

The Cat Man of Aleppo
Discussion Guide
Grades Pre-K – 3rd

Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.

- Ask your students to think about a time in which they were kind. As a class, make a list of these actions.
- Tell students that you are going to read a true story about someone who demonstrated an act of kindness for his community during a difficult time. Read aloud the note from Mohammad Alaa Aljaleel in the beginning of the book prior to reading the story.
- Frontload vocabulary: *hope, flee, abandon, donation, sanctuary*

During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.

* *Follow each question with, “What details from the story make you say that?”*

- How does Alaa feel about his community before the war? How is this similar or different to how he feels during the war?
- Why do you think Alaa relates to the abandoned cats?
- What types of sacrifices is Alaa making to help the cats?
- How did the sanctuary bring people together from around the world?

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

- Discuss: How can an act of kindness change the world?
- Have each student think about one act of kindness they can commit to doing during the school day. As a class, create a kindness calendar for an upcoming month. Use students’ ideas to fill in the boxes for each day. At the end of each day, reflect as a class on whether they followed through with their commitment and how they can improve for the future.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.