

## **PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: September**

### **Theme: Multiculturalism**

**Book Title:** The Name Jar  
By Yangsook Choi

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

#### **Book Summary:**

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—*Yoon-Hey*.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- How do you think that you would feel on your first day of a new school in a new country?
- Why do you think the children on the bus teased Unhei about her name? How do you think Unhei felt?
- What does Unhei say in her new classroom when they ask her name? Why does she do that?
- What do you think about the jar of names left on Unhei's desk?
- When Unhei tells her mother she doesn't want to be "different," her mother says it is good to be different. What does her mother mean? Have you ever felt different? How did it feel?
- Unhei knows two languages. Do any of you speak two or more languages?
- How do you think Unhei felt when Mr. Kim told her about her name? What does Mr. Kim say Unhei's name means?
- Why did Joey take the name jar? How does Joey's support affect Unhei? What does Unhei show to Joey? Why was it important to Joey to learn how to say Unhei's name correctly?
- What is Joey's Korean nickname? What does it mean?
- Has someone ever mispronounced your name? If so, how did you feel? What did you do about it?
- Do you know the meaning of your name? Was there a reason why you were given your name?
- Rosie points out that "we didn't get to choose our names when we were born." Are there reasons that one might choose to change their name (ie. nicknames, family changes, gender identity or personal preference)?
- Why do you think Unhei chooses to keep her Korean name?
- Can you think of any other reasons why someone who is new to a country might be teased? How might these be related to their race or culture? If you were a witness to one of these teasing incidents, what could you do to be a positive change-maker (upstander), rather than a silent witness (bystander)?

