

Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore

A RIF GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Themes: Community, Leadership

Grade Level: Kindergarten to 3rd grade

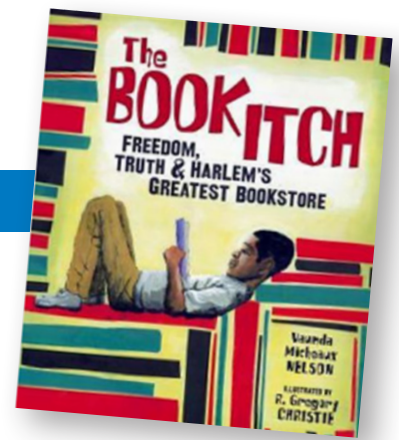
Book Brief: Lewis Michaux Sr. raised the funds to start the National Memorial African Bookstore in Harlem in the 1930s. This story celebrates literacy, the exchange of ideas, and using knowledge for power.

Author:

Vaunda Micheaux Nelson

Illustrator:

R. Gregory Christie



TIME TO READ!



Before reading, build background: Talk about bookstores and what your ideal bookstore would include. Would it be a huge inventory, a shopkeeper with great recommendations, or a comfortable chair for reading?

While reading, visualize: Use the illustrations to immerse yourselves in the story. Imagine stepping into the store, onto the street, and turning around to see and hear everyone as the action happens.

After reading, ask questions:

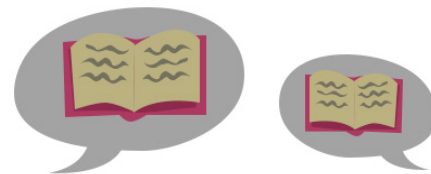
- Why was it so important for Lewis Michaux Sr. to open a bookstore?
- Why do you think so many people went to the bookstore?
- What did the bookstore offer in addition to books?
- What do you think the phrase “knowledge is power” means?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

ASKING QUESTIONS

Materials: Sticky notes or paper, writing utensil

In *The Book Itch*, the boy's dad says, “And don't you stop asking questions.” Practice the skill of asking questions while you read an informational book with your child. Start with a topic your child is naturally interested in and read an informational book about it together. Ask your child to come up with a set number of questions (five to ten, as appropriate). Then, select one or two (or all) of the questions and find the answers online or in another book.



BOOK CLUB

One of the benefits of the bookstore in *The Book Itch* is that people can congregate there to exchange ideas. Read the same book that your child reads (or read it together if your child is not reading independently, yet). Do not talk about the book as you read. Then, pick a place in the house to come together and have a conversation about the book and/or the ideas presented in the book. If you like, serve refreshments, as they did in the backroom at the bookstore.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



OTHER BOOKS ABOUT HOME:

- **Magic Trash: A Story of Tyree Guyton and His Art (2011)**
- **The Soda Bottle School: A True Story of Recycling, Teamwork, and One Crazy Idea (2014)**
- **Harlem Grown: How One Big Idea Transformed a Neighborhood (2020)**