



Read Aloud Guide

Title: *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson

Best for: K - 5

Summary: Every Sunday after church, CJ and his Nana take the bus to its last stop on Market Street. This Sunday, CJ begins to ask some questions: why they have to wait in the rain, why they always make this trip while his friends get to play, why his friends' parents have cars while he and Nana take the bus. Nana responds by giving CJ different ways of look at his surroundings, turning what he saw as "lesser" into something more beautiful than what he had wished for. Along the way Nana shows CJ the joy in helping and appreciating the people around them. At the end of the book, you find out that they have arrived at a soup kitchen to help serve a meal.

Why we chose this book: This award-winning book is a simple story but addresses many complex things about life in the city. While a young boy and his Nana ride a city bus, they encounter so many different types of people – a musician, a man and a dog, a man with tattoos, older boys listening to music. When CJ and his Nana get off the bus, CJ notices that the neighborhood is dirty, but his Nana reminds him how to find beauty by looking in the right direction, without sounding condescending. We love how the book addresses the reality of living in a city with lots of different types of people, and reminds us all about the importance of humanity, community, and connectivity. The illustrator is a local Bay Area artist!

Central themes: family relationships, poverty, giving, beauty, empathy

Introducing the book: You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

"What do you think the book might be about? Make a guess based on the title and the cover picture." (Allow students to make a prediction about the book.)

"This book is about a boy named CJ who has to ride the bus with his grandmother. Has anyone here ridden a bus? Can you tell us about it?"

After Reading: Debrief with students

"Why is CJ upset at the beginning? How does his mood change throughout the book?"

"Nana helps CJ see that there is beauty everywhere we look. Where are some places you find beauty in your school? Your neighborhood?"

"CJ and Nana volunteer at a soup kitchen on Sundays – they help cook and serve food to people. Can anyone tell about a time when you helped someone do something? How did you feel?"

"Why do you think the author decided to write this book?"