

## Meena's Saturday

### By Kusum Mepani

#### Focus Rings of Culture



#### Vocabulary

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| complicated | chaos      |
| nonstop     | iron       |
| village     | attraction |

### SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

#### Building Background Knowledge

To engage with this text, we suggest readers have the following background knowledge:

- Gender roles can influence who does what work in many families and in society. In the story, girls and women do much of the cooking, cleaning, and preparation, while boys are treated differently. Invite students into a discussion about gender roles they may have observed.
- Tradition can be both beloved and limiting. Meena loves her family's Saturday rituals but she also begins to notice traditions that make her uncomfortable or feel unfair.
- Immigrant experiences often blend languages and identities. Meena's family speaks Gujarati and English, reflecting the way many families balance heritage language and the language of the place where they live, contributing to rich cultural identities.

#### During Reading

Pause after the opening pages that show Meena and her sisters waking up early, drinking chai, and beginning their chores.

Ask students to turn and talk or briefly share: What does Meena's Saturday morning look like so far? What jobs do the girls have? How does Meena seem to feel about her morning?

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## Extension Activities

### Small Changes, Big Courage

Invite students to think about small changes that can make things fairer or kinder. Students draw or write about one small action they could take at school, at home, or with friends to make a positive change (e.g., sharing, speaking up, including others).

### Personal Narrative

Amina wants to make friends but worries that being different will make that harder. Write about a time you felt unsure in a new place or situation. What helped you feel more comfortable or confident?

## SEL Connection

Self-Advocacy & Responsible Decision-Making – Meena demonstrates responsible decision-making when she chooses to take a seat at the table, even though it challenges a long-standing tradition. Students can reflect on how making thoughtful, respectful choices can lead to positive change for themselves and others.

## Identifying Cultural Behaviors

| Cultural Behavior  | Examples from the Text  |
|--|---|
| Field Dependence: In some cultures, teaching and learning is best done in the context of groups' social and cultural experiences. Relevance is determined by contextualizing the learning, which is highly valued. | Meena learns about family roles, cultural expectations, and fairness through participating in the Saturday routine alongside her sisters, cousins, and aunties. Her understanding of tradition and gender roles develops through observation and participation, not formal instruction.                     |
| Communalism/Communal: "We" is more important than "I." The success of the whole (community, family, class, collaborative group) outweighs and is more valued than the success of the individual.                   | Meena's Saturdays revolve around caring for the larger community in many ways, like cleaning the house, preparing food and welcoming relatives. The family's weekly gathering honors shared history and mutual support, especially among immigrant families who helped one another settle in a new country. |

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### Suggested CLR Protocols

Educators can access all CLR protocols on CLR+

| Activity                 | CLR Protocol   |
|--------------------------|--|
| Responding Protocol      | <p><b>Stand and Deliver</b></p> <p>In CLR we aim for the use of 80% involuntary response protocols. This is a voluntary response protocol. A teacher asks a question, any students who want to respond stand and answer. If more than one student stands, they learn deference.</p> <p>Validate and Affirm (VA) Spontaneity, Sociocentrism, Kinesthetics<br/>Builds and bridges (BB) Individual Accountability, Turn Taking, Prompted</p>  |
| During Reading           | <p><b>Team Huddle</b></p> <p>The teacher plays music as students move around the room. When the music stops, the teacher calls out a group number and students quickly form groups that size to share, discuss, question, and build on their ideas. The music resumes and the process repeats 2-4 times.</p> <p>Validate and affirm (VA) Cooperative, relational, Conversational Patterns, verbal overlap, verbal expressiveness, Dynamic Attention Span; Musicality</p>   |
| Literacy (after reading) | <p><b>Save the Last Word</b></p> <p>Students listen to or read a text silently, then write or draw an interesting or important quote on one side of an index card and explain its significance on the other. In groups of 3-6, students take turns reading their quote aloud while peers respond to its meaning; the presenter then shares their explanation for the "last word." Repeat until all quotes are discussed. Use an involuntary response protocol before a voluntary response protocol, such as Stand and Deliver.</p> <p>Validate and affirm (VA) Student-Centered; Subjectiveness; Sociocentrism<br/>BB: Turn-taking, Written, Individual, Prompted,</p> |