Irene Height, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Shirley Chisholm are profiled in brief but lively and vivid biographies that highlight what made all of them so determined and so very brave. Each biography is introduced by a color illustration that sets the stage for the narrative. She also writes about the ways in which their perseverance and accomplishments improved life for all Americans.

These three books profile men and women who risked their lives in many different ways to fulfill a dream of equal opportunity with dignity.



ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

- Look closely at the art in *Freedom River* and then create collage illustrations that combine photographs of family and friends with illustrations from magazines that resemble 18th and 19th century clothing and buildings.
- Identify other African American artists who use collage illustrations in books.
- Sojourner Truth met Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglas. Read about their lives and write a two-person play recreating a conversation she might have held with one of them.
- Imagine Sojourner Truth standing alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. on August 28, 1963 during the March on Washington and write her speech. Picture all ten women from *Let It Shine* sitting on a stage in your school auditorium. What questions would you ask them and what answers would they give?
- Think of yourself as a TV reporter accompanying one of these women on one important day in their life. What would you say on the 6 o'clock news?

RELATED CSK TITLES

Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave
by Virginia Hamilton. Knopf, 1988.

Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary
by Walter Dean Myers. Scholastic, 1993.

Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Freedom Movement
by Lillie Patterson. Facts on File, 1989.

Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman
by Alan Schroeder. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1996.

Mississippi Challenge
by Mildred Pitts Walter. Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Now Is Your Time! The African American Struggle for Freedom
by Walter Dean Myers. HarperCollins, 1991.

Rebels Against Slavery: American Slave Revolts
by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack. Scholastic, 1996.

Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman
by Fredrick McKissack and Patricia C. McKissack. Scholastic, 1992.

FAMILY STORIES

Miracle's Boys
by Jacqueline Woodson
G.P. PUTNAM'S SONS

Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys
by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard
Illustrated by E.B. Lewis
SIMON & SCHUSTER

In *Miracle's Boys*, Jacqueline Woodson demonstrates how the power of unconditional love and family memories keeps a family together, even after suffering tragic loss



of both parents. Guilt and hurt burden each of the three orphaned brothers over their parents' deaths, yet as they struggle with their feelings, they know inside of themselves that they are there for one another no matter what they must face. Memories of parental love and support give them each strength to confront their difficult emotional pain surrounding their parents' deaths, as they reach out to one another, and finally begin to heal. The complexity of this emotional family drama is unraveled to reveal a story, which reflects the true essence of brotherhood. The author's resonant yet compassionate voice succeeds in creating familiar and memorable characters.

In *Virgie Goes to School With Us Boys* by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard and illustrated by E.B. Lewis, a 2001 Honor book, family memories played an important role in creating the impetus for the story, as the author remembered hearing about her grandfather's walk for miles to a Quaker school after the Civil War. In this story, Virgie's strength and determination shine through as she joins her brothers in the long walk and plans to teach her parents what she learns in school. The author's comfortable and appealing storytelling style is exquisitely complemented by Lewis' ethereal and expressive watercolors.

These titles dealing with family raise some good questions about what it means to be a family, and how families provide enduring strength, yet can cause the most hurt when you lose someone you love.

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

- Determination is a strong personal characteristic of the main characters in both of these stories. What role do you think determination played in affecting what happened to their family life?
- In *Miracle's Boys*, how do you think Ty, Lafayette, and Charlie knowing where they came from helped them through their difficulties?
- The author Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard gives insights into how she learned her own family history in the afterword to *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* and the 2001 edition of *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. How could you find out more about your own family history?
- Work with your family members to construct a picture of your family tree.

RELATED CSK TITLES

Bud, Not Buddy

by Christopher Paul Curtis. Delacorte Press, 1999.

Heaven

by Angela Johnson. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Toning the Sweep

by Angela Johnson. Orchard Books, 1993.

In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers

by Alan Schroeder. Illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. Lee and Low, 1997.

The Patchwork Quilt

by Valerie Flournoy. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial, 1985.



CONTEMPORARY URBAN CULTURE

Uptown

by Bryan Collier

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

Uptown is an upbeat portrayal of urban contemporary culture. The resident tour guide takes the reader on an intensely personal and metamorphic tour of Harlem. One enters to the sound of a train, "Uptown is a caterpillar/Well it's really the Metro-North train. . . ." and exits on the wings of a butterfly.

"Uptown is a song sung by the Boys Choir of Harlem. Each note floats through the air and lands like a butterfly." Collier's colorful and lyrical text tantalizes the senses with evocative language escorting the reader through his neighborhood, "Uptown is Harlem . . . Harlem world, my world."

Readers will want to linger on each page to unravel the multi-layered collage illustrations. Collier's use of textures, tones, and media create a visual cornucopia that surprises anew with each reading experience.

ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS

- In what ways does *Uptown* create a "you are there" experience for the reader?
- What elements make this tour of *Uptown* unusual, different, particularly enjoyable?
- How do the illustrations work with the dialogue to stimulate the senses?
- Plan a virtual tour of a place you know well, your neighborhood, your school, or local shopping plaza.

RELATED CSK TITLES

Black Cat

by Christopher Myers. Scholastic Press, 1999.

Harlem

by Walter Dean Myers. Illustrated by Christopher Myers. Scholastic Press, 1997.

Monster

by Walter Dean Myers. Harper Collins, 1999.

Night on Neighborhood Street

by Eloise Greenfield. Illustrated by John Spivey Gilchrist. Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991.

Slam

by Walter Dean Myers. Scholastic Press, 1996.

ABOUT THE AWARD

The CSK Award has grown since its inception in the late 1960s. At its humble inception at the May 1970 dinner gala of the New Jersey Library Association, Lillie Patterson was honored for her biography, ***Martin Luther King, Jr. Man of Peace***. In 1972, CSK held its first breakfast at an ALA conference site (but without ALA recognition). Official affiliation with SRRT came in 1980 and in 1982 the American Library Association recognized the Coretta Scott King Award as an association award. Success of the CSK Task Force can be attributed to the work of tireless volunteers and visionary founders. For a more complete history consult two works: ***The Coretta Scott King Awards Book, From Vision to Reality***, Edited by Henrietta Smith, American Library Association, 1994 and ***The Coretta Scott King Awards Book, 1970-1999***, Edited by Henrietta M. Smith, American Library Association, 1999.

Among their many other functions, book awards provide a simple means for casual browsers in bookstores and in libraries to find material that is engaging, well crafted, and satisfying both emotionally and intellectually. The Coretta Scott King Award particularly introduces the best in African American literature to all children. The Award now graces dozens of titles from picture books for the smallest children to novels and nonfiction for teenagers. In this guide, we have examined some of these titles from different angles and perspectives.



This guide was produced by the 2001 Honor-winning Publishers:
Harcourt, Jump At The Sun/Hyperion, Knopf/Random House Children's Books,
and Simon & Schuster.