



Questions and Topics for Discussion

Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation by Duncan Tonatiuh

For a printable copy of these questions, visit: beclibrary.org/book-discussion-questions

1. What happened to the Mendez family when they tried to enroll the children in school? Do you think this was fair?
2. What is segregation and why did the Mendez family work to end it?
3. Why wouldn't the other parents sign the petition to integrate the schools, so that all children, regardless of their skin color or background, could have the same opportunities?
4. Were there locations, other than schools, where Mexicans weren't allowed? What were they?
5. Was Mr. Kent, the superintendent of the Garden Grove district, honest when he was questioned in court? What kinds of things did he say? How did that make you feel?
6. Why did the education specialists say it is bad to segregate children into different schools? Can you think of additional reasons why this is bad or unfair?
7. What was Judge Paul McCormick's decision? How do you think Sylvia felt when she heard it?
8. Why were people from different backgrounds supportive of the work the Mendez family did?
9. This book is considered "Nonfiction." What does nonfiction mean? (Older readers- did you know this was a nonfiction story?)
10. Look at the back pages of the book. There is a note from the author and more things to learn in the glossary and bibliography. Can you find a word in the glossary that is new to you? Which one?
11. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?
12. What would you say to the author of this book if you were to meet him? What would you say to Sylvia Mendez?

Do you have a good question to add to this list? Contact: reference@blueearthcountymn.gov