



Suggested Social Justice Book List For Young Upstanders

1. **The Whispering Town** by Jennifer Elvgren, Illustrated by Fabio Santomauro - Residents of a small town in Nazi-occupied Denmark work together to provide a hidden Jewish mother and son safe passage to neutral Sweden.
2. **Separate in Never Equal** by Duncan Tonatiuh -Almost 10 years before *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a “Whites only” school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California.
3. **Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike of 1909** by Michelle Markel, Melissa Sweet - The true story of the young immigrant who led the largest strike of women workers in U.S. history.
4. **The Elephant with a Knot in His Trunk** by Nancy Patz and Stuart Sheer - Kofi, a young elephant, was born with a knot in his trunk. His disability keeps him from eating, drinking, and trumpeting as other elephants do. His peers bully him, and Kofi feels isolated and inadequate. When he discovers Big Ebo, the meanest bully, caught in a whirlpool, he faces a challenging decision. Should he attempt to rescue the bully? Can succeed? Should he even try?
5. **Side by Side/ Lada A Lado: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/ La Historia de Dolores Huerta y César Chávez** by Monica Brown and Joe Cepeda - A powerful and accessible bilingual picture book that highlights "the power and impact of ordinary but dedicated citizens." Every day, thousands of farmworkers harvested the food that ended up on kitchen tables all over the country. But at the end of the day, when the workers sat down to eat, there were only beans on their own tables. Then Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez teamed up. Together they motivated the workers to fight for their rights and, in the process, changed history.
6. **Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story** by Ken Mochizuki and Dom Lee - A portrait of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania in 1940, explains how he used his powers--against the orders of his own government--to assist thousands of Jews escape the Holocaust, actions that resulted in the imprisonment and disgrace of his entire family.
7. **Jars of Hope: How One Woman Helped Save 2,500 Children during the Holocaust** by Jennifer Roy and Meg Owenson - Amid the horrors of World War II, Irena Sendler was an unlikely and

unsung hero. While many people lived in fear of the Nazis, Irena defied them, even though it could have meant her life. She kept records of the children she helped smuggle away from the Nazis' grasp, and when she feared her work might be discovered, she buried her lists in jars, hoping to someday recover them and reunite children with their parents.

8. **Rosa** by Nikki Giovanni and Bryan Collier - Fifty years after her refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus, Mrs. Rosa Parks is still one of the most important figures in the American civil rights movement. This tribute to Mrs. Parks is a celebration of her courageous action and the events that followed.
9. **The Case for Loving: The Fight for Interracial Marriage** by Selina Alko and Sean Qualls - This is the story of one brave family: Mildred Loving, Richard Perry Loving, and their three children. It is the story of how Mildred and Richard fell in love, and got married in Washington, D.C. But when they moved back to their hometown in Virginia, they were arrested (in dramatic fashion) for violating that state's laws against interracial marriage. The Lovings refused to allow their children to get the message that their parents' love was wrong and so they fought the unfair law, taking their case all the way to the Supreme Court - and won!
10. **Brundibar** by Maurice Sendak and Tony Kushner - When Aninku and Pepicek discover one morning that their mother is sick, they rush to town for milk to make her better. Their attempt to earn money by singing is thwarted by a bullying, bellowing hurdy-gurdy grinder, Brundibar, who tyrannizes the town square and chases all other street musicians away. Befriended by three intelligent talking animals and three hundred helpful schoolkids, brother and sister sing for the money to buy the milk, defeat the bully, and triumphantly return home. Brundibar is based on a Czech opera for children that was performed fifty-five times by the children of Terezin, the Nazi concentration camp.
11. **Mother Jones: Labor Leader** by Connie Colwell Miller - Tells the story of Mary "Mother" Jones, a leading labor union and child labor activist in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Written in graphic-novel format.
12. **Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote** by Tanya Lee Stone - Elizabeth Cady Stanton stood up and fought for what she believed in. From an early age, she knew that women were not given rights equal to men. But rather than accept her lesser status, Elizabeth went to college and later gathered other like-minded women to challenge the right to vote. Here is the inspiring story of an extraordinary woman who changed America forever because she wouldn't take "no" for an answer.
Elizabeth Leads the Way is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.
13. **Delivering Justice: W.W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights** by Jim Haskins - A gripping biography of the mail carrier who orchestrated the Great Savannah boycott — and was instrumental in bringing equality to his community.
"Grow up and be somebody," Westley Wallace Law's grandmother encouraged him as a young boy living in poverty in segregated Savannah, Georgia. Determined to make a difference in his

community, W.W. Law assisted blacks in registering to vote, joined the NAACP and trained protestors in the use of nonviolent civil disobedience, and, in 1961, led the Great Savannah Boycott. In that famous protest, blacks refused to shop in downtown Savannah. When city leaders finally agreed to declare all of its citizens equal, Savannah became the first city in the south to end racial discrimination.

14. **¡Si, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can!: Janitor Strike in L.A.** by Diana Cohn - is a bilingual fictional story set against the backdrop of the successful janitors' strike in Los Angeles in 2000. It tells about Carlitos, whose mother is a janitor. Every night, he sleeps while his mother cleans in one of the skyscrapers in downtown L.A. When she comes home, she waves Carlitos off to school before she goes to sleep. One night, his mamá explains that she can't make enough money to support him and his abuelita the way they need unless she makes more money as a janitor. She and the other janitors have decided to go on strike.
How will Carlitos support his mother? Carlitos wants to help but he cannot think of a way until his teacher, Miss Lopez, explains in class how her own grandfather had fought for better wages for farmworkers when he first came to the United States. He and the other children in his class join the marchers with a very special sign for his mom!