

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Better with Books: 500 Diverse Books to Ignite Empathy and Encourage Self-Acceptance in Tweens and Teens.

By Melissa Hart

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The middle- and high-school years are times of critical self-discovery; not an easy process, especially for those who are different from their classmates. Novels can give young readers touchstones, examples of people who are like them and who not only survive but do so while finding a place of acceptance. Books also build insight and empathy. Buttressed by insightful opening essays based on the compiler's own experiences, this guide covers approximately 500 books in 11 categories: adoption and foster care, body image, immigration, learning challenges, LGBTQIA+ youth, mental health, nature and environmentalism, physical disability, poverty and homelessness, race and ethnicity, and religion and spirituality. The reading lists which make up each chapter are divided into books for preteens and books for teens. The annotations give major plot points and are concisely and engagingly written. An appendix of sources for teachers, parents, and youth is included, as are a further reading list, a bibliography, and an index (unseen). An excellent resource for middle-and high-school librarians, this could also also serve as a reference source for counseling programs or for church youth programs.

— *Ann Welton*

YA/C: High school libraries will be well served by this youth-focused resource, whether for collection development or reader's advisory. *AW.*