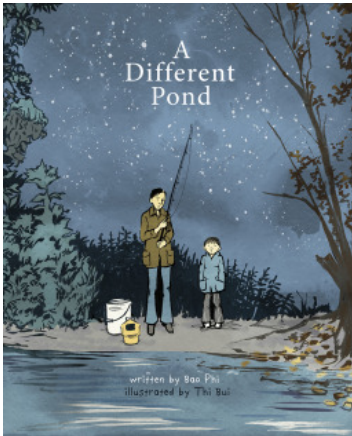


## Elementary Book Lesson for Caregivers



### Book Title

*A Different Pond* by Bao Phi, Illustrated by Thi Bui

### Recommended Ages

5 - 12 years old

### Book Summary to Share With Children

*This book is about a boy and his father who go fishing together on an early Saturday morning. During this special time together, the boy learns more about his family's Vietnamese history and struggles with making ends meet. He also finds important ways to help and contribute to his family.*

### Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- In reflecting on your childhood, when did you first become aware of class differences between you and your peers? What were your thoughts and feelings as your awareness and understanding of socioeconomic differences grew?
- What support does your child need in order to have empathy and understanding for people in the your community who may have less financial security than others, perhaps working jobs outside the hours of a typical workday?
- What messages did you receive about immigrants when you were a child?
- In what ways can you counter negative messages about immigrant families with respect and empathy?

### Reader's Note

While this semi-autobiographical story might seemingly be about refugee immigration, it highlights another important issue of socioeconomic class that often gets overlooked in picture books. The father in the book must work multiple jobs to make ends meet, and fishing is a necessary supplement to help feed the family. This book also shows one way a family gets food, which is an important window for some children and a mirror for others, as food is personal. Be aware, however, of reinforcing negative stereotypes about immigrants and refugees as “foreigners with strange practices” like fishing in the river instead of buying fish from the market or store.

The story gives an opportunity for understanding the family's perspective and respecting the different lived experiences of others. Fishing is also an important way for father and son to spend quality time together, despite the dad's multiple jobs, and for the son to learn about his family history and culture from another country.

Another consideration is how to validate and praise English language learners like the dad in the book as they navigate two different cultures using two different language skills. Though the son is proud of his dad's ability to speak two languages, he experiences teasing from peers about his dad's accent.

Read the author and illustrator notes to your child, so they can understand the importance of this story of immigration and poverty.

## Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

### SEL

- √ Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- √ Social Awareness
- √ Relationship Skills
- √ Responsible Decision-Making

### ABE

- √ Empathy and Understanding
- √ Healthy Complex Identities
- √ Respect Across Difference
- √ Notice, Name, and Reject Bias
- Responsiveness and Action

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do the dad and son fish so early on a Saturday morning? Why is it an important thing they do for the family?
2. Why does the dad say he needs to work a second job?
3. Why do you think that the boy's classmate says that his Dad's English sounds like a "thick, dirty river"? What does his English sound like to the boy?
4. How do we respect and encourage people learning a new language?
5. What do you think the Dad means when he says that "one day, his brother didn't come home" from the Vietnam War?
6. How might fishing at the pond help the Dad remember his brother?
7. What is special about the boy and the Dad's relationship? In what ways does the boy help his Dad with the fishing?
8. What do you think the title, *A Different Pond*, refers to?
9. What support can you give to our peers and friends who are language learners and who may also encounter being teased for having parents whose English sounds like "a thick, dirty river"?

## Journal Questions/Activities

- In the story, the boy seems very proud to help his father catch fish for the family. When was a time when you felt proud to help your family?
- Who earns money in your home? How does your family talk about the value of work?
- Write or draw about a memory in which you shared a special moment with someone close to you. What made that moment special? How did it shape your understanding of the person you shared it with, yourself, or the world around you? Try to be as descriptive or detailed as possible in sharing about your memory. Use the book for inspiration.
- Where does your food usually come from? Who has ever eaten food that you or a family member have caught, hunted, gathered, or grown? What did you think about that experience?