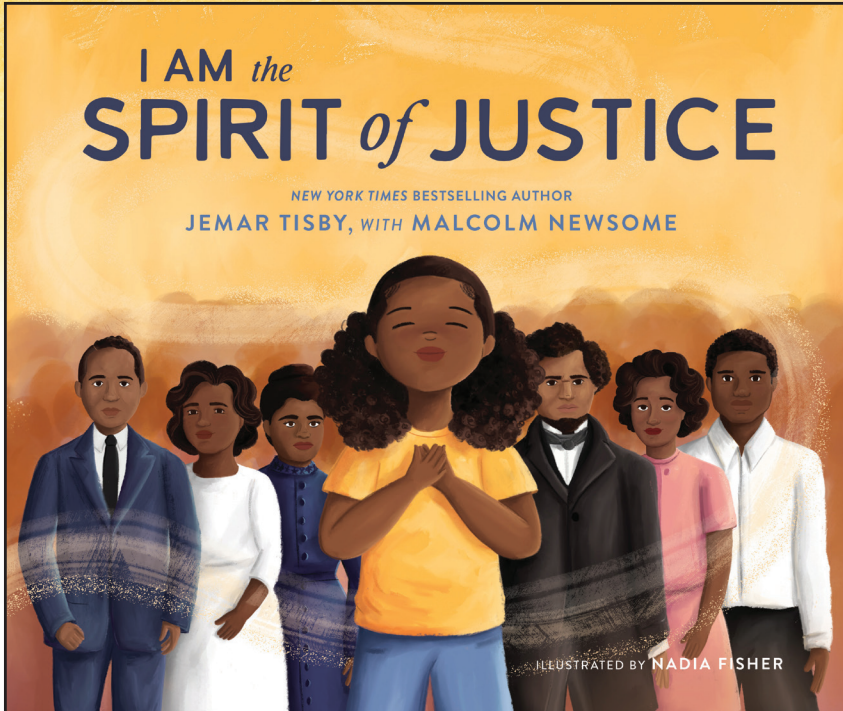


Curriculum GUIDE

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I AM *the* SPIRIT *of* JUSTICE

BY
JEMAR TISBY
with
MALCOLM NEWSOME

ILLUSTRATED BY
NADIA FISHER

I*Am the Spirit of Justice*, from *New York Times* bestselling author Jemar Tisby, uses lyrical text and moving illustrations to take students on a journey through the history of the United States of America, highlighting the ways people have been fighting for justice from the very beginning.

This moving picture book is the young reader companion to Jemar Tisby's *The Spirit of Justice* and is cowritten by author and poet Malcolm Newsome, with art by illustrator and activist Nadia Fisher. This beautiful and sweeping book is a great introduction to the history of civil rights for the youngest readers and an important addition to the libraries of anyone working for justice.

Discussion Questions



Where does the story begin? What words are used to describe the people there?



Look carefully at the illustration on pages two and three. How do the colors the artist used make you feel? Describe the expressions on the people's faces in this illustration.



Why do you think the authors chose the symbol of wind for the Spirit of Justice? Find examples of wind in the illustrations in the book.



Discuss what it means to segregate people. Why do you think the authors describe segregation as “invisible walls”?



Two similes are used to describe the Spirit of Justice: “I erupted like a volcano” and “I rumbled like an earthquake.” Discuss why the authors might compare the Spirit of Justice to these natural phenomena.



How have people been treated unfairly over the course of our country's history up to today? Cite examples from the story.



Reread the last statement of the story (pages 28–29). How does this make you feel? Which words help to create this feeling?



What message or lesson do you think the authors hope that people take from reading *I Am the Spirit of Justice*?



The discussion questions, activities, and worksheets in this guide were created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master's and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

Activities

A Glossary of Powerful Words

The authors of *I Am the Spirit of Justice* use many powerful words to trace the concept of justice throughout American history—words like **liberty**, **segregation**, **abolishing**, **perseverance**, and **resisting**. Work with a partner to find five powerful words from the book. The words may be from the list above or other words that you and your partner find. Use these words to make a glossary of powerful words from *I Am the Spirit of Justice*. List the words in alphabetical order and write a definition for each.

Demonstrating Unity

Brainstorm ways that your classroom, school, or community works together to include everyone and to treat all fairly. As a class, create a mural of connected pictures depicting examples of fairness and inclusion.

Identity Posters

Understanding each person's identity in a community is an important step in creating a just society. Think about what makes you the person that you are. Design an identity poster that includes illustrated captions for your name, traditional foods that you enjoy, your cultural celebrations, and your family. Display these posters around the classroom, and discuss as a group which elements of your classmates' identity are similar and which elements are unique.

A Justice Hero

Several justice heroes are referenced or pictured in *I Am the Spirit of Justice*, including the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, Denmark Vesey, Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, Martin Luther King Jr., and many others. Select one of the heroes from the book and research their life and work and the role they played in emphasizing the Spirit of Justice. Write a short, informative report on how your selected hero worked to get others to see unfairness and their plan of action to make life in America more just for all.



Name: _____

Your Voice Matters

When injustice exists, advocates and allies don't stay silent, they speak up to make others accountable for their thoughts and words. If you hear someone say something mean to or about a classmate, how might you respond to call attention to their unjust remark?

EXAMPLE: Mary says to Alice, "Marsha's haircut makes her look like a baby!"

You might reply, "That's not nice. How would you feel if someone said that about your hair?"

Think of other ways you might respond to mean comments or belittling statements made to or about others. Write your replies to injustice in the speech bubbles.



Name: _____

Action Words

The authors chose strong verbs in *I Am the Spirit of Justice*. These verbs show the action people took to recognize and respond to injustice when they encountered it. Look through the story and pick five powerful verbs. List them in the chart and describe the feelings that the verbs give the reader.

POWERFUL VERB	FEELING THE VERB CREATES

Name: _____

A Logo for *I Am the Spirit of Justice*

A logo is a simple design that represents a company, organization, or idea. After discussing the message or lesson of the story as a class, what symbol do you think best represents the message presented in *I Am the Spirit of Justice*? A raised fist? Joined hands? Hearts gathered by the wind? Design your very own logo for the book. Create a colorful graphic and use the writing lines to describe the reasons behind the design of your logo.

