



Read Aloud Guide

Title: *My Hair is a Garden*, by Cozbi Cabreba

Best for: K - 2

Summary: This book is about a young girl named Mackenzie who gets teased by her classmates about her hair. She finds guidance and comfort in her neighbor, Miss Tillie, who shows Mackenzie that her hair is beautiful and not something to fear or be ashamed of. Miss Tillie shows Mackenzie how to care for her hair, and also how to think differently about what “pretty” means, using her garden as a tool.

Why we chose this book: Cozbi Cabrera has been an art director, clothing designer, and maker of muñecas (cloth dolls) collected worldwide. We love this book because it tackles an issue that is very common for young Black girls – being teased because their hair is different from other types of hair. This book shows us and shows students that black hair is different and beautiful, and it needs different care than other types of hair. There is even a section at the back with a hair guide and recipes.

Central themes: black hair, natural hair, teasing, self-love, self-care, support

Introducing the book: You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

“This book is about a young girl who gets teased about her hair, and her next-door neighbor who helps her learn how to take care of her hair and feel better about her hair.”

“Can anyone relate to being teased for something? You don’t have to share if you don’t want to; you can just give a quiet thumbs up if you’ve ever been teased for something.”

“Does anyone here have a helpful neighbor? What makes your neighbor helpful?”

After Reading: Debrief with students

“If you could meet Mackenzie right now, what would you say to her?”

“How is your hair like a garden? How do you give your hair love?”