

The **TIME TRAVEL ADVENTURES** of **ARA**

**HARRIET TUBMAN AND THE
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD**



**Resources and Study Kit for Parents,
Caregivers, or Guardians**

This kit provides tools and discussion points to help families engage with "The Time Travel Adventures of Ara: Harriet Tubman and The Underground Railroad" and explore its rich historical and personal themes.

• About the Book:

- Title: The Time Travel Adventures of Ara: Harriet Tubman and The Underground Railroad
- Author: Channon Oyeniran
- Series: This is Book 1 of a five-part series that delves into the lives of Black historical heroes and Ara's family heritage.
- Synopsis: Nine-year-old Ara is unhappy about spending his March Break with his grandparents in St. Catharines, Ontario, wishing he were on a more exciting trip like his friends. His mother gives him a special, old bracelet that has been in their family for generations, urging him to think about his own history.

While playing with a new friend, Sam, in the forest behind his grandparents' house, Ara's bracelet glows green, and they are suddenly transported from 2022 to March 9th, 1860, where they meet Harriet Tubman. Ara and Sam join Harriet, also known as "Moses," on a dangerous mission to Niagara Falls, New York, to help the Ennals family, who are freedom-seekers, escape slavery and find safety in Canada West (now Ontario).

Through this adventure, Ara learns about the realities of slavery, the Underground Railroad, the meaning of courage and purpose, and the significant role of his own family's history and St. Catharines in the fight for freedom.

• Family Discussion Prompts:

- Empathy and Emotions: How does Ara feel at the beginning of the story, and how do his feelings change by the end of his adventure? How would you feel if you suddenly found yourself in a different time period?

- Family History and Identity: Ara's mom's family escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad. His mom gives him a special bracelet to connect him to his history. What is special about your family's history or heritage? Do you have any family heirlooms that tell a story?

- Courage and Purpose: Harriet Tubman emphasizes finding a "true purpose that motivates you" and the importance of courage. How do Ara and Sam demonstrate courage during their mission? What does it mean to be courageous in your own life?

- Understanding Slavery: Harriet explains that slavery is when "people own other people" and treat them as property. Discuss why slavery is wrong and the importance of freedom and human rights.

- St. Catharines Then and Now: Ara initially finds St. Catharines boring but later discovers its exciting history. If you live in or near St. Catharines, can you identify any landmarks mentioned, such as Salem Chapel British Methodist Episcopal (BME)? How do you think your community has changed over time?

- **Family Activities:**

- Map Your History: Locate Toronto, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Maryland, and Pennsylvania on a map. Discuss the distances freedom-seekers traveled.

- Explore Local History: If possible, visit local historical sites related to Black history or the Underground Railroad in your area. In St. Catharines, this might include the Salem Chapel BME or the Harriet Tubman statue.

- Creative Expression: Encourage your child to write their own short story about a time travel adventure, or draw pictures of scenes from the book. Ara has to write about his March Break.

- Glossary Exploration: Review the glossary at the end of the book together to understand terms like "Underground Railroad," "conductor," "freedom-seekers," and "drinking gourd".

Downloadable Resources: To support diverse programming, institutions can utilize free downloadable colouring sheets available on the book's website for children's activities. Additionally, a more detailed book brief can be downloaded for staff training, exhibit research, and public information materials.