

The Little House of Hope: Discussion Questions



Reading books can lead you to ask lots of good questions. Here are some questions we have after reading *A Little House of Hope / La casita de esperanza*. There are no right answers to these questions. We only ask you to explore and express your thoughts and feelings.

1. Esperanza, Manolo, Mami, and Papi are far from home, but are making a new home in la casita. Look through the pictures and reread the words. What about their home and family is familiar? What is different? Is home a place or is home a group of people, or both?
2. Before learning English Mami and Papi worked in minimum wage jobs. When you see clerks or waitresses or people beginning to speak English, do you see them as mothers and fathers? Can you imagine their kids at home eating buttered toast and doing homework? What do you wish people knew about your Mami and Papi?
3. Mami's pots bubble with memories of home. What smells remind you of home or of being with family? What food makes you know that you are finally home and away from school or work?
4. Esperanza's name in English and what the family feels in their new home are the same word. What is it? What does the word mean to you?

This activity was created for the picture book *A Little House of Hope* or *La casita de esperanza* by Terry Catasús Jennings and illustrated by Raúl Colón (Holiday House Books).
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5. Conchita comes because "soldiers had taken her husband." Not every country can protect its citizens from being hurt and sometimes the government itself commits acts of discrimination, harm, or violence against its own people. Many immigrants, refugees, and asylees leave their countries looking for the safety their governments do not provide. Do you think every person has the right to be safe no matter where they are born?
6. Families like Patricia's come from Guatemala, El Salvador, and other countries. They often spend every bit of money they have saved and can borrow, leave so many they love behind, travel with people they may not trust, walk until they are exhausted, go without food or drink, encounter many dangers, and often do not know if the United States will allow them in or allow them to stay. Despite all these things, families make the journey. If the trip is so hard then staying at home must be harder. How does that make you feel?
7. Do you remember how they call the house "la casita" or the little house? How does la casita hold so many people? How many people does your home hold?
8. All over the world people speak more than one language. How are Conchita and Mami learning a new language, but also helping others learn? What languages do you speak? What languages do you want to learn?
9. Patricia and Enrique "get their papers" or permission to live and work in this country. Would you like them to be your neighbors? Tell us more.
10. What are your ideas to make your home, neighborhood, or school more welcoming to neighbors from other countries or filled with esperanza?

What questions do you have after reading the book? List them below.