



***The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi**
K-5 DISCUSSION GUIDE

Objective:

Students will explore themes of identity, cultural inclusivity, and acceptance through the story "The Name Jar."

Summary of the Book:

"The Name Jar" tells the story of Unhei, a young girl who moves from Korea to the United States. On her first day at school, she is worried that her classmates will not be able to pronounce her name, so she decides not to share it. Her classmates then create a jar full of potential names for her to choose from. Throughout the story, Unhei learns the importance of her name and identity.

Key Discussion Questions:

1. Understanding Names and Identity:

- What is special about Unhei's name?
- How do you feel about your own name? Does it have a special meaning?
- Why do you think Unhei was unsure about sharing her name with her classmates?

2. Exploring Cultural Inclusivity:

- Why do you think it was hard for Unhei's classmates to pronounce her name?
- Have you ever met someone with a name you found difficult to pronounce? How did you handle it?

3. Themes of Acceptance and Friendship:

- How did Unhei's classmates help her feel more comfortable at school?
- What does the story teach us about accepting others who are different from us?

4. Self-Reflection:

- What would you do if you were in Unhei's place?
- How can we make new students at our school feel welcome, especially if they are from another country?

Activities:

1. **Name Jar Activities:**

- Create a "Name Jar" in the classroom where students can submit names that are important to them. An alternate option is for students to create beaded name bracelets or a name placard with construction paper. Discuss the meanings or origins of these names.

2. **Writing Prompt:**

- Ask students to write a short story about their own name or a name that is special to them. They can share where the name came from, what it means, and why it's important.

3. **Cultural Show-and-Tell:**

- Have students bring in an item or share a story related to their culture or heritage. This will help students learn about and appreciate each other's backgrounds.

Additional Recommended Titles:

- [*That's Not My Name!*](#) By Anoosha Syed (PreK-K)
- [*My Name is Saajin Singh*](#) by Kuljinder Kuar Brar (PreK-2nd)

Alignment with Standards:

National Council of the Social Studies (NCSS) Themes:

1. **Culture:** Understanding how Unhei's name is a part of her cultural identity.
2. **Individual Development and Identity:** Discussing how names contribute to our sense of self and how we present ourselves to others.
3. **People, Places, and Environments:** Exploring how Unhei's move from Korea to the United States affects her identity and interactions with her peers.
4. **Global Connections:** Encouraging students to think about the global nature of names and cultural diversity in their own lives.

Common Core Standards (ELA):

- **Reading Literature (RL.K-5.1):** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **Speaking and Listening (SL.K-5.1):** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about topics and texts.
- **Writing (W.K-5.3):** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- **Language (L.K-5.5):** Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.