

i'm your neighbor books

exploring this story & your own

These discussion questions were created by **I'm Your Neighbor Books** for the Welcoming Library. The **Welcoming Library** is a traveling collection of picture books set in our New Arrival and New American communities. From small towns to big cities, these immigration stories are helping readers (of all ages) Welcome and Belong. Consider bringing a [Welcoming Library](#) to your community.

Normally these questions would only be affixed to the inside cover of a Welcoming Library book. Because of a special project or event, we are offering these materials to you outside of the Welcoming Library project.

STORMY SEAS: STORIES OF YOUNG BOAT REFUGEES

By Mary Beth Leatherdale & illustrated by Eleanor Shakespeare (Annick Books)

The five young people in the story all endured similar hardships. They also share qualities that helped them survive. Can you name some characteristics that helped Ruth, Phu, José, Najeeba and Mohamed make it through these challenging experiences? Do you know someone who has those same types of qualities? Do you have them?

José returned to Cuba to make a film about his experience. Najeeba became an international lawyer so she could help women and children refugees. They both chose to "give back" to their communities to help others. Do you know someone who has struggled with a challenge and then worked hard to help others who have had a similar experience? Can you think of a time in your life when you helped someone after you had trouble with something?

The authors included a timeline of immigration events from 1670 to the present. Families throughout history were forced to leave their homes and risk their lives by taking a boat to safety. Today, there continue to be many people with the courage to risk everything to find a safe place for their children to grow up. What makes you feel safe? What can you and your family do to help new refugees who move into your community feel safe and welcome in their new home? If Ruth, Phu, José, Najeeba or Mohamed were new students in your classroom, what could you do to help them feel safe in your school?

In the introduction, Mary Beth talks about perseverance—the ability to keep going and survive under very difficult circumstances. Ruth was interested in staying alive. José prayed. Mohamed dreamt of his friends, happiness and safety. Do you know of other ways people have persevered? What helped them get through? What do you do when you are scared or lonely? What helps you get through a frightening experience?