

**PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: May**  
**Theme: Immigration and Migration**

**Book Title:** Inside Out & Back Again  
by Thanhha Lai

**Grade Level:** 4th / 5th

**Discuss:**

- Talk about the Vietnam War and what happened that caused Vietnamese people to leave their homeland. Where are some of the places that the Vietnamese people went and what happened to them when they arrived in these new places?
- What did you know about Vietnamese culture before reading the story? What are some of the things you learned as you read?
- Hà and her brothers are only allowed to take one item in their backpack other than clothes and food. Hà picks her doll that she once loaned to a friend which was then bitten by a mouse. What would you select to take with you? Why?
- Hà and her brother Khôi experience name-calling and teasing when they go to school in Alabama. Have you ever witnessed someone being called names and teased? What do you do about it? How would you feel if you were being called names and teased? How would you welcome a new student in your school or a new neighbor in your community?
- When Hà and her family introduce themselves to their neighbors, many of them are unkind and slam the door in their faces. Why do their neighbors do this? How does it make Hà feel? How would it make you feel?
- Compare Hà's life in Vietnam and Alabama. How are things different? How are they the same?
- Why does Hà love papaya so much? What might the fruit represent for her? How is that the same as or different from what the chick means for her brother Khôi?
- Hà and her family make many difficult decisions before they leave Vietnam, during their transition, and once they reach Alabama. What are some of the difficult decisions they made? Can you recall any difficult decisions that you or your family has had to make?
- In the Author's Note, Thanhha Lai says she hopes that "after you finish this book that you sit close to someone you love and implore that person to tell and tell and tell their story" (p. 262). Talk to a family member or friend about their experience growing up in a different place. Have a list of questions to ask them about their experiences.