



## WHEN I GET OLDER

### POEM OF COURAGE:

AGE RANGE: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES K-5)

CONCEPT: COLLABORATIVE COURAGE POEM

THIS ACTIVITY IS BASED ON *WHEN I GET OLDER*. WRITTEN BY K'NAAN AND ILLUSTRATED BY RUDY GUTIERREZ, THIS PICTURE BOOK IS FEATURED IN THE 2023 BEAUTIFUL BLACKBIRD CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL.

### PROMPT:

CREATE AN ILLUSTRATED POEM OF COURAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

### MATERIALS:

- LARGE SHEET OF PAPER
- DRAWING AND WRITING UTENSILS (MARKERS, COLORED PENCILS, PAINT STICKS, ETC.)
- STRIPS OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER
- SHEETS OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER
- TAPE
- PICTURE BOOK *WHEN I GET OLDER* BY K'NAAN

### STEPS:

1. TAPE THE LARGE SHEET OF PAPER DOWN ON A TABLE OR ON THE GROUND.
2. AT THE TOP OF THE PAPER, WRITE THE FIRST TWO LINES OF THE SONG "WAVIN' FLAG" BY K'NAAN: "WHEN I GET OLDER, I WILL BE STRONGER, / THEY'LL CALL ME FREEDOM, JUST LIKE A WAVIN' FLAG."
3. INTRODUCE *WHEN I GET OLDER* BY SHOWING THE BOOK'S ILLUSTRATIONS AND DISCUSSING HOW K'NAAN AND HIS GRANDFATHER USE POETRY AND MUSIC TO GIVE THEM COURAGE AND TO HELP THEM STAY CONNECTED TO LOVED ONES THROUGH SCARY SITUATIONS. POSSIBLE QUESTIONS INCLUDE:
  - A. WHAT DO YOU THINK GRANDFATHER MEANS WHEN HE TELLS K'NAAN THAT "POEMS WILL BE YOUR COURAGE?"
  - B. HOW CAN POEMS AND MUSIC BE LIKE MEDICINE?
  - C. WHAT DO WE THINK THE LYRICS "WHEN I GET OLDER, I WILL BE STRONGER" MEAN? WHAT ABOUT "THEY'LL CALL ME FREEDOM, JUST LIKE A WAVIN' FLAG?" HOW DO THESE WORDS MAKE YOU FEEL?

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CHILDREN'S  
BOOK FESTIVAL

- D. HAS THERE EVER BEEN A TIME WHEN YOU WERE FEELING SCARED OR LONELY? WHAT HELPED YOU TO FEEL LESS SCARED OR LONELY?
  - E. IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU SAY TO YOURSELF OR THAT SOMEONE YOU LOVE SAYS TO YOU THAT GIVES YOU COURAGE OR MAKES YOU FEEL AT HOME?
  - F. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A FRIEND WHO IS FEELING SCARED OR LONELY?
4. INVITE KIDS TO BEGIN ADDING WORDS AND DRAWINGS WITH THE THEME OF COURAGE IN MIND, EITHER DIRECTLY ONTO THE LARGE PAPER OR ONTO CONSTRUCTION PAPER THAT CAN THEN BE TAPED TO THE LARGE PAPER. THEY CAN USE THE STRIPS OF PAPER TO WRITE DOWN WORDS THEY TELL THEMSELVES, WORDS LOVED ONES SAY TO THEM, OR LYRICS FROM SONGS AND POEMS. THIS IS ALSO A GREAT TIME TO ASK SOME OF THE QUESTIONS LISTED ABOVE TO HELP PROMPT RESPONSES.
  5. AT THE END OF THE ACTIVITY, GATHER EVERYONE AROUND THE PAPER TO ADMIRE THE DRAWINGS AND READ THE COLLABORATIVE POEM ALOUD TOGETHER.
  6. OPTIONAL: PLAY MUSIC DURING THE ACTIVITY TO HELP INSPIRE!