

Story Boat Discussion and Activity Guide for All Ages

Overview of *Story Boat* by Kyo Maclear, Illustrated by Rashin Kheiriyeh

- In *Story Boat*, the older sister in a displaced family creates an imaginative world for her little brother out of the few objects they brought from home. The girl creates a nurturing *here* for her family. In doing so she pushes away the pain of what they left behind and the uncertainty of where they will arrive.

Framing the Discussion

- 84 million people are displaced across the globe. 35 million of them are children. The journey of the world's refugees is *our* journey.

Why use a picture book for an adult/all-ages book discussion?

There are many reasons to choose a picture book for an adult/all-ages book discussion. While the story in a picture book may be simple enough for younger readers to follow along, often a picture book contains themes and ideas that can spark thoughtful conversation in readers of all ages. Additionally, meaningful discussions can arise from an examination of the pictures themselves.

Picture books also offer patrons who would not normally join a book discussion the opportunity to engage in a library program. Reasons can vary from low literacy levels, lack of time to read a longer book, or being an English language learner. Whatever the reason, using a picture book allows participants a more accessible way to approach a difficult topic and engage in a group discussion.

Utilizing picture books also offers a unique opportunity to model literacy behaviors for your patrons. Reading the book together and discussing elements of the story, the themes, the pictures, etc., are exactly the behaviors encouraged in caregivers of young children to promote early literacy skills. By introducing a picture book to an adult/all-ages book discussion, library staff can model these skills and show how these behaviors can make reading a book with a child much more meaningful and engaging.

Lastly, offering a book discussion for all ages encourages the people in our communities to talk to each other and learn more about each other. It helps bridge generational divides and can illustrate that everyone in the community, no matter their age, has something to contribute to the conversation. It also allows people who would normally not attend because of childcare or elder care concerns to come to the program and bring their family members with them. All-ages programs help the library create a welcoming and safe place for their community.

Facilitating the Discussion

- Read the book *Story Boat* by Kyo Maclear with illustrations by Rashin Kheiriyeh, aloud as a group or independently before meeting as a group. Participants can also watch a

Story Boat Discussion and Activity Guide for All Ages

[recording of the read aloud of *Story Boat*](#) posted by [I'm Your Neighbor Books](#) with the publisher's permission.

- Encourage participants to share and discuss their thoughts and feelings about the book and book-related topics such as the refugee experience and fair housing.

Discussion Questions

- The girl in *Story Boat* says “*Here* is just here”. What does that statement mean to you? How do you think it relates to the refugee experience?
- What do you think makes a place *home* instead of just *here*?
- Even though the family does not have a permanent place to live, the girl lists things that the family has with them that they call *home*, such as a cup, a blanket, and a lamp.
 - Create a list of things that make you think of home or represent home. This can include physical objects, memories/stories, music, etc.
 - What is it about each item that makes you think of home?
- If you were forced to leave your home, what is the one item you would take with you and why?
- How do you think the illustrations support the story? Are they happy and uplifting or dark and gloomy? How do they change the mood or tone of the story?
- While this story allows us to see this experience from a child's eyes, what do you imagine the parents' experience was like? How are the experiences different? How are they the same?

Related Activity

- Create a paper story boat [from this activity](#) courtesy of [I'm Your Neighbor Books](#). Additionally, participants can record their hopes and dreams for the refugees across the globe.

Additional Information and Resources

- [Story Boat Storywalk](#)® with text-related questions geared to younger readers
- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO): Fair Housing information: <https://www.cvoeo.org/get-help/fair-housing-and-discrimination#:~:text=Each%20April%20we%20celebrate%20the,housing%20plays%20in%20thriving%20communities.>
- U.S Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) Vermont: <https://refugees.org/uscri-vermont/>
- UN Refugee Agency <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/>

Want to get involved with Fair Housing Month? Contact us at fhp@cvoeo.org

