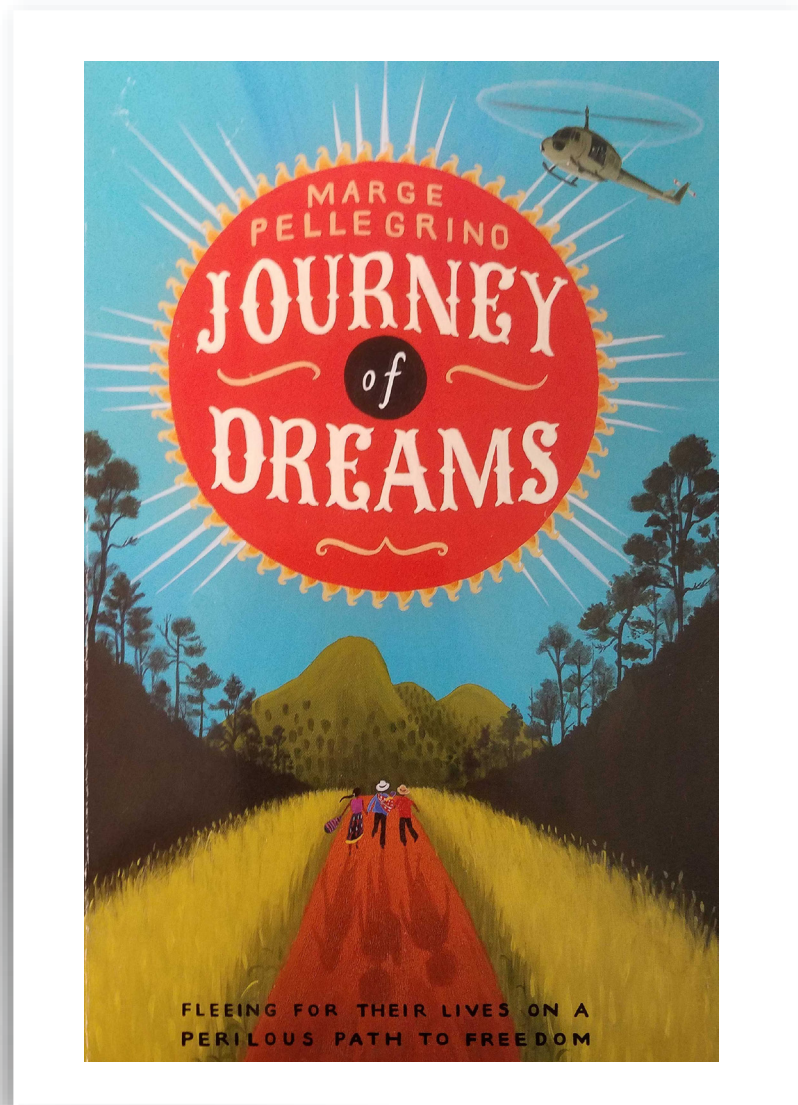


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Educator's Guide

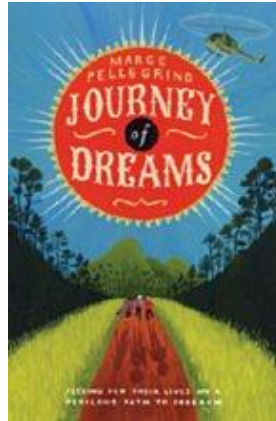
Journey of Dreams

Written by Marge Pellegrino

Published by Frances Lincoln, 2009

ISBN: 9781847800619

Ages 11 and up



BOOK SUMMARY

For the peaceful highlanders of Guatemala, life has become a nightmare. Helicopters slash like machetes through the once-quiet air. Soldiers patrol the streets, hunting down suspected guerillas. Villagers mysteriously disappear and children are recruited as soldiers. Tomasa's family is growing increasingly desperate, especially after Mama goes into hiding with Tomasa's oldest brother. Finally, after their house is razed to the ground and the villagers massacred, Tomasa, Manuelito, and baby Maria set off with Papa on a perilous journey to find Mama and Carlos, only to discover that where one journey ends, another begins. This gripping novel tells the story of how Tomasa's family survives the Guatemalan army's brutal regime and how, in the midst of tragedy, their love and loyalty — and Papa's storytelling — keeps them going on their harrowing journey as refugees to the United States. Mirrored in the tapestries of Tomasa's dreams, the dramatic events of the Guatemalan army's "scorched earth" campaign of the 1980s are tempered with hope and the generosity of the human spirit.

AUTHOR'S CORNER

A little bit more about Marge Pellegrino:

Marge Pellegrino jumped out of business and into the writing world in 1984. Passionate about sharing the power she's found in words, Marge leads writers of all ages in workshops that make them think in new ways and discover their own voices.



Awards and honors:

Juried member of the Arizona Commission on the Arts Artist Roster, 1998-present. As a teaching artist, Marge has been nominated for the Tucson Pima Arts Council's Lumie Award 2008, Governor's Award 2009 and named Local Hero by the Tucson Weekly, December, 2006.

Her Word Journeys program at the Pima County Public Library was a finalist for the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities' Coming Up Taller Award for excellence in after school programming in 2007 and won that distinction in 2008.

Writing awards include

- Judy Goddard young adult literature award, 2009.
- Personality profile earned, AZ Press Club Award, 2007.
- Second Place Poetry, SandScript Literary Journal Spring, 2003.
- Writers Digest, Memoirs/Personal Essay honorable mention, 2002.
- SouthWest Writers grand prize Storyteller Award and 1st Place in YA Fiction, 2002.

Check out [Marge Pellegrino's website](#) for more information on her other books and the multiple ways she's involved in the community.

USING JOURNEY OF DREAMS IN THE CLASSROOM

After spending the last month working on projects around the violence in Juárez and the disappearances and torture in Pinochet's Chile, I have to admit, I wasn't sure I was up for reading *Journey of Dreams*. While all the reviews were quite positive, every time I read the synopsis I'd start to feel the dread of one more incredibly depressing story that I was going to have to immerse myself in. I managed to talk myself out of starting it a number of times. Eventually I ran out of time, our book group meeting was just a few weeks away, and there was no more putting it off. *Once I started it though, I loved it.*

It is a beautiful book in so many different ways. I obviously had expectations based on the historical context of the book. While the story takes place during the violent period of the Guatemalan Civil War, it isn't a depressing story in the way one would expect. There are parts that are sad and difficult to read. These parts are even harder to come to terms with when you realize you're reading them through the eyes of a thirteen year-old girl. Pellegrino manages to deal with much of the violence implicitly, making the novel appropriate for a much broader age range. There is no explicitly gruesome violence. Tomasa talks about the smell of the burning villages or the sights of the mounds of what appear to be bodies in the village square, but the reality of the violence that these things speak to seems to hover just outside of the story. As an adult reader, I know the horror of what these things represent, but a younger reader more than likely would not. This means that a teacher could share the story of Tomasa and her family, without delving into the darker parts of this period in Guatemala if that wasn't appropriate for the grade level. For more background on both the Guatemalan historical context and the Sanctuary Movement, be sure to read the section "About the Story" at the end of the book.

It's a book that has the potential to open the eyes of our students to a world that they may not know. It puts a face and a story to the word "immigrant" that's been so hotly debated. For our students who know this story all too well because it echoes parts of their own, it's a way to see themselves reflected in our classrooms, to read about a protagonist who represents them. For these same students, it's a story of hope—an immigration story with a happy ending. Tomasa's voice is clear, strong, and endearing. Often we hear that we don't have enough books with strong female characters, but Pellegrino offers us one with 13 year-old Tomasa. But, it's not just Tomasa; all of the characters seem real and well-developed. I believe students will be able to identify with both Tomasa and her younger brother Manuel in significant ways.

There were many things that I loved about this book, but three things stand out that are present throughout the novel: the storytelling, the weaving, and Tomasa's dreams. The book opens with Tomasa's father telling one of their favorite stories. He does this every night before they go to sleep. It becomes an important constant as the story unfolds. There are always multiple meanings or interpretations of the stories, and at times they foreshadow what is to come. Tomasa and her mother are both weavers. Tomasa seems to process many of the things she experiences through imagining how she would weave them. Once they flee, she no longer has the ability to actually weave, so instead she draws pictures in her head or in the dirt on the ground. As I read these parts, I was reminded of the other projects we've worked on this semester where art became not only a way to heal from these experiences, but also a form of documenting or story-telling, a way to make sure that others would know what had happened. Tomasa's images seem to do the same: "Even the smallest noise made with a stick in the dirt could alert a civilian patrol. Without my loom, or even the earth, I can only draw in my mind. .

.The thought of a stick scratching these images in the earth helps me stop trembling” (p. 88). Tomasa’s dreams are another constant and important part of the novel. Through her dreams we see what she worries about, and often, how she makes sense of their experiences through her father’s stories. In all three of these things—the storytelling, weaving images, and dreams—Pellegrino uses incredibly lyrical and poetic writing. She paints pictures in the minds of the reader with beautiful figurative and sensory language. Many of these sections would be excellent examples to use as mentor texts to show students the power of descriptive writing.

There are many ways to integrate Pellegrino’s book into our classroom curriculum. Aside from the ways it could be used to teach writing, her content connects to multiple topics: the history of the Maya, the role of weaving in Mayan Culture, the Guatemalan Civil War, Día de los Muertos in Guatemala, the Sanctuary Movement, and Civil Rights activism. I’ve included ideas for how to teach on these topics in below in the lesson plan section of this guide.

It’s a book that I think will be a very valuable addition to our classrooms. I’ll leave you with one of my favorite quotes from the book:

“In the morning, we start walking again, beginning the pattern of our day as Mama might begin a new line on the loom. Each footstep is like a string wrapped by a thread, marking another piece of our journey. Only God knows how large the fabric will grow or how long our lives will be. If my prayers are heard, we will be with Mama and Carlos before it is finished. I wish I knew what kind of images we will weave between now and then” (p. 123).

LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES

The following lesson plans are divided into two sections:

- A short section of suggested activities that can be used before, during or after the reading of the novel which are organized thematically by different subject areas
- Guided reading questions organized by chapter

In addition to the lesson plans and activities included here, check out the excellent writing prompts and discussion questions Marge Pellegrino created for *Journey of Dreams* [here](#).

Common Core Standards Addressed:

K-12

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their

development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Geography

Find Guatemala on a map. Then find the cities that Tomasa and her family traveled to: Guatemala City, Mexico City, Tucson, and Phoenix. Trace one route that Tomasa's family may have taken to get from Guatemala City to Mexico City. Remember, they crossed where Mexico and Guatemala meet at a river. Next, trace a possible path from Mexico City to Tucson. Check the path created by the class, with the map provided at the end of the book. Think about what it would have been like to travel this distance—much of it on foot. How would you have felt if you were Tomasa?

Social Studies

Día de los Muertos in Guatemala

When the children meet Juana in Mexico City, she tells them about her village's tradition of creating kites as part of All Souls' Day (which is also known by some as Día de los Muertos). The links below provide lesson plans and resources to help teach about this tradition in the classroom. Using available resources, have students research this tradition. If students are familiar with Día de los Muertos celebrations in Mexico, ask them to compare and contrast the two countries' traditions. If time permits, allow students to create their own kite

- Lesson Plans on Día de los Muertos in Guatemala:
<http://portfolio.project.tcnj.edu/summer2005/Glading/Guatemala%20Day%20of%20the%20Dead.htm>
- The Drachen Foundation has compiled a number of resources and lesson plans on the Guatemalan kites here:
<http://www.drachen.org/learn/kite-cultures/guatemala>

The Maya:

Tomasa and her family are Mayan, and this an important part of understanding the story. Many students may not be knowledgeable about who the Maya are, their history, or their cultural traditions. Using appropriate print or online resources have students research the Maya, creating a poster presentation, essay, or some other form for communicating what they've learned. This could be done in small groups or individually. Brown University put together the following unit: [Culture Connect: Experience the Culture of the World](#), which would also be useful. One section of this unit is dedicated to the Maya of Guatemala, focusing on their tradition of weaving. This provides a more structured lesson plan for the entire class to participate in as a whole group.

Other lesson plans and resources on the Maya can be found at:

- http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/art/maya_6-07.html
- http://pa.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_2_17313_2059_285531_43/http%3B/pubcontent.state.pa.us/publishedcontent/publicsh/cop_environment/phmc/communities/extranet/archaeology/curriculumcontent/supplemental_maya1.pdf

Rigoberta Menchú and Human Rights Activism in Guatemala:

In *Journey of Dreams* Pellegrino alludes to the violence and human rights abuses many Guatemalans suffered during the Guatemalan Civil War. Depending upon the grade level of students reading the book, it may be appropriate to delve deeper into the details of this period of Guatemalan history. Rigoberta Menchú, an indigenous women from Guatemala, is well known for her efforts to expose the human rights violations suffered by many indigenous peoples in Latin America. In 1992 she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work. There are a number of resources available to help teach about her efforts:

- Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/rigoberta-mench>
- Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights: <http://curriculum.rfkcenter.org/curriculums/30?locale=en>
- The My Hero Project: http://www.myhero.com/go/hero.asp?hero=r_menchu

The Sanctuary Movement:

The Sanctuary Movement, or El Santuario, play an important role in aiding Tomasa's family in fleeing to the United States. Research with students what this movement was: Who was involved in it? How did it work? Were there repercussions for those involved? Why have some compared it to the Underground Railroad?

Guatemalan Immigration:

Immigration has been a heated topic for a number of years now, and more than likely will continue to be highly debated. Often left out of the discussion or debate is why such large numbers of people attempt to immigrate from Latin America. The film, *Harvest of Empire*, based on the book by Juan González, looks at this very issue—going country by country through Latin America looking at how U.S. economic and military interests contributed to dramatically increasing numbers in immigration. A section of the film looks specifically at Guatemala. Have students watch this section and discuss the factors that contributed to Guatemalan immigration to the U.S. The film does include some graphic images, so previewing the film to be sure of grade level appropriateness is encouraged.

Literary Interpretation: Guided Reading Questions

Chapter One:

1. Where and when does this story take place? (p. 7)
2. What is the dark shadow that the children are fleeing from? (p. 7)
3. What does the owl symbolize? Is seeing an owl a good or bad omen? What do you think it means for Tomasa's family? (p. 11)
4. What does Tomasa's family do at the market? (p. 18-21)
5. What happens to Hector and Carlos when they're returning from the market? (p. 24)
6. Make a prediction: Do you think Papa will be able to bring them back?

Chapter Two:

1. What do Tomasa, Mama, and Abuela do to calm themselves while they wait for news about Carlos? (p. 25-26)
2. How would you feel if you were Tomasa waiting to hear about your brother?
3. What has happened to Hector? Where is he? (p. 29)
4. What does Tomasa dream about that night? (p. 30)
5. Explain what you think Tomasa's dream means.

Chapter Three:

1. As nervous as Catarina is, what do you think the chances are that Hector will return from the army? (p. 31)
2. How do we know that Catarina is nervous? What is her body language like? (p. 31)
3. What does Mama say is coming out of the plane? What happened the last time the plane spread chemicals in the fields? What do you think these chemicals are? (p. 35)
4. Think about how the women respond to the things that Mama says. Do you think they agree with her? Why do you think they act the way they do? (p. 35-36)
5. What is thrown into Tomasa's home? What does it say? Who do you think it is intended for? What do you think it means? (p. 36-37)

Chapter Four:

1. What does the second message say? Do you think it's good or bad? How can you tell? (p. 39)
2. Why do you think Mama and Carlos have left? (p. 39-40)
3. Think about the story Papa tells about the wasps and the Jaguars. Why do you think he told this story the day that Mama and Carlos leave? (p. 41)
4. What does Tomasa's drawing symbolize? (p. 41)

Chapter Five:

1. Will Tomasa be returning to school? Why? (p. 45-46)
2. What is the deeper meaning in Papa's story for Tomasa? Think about what she dreams that night (47-49).

Chapter Six:

1. How do the women act when Tomasa goes to wash clothes with them? (p. 50)
2. What does Abuela tell Tomasa about the women? How is it related to Mama and Carlos leaving? (p. 51)
3. Why would anyone want all of the families to move away? Who would benefit from that? (p. 52)
4. What happens to the goat? Who do you think did this? Do you think it was the guerrillas or the soldiers? Why? (p. 53-54)
5. Why do you think Papa wants the family to stay close to home? Why do you think he won't let Tomasa go to the market? (p. 54-56)

6. How are things changing in the village? (p. 57)
7. Why do you think the school is closing and Maestro is leaving? The soldiers say there are too many problems in the village? What problems do you think they're talking about? How would closing the school fix them? (p. 57)

Chapter Seven:

1. What time of year is it now? How do you know? (p. 61)
2. How do they celebrate Easter in Guatemala City? (p. 61)
3. What trip is Papa preparing for? How does Manuelito feel about it? (p. 61)
4. How does Abuela help Tomasa prepare for the trip? Is Abuela going to accompany them? (p. 62-63) How does she explain this to Tomasa?

Chapter Eight:

1. What things are hidden in Tomasa's skirt? (p. 67)
2. Why must Abuela pretend that she is asleep? (p. 69)
3. Who stops them as they are trying to leave? What does the family have to do? (p. 69-70)
4. Imagine that you are not allowed to leave the city you live in. How would that make you feel? How would that change your life?
5. What interrupts the fiesta? Where are the booms and the shots coming from—is it in Tomasa's village? What do you think this means is happening in the next village? (p. 72-4)

Chapter Nine:

1. Tomasa says that almost all the boys Carlos' age have gone. Where have they gone? (p. 75)
2. Why do the people in the village treat Tomasa's family the way they do? What are they afraid of? (p. 76)
3. What happens as Tomasa, Papa and Manuelito are leaving the village? (p. 78) What do you think is happening?
4. What does Tomasa do when she hears the shots and smells the smoke? (p. 78-79)
5. What does the soldier do to Tomasa's home? Why do you think he does this? (p. 79)
6. What happens to Abuela? (p. 79)
7. Who stops the family? What does Papa say to try and convince the soldier to let them go? Why would the soldier, who is also Mayan, treat them this way?
8. Think about what Abuela said before about how some people would want all the families to leave so that they could take over the land—have the soldiers accomplished this by destroying all the villages? Who will benefit with all the villagers dead?

Chapter Ten:

1. Tomasa is speaking in similes when she says "Like the deer and the monkeys, the parrots and the toucans, we know to stay still and silent when the puma stalks" (p. 85). Who does the puma stand

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- for? Hint: who are they running and hiding from?
2. Without her loom, paper or even the earth, where must Tomasa draw now? (p. 88)

Chapter Eleven:

1. Why would Tomasa's face "become Mama's" to Maria? (p. 91)
2. Why do you think Maneulito is so angry with Mama? How would you feel if you were him? How do you think Mama feels? What would you have done if you were Mama—would you have stayed or gone? (p. 93)
3. What do you think the smoke is from? Is this a good or bad sign for Tomasa's family? (p. 94)
4. How does Mauelito help save Maria? What does he find? How did he know to look for this? (p. 96-97)

Chapter Twelve:

1. What did the mountain provide for Tomasa's family as they were traveling? How does Tomasa describe the mountain? (p. 98)

Chapter Thirteen:

1. Who are they going to stay with in the town? What are Tomasa and her siblings to call them? Do you think they are really family? Why? (p. 101, 103)
2. What advice do Tío and Tía give to Papa about where to go? Should he go to Guatemala City? Why? (p. 105-106)
3. What happens to those who criticize the soliders or the government? (p. 106)

Chapter Fourteen:

1. Tía introduces Tomasa and Maria to her two daughters. The two daughters react differently? Describe this. Why do you think the second daughter acts the way she does? Is it because she doesn't like Tomasa? Or, is there some other reason? (p. 110-111)
2. Why would it be dangerous for a soldier to find the family's identification cards? (p. 111-112)
3. What does Tía suggest about Tomasa and Maria's clothes? Why do you think it would be better for Tomasa and Maria not to wear the clothes their mother has embroidered? (p. 112-113)
4. What other kindness do Tío and Tía show Tomasa's family? Why do you think they do this? Would you do the same? (p. 114)
5. Where is the family traveling to now? (p. 115)
6. Why does the family sleep in their shoes? (p. 118)
7. What is the bus ride like for the children? (p. 120-121)

Chapter Fifteen:

1. How long has it been since the family has eaten? What do you think it would be like to be traveling long distances on foot without eating? Do you think you would be able to do it? (p. 124)
2. Does the Mexican official let Tomasa's family cross the bridge? (p.

125)

3. What does the term coyote mean for Tomasa's family? (p. 126-127)
4. How is the family going to cross the border between Mexico and Guatemala now? (p. 127)
5. What does Felipe tell them about his experiences trying to cross into Mexico legally? (p. 129-132)

Chapter Sixteen:

1. What does the newspaper say about the guerrillas and the soldiers? Think about the family's experience in their village. Was it the guerrillas or the soldiers who burned down their home and tried to kill them? Why do you think the newspaper would write a more favorable story about the soldiers? (p. 134)
2. What happens when Tomasa tries to get on the raft to cross the river? Who helps to get her on? (p. 135-137)
3. Does the family make it across to the Mexican side of the river? What happens? (p. 138-141)
4. Do you think what the coyote makes Papa do is fair? (p. 141-142)

Chapter Seventeen:

1. What happens their first day traveling in Mexico? Where is the family taken back to? (p. 146-148)
2. How long does it take them to earn enough money to pay the coyotes to cross again?

Chapter Eighteen:

1. How does the third crossing go for Tomasa and her family? (p. 150)
2. What surprises Tomasa when she climbs out of the truck? (p. 153)
3. Where do Tomasa and her family stay at first when they get to Mexico City? Can you imagine living like that? (p. 155-160)
4. Who do the children meet their first day in Mexico City? Why do you think they trust her? (p. 156-157)

Chapter Nineteen:

1. How are the traditions of Tomasa's village different from Juana's? (p. 161)
2. What is the significance of kites on All Souls' Day in Juana's village? (p. 162)
3. What warning do the children receive about Juana? What do you think it means? (p. 164)
4. What safe place does the family find to stay at? (p. 168)
5. Why do you think Tomasa is reminded of Abuela when she tastes the plant? (p. 171) Do you have a food, taste or smell that reminds you so someone special?
6. How many days does it take the children to find Juana? Do you think she was worried about them? How can you tell? (p. 186)
7. Why do you think Manuel is so attached to Juana? (p. 189)
8. Who is Amelia? What news does she share with Tomasa's family? (p. 191-193)

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9. What pictures does Tomasa draw for Amelia? How are the two pictures different? Why do you think the drawings make Tomasa cry? (p. 194)

Chapter Twenty:

1. What has Juana been carrying on her back? Is it really her baby? (p. 198)
2. What triggered Juana's emotional scene with the doll? What happened in her past that has upset her so deeply? (p. 200-201)
3. Who does Manuel begin to forgive when he hears Juana's story? (p. 201)

Chapter Twenty-One:

1. How would Tomasa's family have celebrated the New Year in the highlands? (p. 204)
2. What message does Hermana leave for Amelia to let her know the family is ready to be moved? (p. 207).
3. When Tomasa, Manuel, Maria and Papa leave the convent, do they know where Mama and Carlos are? (p. 210)

Chapter Twenty-Two:

1. How many miles do they travel to get to where they will find more help? (p. 212).
2. What have they done to try and blend in, to look more Mexican and less Guatemalan? Why do they do this? (p. 214)

Chapter Twenty-Three:

1. Why is Tomasa afraid of the priest? Why do you think she is surprised to find out he is the priest? (p. 215-216)
2. Where does the family spend the night in Agua Prieto? (p. 216)

Chapter Twenty-Four:

1. What will happen if the family is caught and can't convince the border patrol that they are Mexican? Where will they be sent? (p. 219)
2. Why do you think Amelia gave them brown and green clothes to wear? Think about what they had to do to cross the border. How would this help them?
3. What delays their trip? Do you think they'll make it across in one day? (p. 223-224)
4. Why do you think Tomasa is frightened by the mention of "rope"? Think about her earlier experiences crossing the border with rope. (p. 224)

Chapter Twenty-Five:

1. What game do they have to play during the ride in the car? Why do you think they play this—what are they doing? (p. 228-229)
2. When Tomasa wakes up, what city have they arrived in? Is that where they're staying? (p. 231)

Chapter Twenty-Six:

1. Who is waiting for them when they arrive at the house in Phoenix? (p. 236-237)
2. Does Tomasa recognize her mother at first? How does Tomasa describe her mother? (p. 236)
3. Why do you think it was hard for Mama to hear the story about her family crossing the river? How do you think it made her feel? (p. 239-240)

Typically in our Educator's Guides we include a section of reflective writing questions that provide the opportunity for extended responses. The author of *Journey of Dreams*, Marge Pellegrino, has already done this, providing both discussion questions and writing prompts on her website: http://margepellegrino.com/journal/?page_id=53

ABOUT US & THIS GUIDE

The Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI) receives resources from the U.S. Department of Education to support K-12 teaching about Latin America. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for teaching across grade levels and subject areas so educators can bring regional and linguistic knowledge of Latin America into their classrooms. For more information and materials that support teaching about Latin America in the classroom, visit our website at <http://laii.unm.edu/outreach>

Written by staff at the LAI, **Vamos a Leer Educator's Guides** provide an excellent way to teach about Latin America through literacy. Each guide is based upon a book featured in the **Vamos a Leer** book group. For more on **Vamos a Leer**, visit our blog at bit.ly/vamosaleer. This guide was prepared 3/2013 by Katrina Dillon, LAI Project Assistant.

To complement this guide, the LAI oversees the **Vamos a Leer blog**, which provides a space for exploring how to use literature to teach about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States. In addition to promoting discussion, the blog shares relevant resources and curriculum materials. Visit the blog at the following address: <http://bit.ly/vamosaleer>.