

~ **SAKAI READS** ~

Expanding Perspectives DISCUSSION GUIDE

“We may have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race” ~ Kofi Annan.

“Fiction gives us empathy: it puts us inside the minds of other people, gives us the gifts of seeing the world through their eyes. Fiction is a lie that tells us true things, over and over” ~ Neil Gaiman

Introductory Discussion - (5 min.)

Begin by reading the definition and quote above. Invite student to discuss the following:

- Describe what compassion towards others looks like and give an example.
- Describe what compassion towards self looks like and give an example.

Title Specific Discussion - (15 min.)

- Choose some questions from the list provided for your group’s story to discuss.

Summary Discussion - (10 min.)

- How did reading the story help deepen your understanding of the importance of having compassion for others?
- Why do you think reading fiction novels can help inspire compassion in people?
- Do you have other suggestions for how to help increase compassion in our world?

Esperanza Rising

Pam Munoz Ryan

Themes: Determination, Discrimination, Patience, Character

Summary: Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico - she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise

above her difficult circumstances — Mama's life, and her own, depend on it. © 2016 Scholastic Inc

Discussion Questions

- 1) Abuelita teaches Esperanza how to crochet. Is there a skill or talent that someone in your family has that you have learned or would like to learn? Please describe.
- 2) Abuelita says, "There is no rose without thorns." What does this saying mean?
- 3) Why do you think Esperanza has such a hard time transitioning to her new life in Los Angeles?
- 4) On El Rancho de las Rosas, Esperanza told Miguel that they each stood on different sides of a river that could never be crossed. What does this mean? How do you think it made Miguel feel? How did their relationship change once they came to the United States?
- 5) A poor woman on the train to Los Angeles explains that although she is poor, she is rich. How can a poor person be rich? How can a rich person be poor?
- 6) Esperanza's mother tells her: "Esperanza, if we had stayed in Mexico and I had married Tio Luis, we could have had one choice. To be apart and miserable. Here, we have two choices. To be together and miserable or to be together and happy. Mija, we have each other and Abuelita will come. How would she want you to behave? I choose to be happy. So which will you choose?" (page 104) How did Esperanza change after her mother said this? What advice has a friend or family member given that has helped you? Please explain.
- 7) Esperanza gives Isabel the doll her father bought for her birthday. Why do you think she parts with her prize possession?
- 8) Abuelita always said, "Do not be afraid to start over." Think about a time you had to start over. How did your feelings about starting over change over time?
- 9) What is your family ancestry? Did your relatives come to the United States from another country? If so, from where? And what was their life like there?

Adapted from "Discussion Questions for Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan." Scholastic - Teachers, Scholastic,