

Activities for THE COT IN THE LIVING ROOM, written by Hilda Eunice Burgos, illustrated by Gaby D'Alessandro

Questions:

- 1) The people in this book live in the same neighborhood, so they are part of a community. All of us are members of more than one community; for example, the main character in the book is a member of her family, and she's also Dominican American, she goes to school so she's part of her school community and her class in particular. What communities are you a part of? Describe one of your communities, what it means to be a member of that group, and why it's important to you.
- 2) The adults who drop the kids off to sleep on the cot in the living room have jobs that require overnight work. Raquel's dad works in a hospital, Edgardo's mom is a singer, and little Lisa's grandmother cleans offices. Can you think of other jobs that people do at night?
- 3) The first time each of the children arrives, the main character feels jealous. Why is she jealous? Do you think she's right that they're lucky and she's not?
- 4) After she sleeps on the cot herself, the main character develops empathy for the other children. What is empathy? What do you think made her change her feelings? How did her change impact the visiting children? Why is it important to be empathetic? How can you be empathetic toward someone in need?

Activities:

- 1) STEM challenge: create a "cot" that can support the weight of a "guest" — you may use a small block or stone as the guest, and challenge yourself by using light materials, such as paper, for the cot.
- 2) Writing exercise #1: write the story of The Cot in the Living Room as told by Raquel, Edgardo, or Lisa.
- 3) Writing exercise #2: think of a special piece of furniture you have in your home and write a story about it, or write the story from the furniture's point of view.
- 4) Writing exercise #3: write a story about your bedtime rituals, why they're special to you, and what you would do if you had to go to bed without them.