



# When Clouds Bring Rain

## A Discussion Guide about the Picture Book for Teachers and Families

**SUMMARY OF THE BOOK:** Remembering their home in rural central Africa, a girl and her brothers navigate their new life in the United States as resettled refugees. At first, their experiences in the big city of Houston are disorienting and confusing. They discover that familiar things—like language, food, play, and even the rainy weather—can connect them to each other and to their new neighbors.

*The following questions about the book can be used in one-on-one conversation, small or large group discussion, or as writing prompts for independent class work.*

### QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN AGES 5–7 (K–2<sup>ND</sup>)

1. Why does the main character, Feza, like it when it rains? Do you enjoy the rain? Why or why not?
2. When Feza's brothers, Mosi and Bakari, remember their home, memories float above their heads. Can you find the pages later in the book with those same memories/scenes?
3. When Mama explains that their family won't be returning home, what three things does she want for her children? Are these things similar to what your parents or other adults in your life want for you?
4. Have you ever felt like your world was "upside down"? Maybe it was a new school or a new place to live or another situation that felt overwhelming and confusing. Notice in the "upside down" picture how the girl and her brothers are all holding hands. Who "holds your hand" (is there for you) when things are really hard?
5. Feza feels better when she can write in her journal and draw pictures. Have you tried this before? What makes you feel better when you are sad or struggling with something?
6. Why do you think it is special for Feza's neighbor to greet her by saying "uraho" ("hi") in Feza's first language? How can a friendly smile and a hug remind someone of home?

### QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN AGES 8–10 (3<sup>RD</sup>–5<sup>TH</sup>)

1. On the page when the girl's mother calls to her to come inside, the raindrops look like tears. How does this foreshadow what comes next in the story?
2. Turn to the page where Feza appears to have two faces. How can she be happy and homesick at the same time? Describe a time when you have experienced two or more emotions at once.
3. The book only mentions "Mama." What do you think happened to the children's father? Do you think it has something to do with the war that forced the family to leave home?
4. At the center of the book, the three children look out at the highways and tall buildings of the big city. Bakari wonders if they will live in one of the tall buildings. Do you think that ended up happening? If you have ever moved to a new place, what have been some things that have surprised you?
5. Feza, Mosi, and Bakari notice all the things that are different in their new home, and they also notice the things that feel familiar. Think about ways you connect with your friends and make new ones. Do your friendships involve favorite games, sports, or other fun activities? What about your favorite foods?
6. Did you notice the swirls and clouds in the illustrations? The clouds are a symbol for the children's memories—they are being carried from page to page, from place to place. What about clouds makes them a good symbol for memories? What other symbols can you find? (bridges, rain, etc.)

## RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

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Wondering how you can broaden the conversation with your students or children about global migration and forced displacement? To understand the context of the issue and complexities facing refugees, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) keeps detailed, up-to-date information. They offer resources for home and classroom, including age-appropriate activity guides, multimedia content, and other helpful tools.

*Find accurate terminology, data, and resources geared toward children at “Teaching About Refugees”:*  
[www.UNHCR.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html](http://www.UNHCR.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html)

## NEXT STEPS

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**1** Is there an organization that works with resettled refugees in your community? Consider volunteering! Whether you are originally from the U.S. or another country, all of us can welcome and support newcomers.

**Plant It Forward** offers economically disadvantaged refugees an opportunity to become self-sufficient through growing, harvesting, and selling produce from a sustainable urban farm.

**VOLUNTEER:** Participate in a community farm workday or buy fresh, locally-grown produce or subscribe to a weekly “farm share.”

[www.plant-it-forward.org](http://www.plant-it-forward.org)

**Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston’s Refugee Services** relies on individuals and groups to assist with welcoming tasks.

**VOLUNTEER:** Sponsor a refugee family, conduct a donation drive, or serve as a translator.

[www.imgh.org/refugee-services](http://www.imgh.org/refugee-services)

**FAM Houston** works for justice by building empowered community among refugees, immigrants, and local Houstonians.

**VOLUNTEER:** Collect clothing and household items, provide homemade or store-bought snacks for our Women’s Empowerment Group, and many more opportunities!

[www.famhouston.org](http://www.famhouston.org)

**2** Bullying and discrimination (like being treated unfairly because of your racial identity or nationality) are not okay anywhere—at school, in your neighborhood, and in places of worship. If you or someone you know is being mistreated, talk to a trusted adult to get help right away.

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

**3** Some laws and policies in the United States make it harder for refugees to come to this country. If you believe that refugees should be welcomed and supported in the U.S., get an adult’s help to contact your government representatives. You can write them a letter or an email to express how you feel about this issue and how it affects your life and your community.

[www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative](http://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative)

**4** Have you ever thought about making your own picture book? You could work with other students in your class or collaborate with family members or neighbors. Write and illustrate the story you want to share with others: you can easily create a book from folded paper, use a scrapbook with plastic sleeves from a craft store, or upload a digital version to an online photobook service to have it printed and shipped to you.