



SHORT Book review: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Anti-racist religious education



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AND METHODIST SCHOOLS





I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

Review by: Natasha Boyce

Review

This book is one part of six volumes of Maya's autobiography. Through the pages we learn about Maya's early childhood experiences, which include parental abandonment and sexual abuse. However, her story shows the power teachers hold in releasing children to tap into hidden potential. This is illustrated through the character of Mrs Flowers who supports Maya to overcome mutism. Also, we see the strength gained from religious conviction, demonstrated by the character of Maya's Grandmother. The descriptions of the church services bear a resemblance to the atmosphere of a Pentecostal service today.

Nevertheless, one of the strongest themes throughout the book is the harsh realities of racism. The book cleverly shows how White privilege applies to the poorest of the White community, and trumps Black individuals and communities regardless of social class or status.

