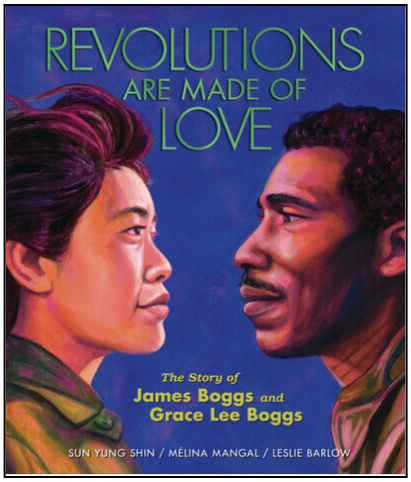
Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs — **Sun Yung Shin, Mélina Mangal, Leslie Barlow**

Book Lesson for Educators and Caregivers



Book Title: *Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs*

Written by: Sun Yung Shin & Mélina Mangal
Illustrated by: Leslie Barlow

Recommended Ages: 8 and up

Note: The historical references and vocabulary in this book may be new information for many young children. You may need to take more time to explain the references and guide children in making inferences based on the text and illustrations.

Book Summary to Share With Young Readers

This book is written as a series of poems about the lives of two movement activists, a married couple named James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs. James Boggs was born in 1919 to Black American parents in rural Alabama. His grandmother was especially important in his life. Seeking work, he left Alabama after high school and was a factory worker, organizer, and prolific writer. He was a leader and activist who fought for the rights of workers and citizens. Grace Lee was born in 1915 in Providence, Rhode Island, to Chinese immigrant parents. Allowed to attend college and graduate school, she earned a Ph.D. in philosophy. The two met in Detroit, Michigan, where they were married. What they created together was more than a marriage; it was a partnership. For decades, they fought alongside many others for fair housing, jobs, food, labor unions, urban gardens, and more to make the world a better place for all. Listen to learn more about their lives and contributions.

Reflection Questions for Educators and Caregivers

1. In reflecting on your childhood, when did you first become aware of examples of discrimination in your community or the larger world? How did you feel as your awareness and understanding of discrimination towards various people grew?

2. Why is it important to teach children about human rights issues like racism, xenophobia, fair housing, and workers' rights? In what ways can you empower them to think critically about the world through a justice lens so they can find ways to create positive change in big and small ways?

Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs — **Sun Yung Shin, Mélina Mangal Leslie Barlow**

Reader's Note

Be sure to preview this book before sharing it with children. There may be people, events, or groups referenced in the book that you need to become familiar with. Take time to do your own learning, as it will enrich the conversations you have with children. Use the glossary provided in the book to help explain vocabulary and concepts.

The following reviews may help educators communicate with families about the book and its message:

> "A painterly approach distinguishes exemplary portraiture from multimedia artist Barlow, making a picture book debut; the characters' expressions convey both their connection and their fervent passion for fighting for equity across a work about 'a true/ collaboration,/ a union/ of love/ and struggle.'"—*Publishers Weekly*
>
> "The prose poems are accessible and clear, with a pleasant cadence and beauty. . .The illustrations are also outstanding throughout, with bright colors and rich details. . . *Revolutions Are Made of Love* is a creative dual biography in poems—a meaningful story about love and partnership."—*Foreword Reviews*
>
> "The poetry is able to convey succinctly the extensive accomplishments of both subjects and the hurdles they faced together and individually, imbuing it with a tone of hope throughout. The illustrations are based on images and stories of the couple, portrayed thoughtfully in each time period of their lives with vivid imagery and color. An exceptional choice for libraries that cherish the stories of unsung, exceptional American people."—*School Library Journal*

More information about James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs, as well as Detroit Summer, can be found on the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center website, at boggscenter.org and the Boggs Foundation website at . On the page "Readings & Resources", you can find links to James's and Grace's books, videos about them, podcasts, and more.

In addition to the authors' notes, watching the following videos and listening to the following audio may also be helpful as you prepare to read this book with children. You may even decide to share parts of them with children so that they can see and hear the voices of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs.

- "The Story of Jimmy Boggs" (18:30), uploaded by Boggs Center Media, *YouTube,* Oct. 7, 2019.
- "Grace Lee Boggs on Being Human" (2:32), uploaded by Fetzer Institute, *YouTube,* May 19. 2010.
- "Partners in Struggle" by Grace Lee Boggs (7:58), *The Moth* podcast, Nov. 12, 2012.
- "A Century in the World" with Grace Lee Boggs (51:00), *On Being with Krista Tippet* podcast, Mar. 21, 2012.

Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs — **Sun Yung Shin, Mélina Mangal Leslie Barlow**

Please Note: Based on the age of the child, you may need to give more details about what it meant to live in the Jim Crow South before reading this book. Additionally, some children may have questions about slavery or lynching. **Observe carefully to determine each child's understanding, allow them to ask questions, and address any misinformation they may share.**

When reading and discussing this book with children, they will likely have questions, especially with some of the historical references and how they connect to today's current issues. As with discussing any human rights issue with children, AmazeWorks suggests the following tips:

- **Listen carefully.** Ask questions and listen to find out what children know and understand. Allow them to share their thoughts and name their feelings.
- **Respond to questions with accurate, developmentally appropriate answers. Tell the truth and respond in a calm tone.** With older kids, you can discuss what's happening in the context of history and connect to other issues throughout the world and history. If you and your family have your own stories that relate, talk about them. This will be easier if you identify and manage your own feelings about them in advance.
- **Check for understanding.** Observe children's body language and behavior for cues about what they are feeling and understanding.
- **Adults, be mindful of the news you consume and the news sources you follow.** Model how to look for credible sources and boundaries around social media usage.
- **Reinforce the importance of empathy, dignity, and respect for all.** What children see on the news or social media may be alarming, and it's important that your conversations maintain a respectful tone and uphold the inherent dignity and humanity of all.
- **Reject stereotypes.** Point out the multiple contributions activists make to America behind the scenes of visible rallies and public actions. Keep learning yourself, so you can be better prepared for supportive conversations with your children.
- **Take action.** Reach out to your representatives, donate to a reliable organization supporting laborers and immigrant rights, support BIPOC and immigrant-owned businesses, and volunteer if you are able.

Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs	Sun Yung Shin, Mélina Mangal Leslie Barlow

Anti-Bias Education Tenets and Social-Emotional Learning Competency Alignment

Anti-Bias Education	Social-Emotional Learning
• **Empathy and Understanding** • **Healthy Complex Identities** • **Respect Across Differences** • **Notice, Name, and Reject Bias** • **Responsiveness and Action**	• **Self-Awareness** • Self-Management • **Social Awareness** • **Relationship Skills** • **Responsible Decision-Making**

Discussion Questions (*essential questions in bold)

1. **Before reading:** Study the image of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs on the front cover. What do you notice? What words can you use to describe the emotions being felt or communicated?
2. Page 4: Why do you think Grace Lee Boggs was born with two first names? How many first names do you have? Do you know the meaning(s) or origins of your name(s)?
3. Pages 5-11: What do we learn from the book about what life was like when Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs grew up, about 100 years ago?
4. Pages 5-11: **How were Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs's childhoods different from each other? From yours? How were they similar?**
5. Pages 6 and 8: **Belonging is when someone feels confident to show up as their true self because they feel seen, heard, and valued. Growing up and as a young adult, how did Grace receive messages from the world around her that she didn't belong because she was Asian/Chinese American?**
6. Pages 10-11: **What did Mama Leila teach James Boggs about history and share with him to support him during hardship?**
    a. **What are some other ways adults supported James Boggs?**
7. Page 15: On the train to New York, why did Grace Lee stay in the Jim Crow car after the conductor told her she was allowed to move back to the "Whites only" car?
    a. What does the following line mean?: "Grace never forgot that America treated her better because she wasn't Black."
8. Page 16: **Why was joining the United Auto Workers Union significant for James**

Boggs?

9. Page 18-20: **What motivated Grace Lee Boggs to join other activists, such as the South Side Tenants Union in Chicago?**
10. Page 24-25: In the poem "Fearless", how does the repetition of the word "fearless" emphasize the theme, or main message of the poem?
11. Page 29: **What does it mean to talk the talk, walk the walk, and walk the talk? How did James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs walk the talk?**
12. Page 30-32: **What is a revolution? What is a revolutionist? How were James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs revolutionists?**
13. Page 32, 34-35: How did James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs continue their activism as they got older?
14. **After reading/listening:** Why do you think the authors chose the title, *Revolutions Are Made of Love*?

Journal Prompt

Choose one of the following quotes from inside the front cover of the book. **Write or draw** about what this quote makes you think of, how it makes you feel, and what the words mean to you. How does the quote connect to who you are?

1. "Each of us by ourselves is nobody. It is only when somebody interfaces with other somebodies that we all become somebody." - James Boggs
2. "Saying you have an ideology is saying you are one thing. I don't think any of us are one thing. I try to combine ideas. If I had to call myself anything, I'd call myself a community activist and a political thinker." - Grace Lee Boggs

Activities

1. Together, search through the book for examples of social issues that Grace Lee Boggs and James Boggs worked to change or improve. Then, invite young readers to make a list of school or community issues they are concerned about. Have them choose one of the issues and write about ways to problem-solve or address the issue. Pair or group students together to discuss and share their thoughts and strategies based on the issues. Then have students combine and create a single document for each issue. Collect the writings into a book of Collaborative Community Solutions that students can refine, refer to, and share.

2. Invite children to write a bio poem about James Boggs and/or Grace Lee Boggs, using information from the book, including what they learn from the illustrations. Use the following template:

(Line 1) First name
(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe the person
(Line 3) Important relationship (daughter of..., husband of..., etc)
(Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas the person loved (who loved...)
(Line 5) Three feelings the person experienced
(Line 6) Three fears the person experienced
(Line 7) Accomplishments (who fought for..., who organized..., etc)
(Line 8) Two or three things they wanted to see happen or to experience (who wanted...)
(Line 9) Where they lived
(Line 10) Last name

3. **For educators of older children:** Take time to discuss the quotes from the back of the book by James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs. Talk about their meanings, how they apply to today, and make a list of images or symbols that come to mind. In groups, have students choose one quote that really stands out, and incorporate the things you discussed into a mural design. Be sure students include the quote in their mural. Afterwards, display the murals, and have groups write a short artists' statement about their design choice and symbolism.

Revolutions Are Made of Love: The Story of James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs
by Sun Yung Shin & Mélina Mangal, illustrated by Leslie Barlow
Carolrhoda Books ® | ISBN: 9798765611524
Ages 8 and up | $18.99