

JAHAN AKUA

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READER ACTIVITY GUIDE

Growing confidence from the inside out

Read together. Wonder together. Talk about what matters.

FOR GROWN-UPS - Why This Story?

Jahan Akua is impossible not to notice.

He is extraordinarily tall—so tall that his knees reach his teacher’s chin and raising his hand can become an adventure. Yet despite being physically noticeable, Jahan often feels as though no one really sees him.

He wishes he could stop growing.

A conversation with his mother helps Jahan understand something important: there are ways of growing that have nothing to do with height. He may not be able to decide how tall his body becomes, but he can decide how he grows on the inside.

And Jahan doesn't stop there. He finds a creative way to make sure his voice can be seen and heard in the classroom. His story moves from wishing he could change himself toward learning both self-acceptance and self-advocacy.

Talk About It Together. There aren't right or wrong answers. Let your child lead the conversation.

Before reading

- What does it mean to “grow”?
- Can you think of something that grows but can't be measured with a ruler?
- Have you ever felt different from everyone around you?

After reading

- Why does Jahan wish he could stop growing?
- How can someone who is so easy to notice still feel invisible?
- What does Jahan's mother mean when she talks about growing on the inside?
- What does Jahan do when he realizes his teacher can't see his raised hand?
- Do you think asking people to notice what you need is a kind of courage? Why?
- What is something inside yourself that you would like to grow?

A NOTE FOR GROWN-UPS

Children frequently compare themselves with other children: height, size, ability, appearance, reading level, athleticism, confidence.

It can be tempting to reassure them by saying their difference doesn't matter.

Jahan's story offers another possibility: *The difference can matter to the child without being something that is wrong with the child.*

We can acknowledge what feels difficult while helping children recognize the qualities they can nurture—and empowering them to ask for what they need.

In the classroom: Invite students to create their “inside growth ruler” at the beginning of the school year and revisit it later—not to measure achievement, but to notice ways they have become more confident, curious, patient, creative, or brave.

HOW I GROW ON THE INSIDE

Some of the most important growing can't be measured with a ruler.

Jahan can't decide exactly how tall he will grow. But there are lots of ways he can choose to grow on the inside. So can you.

I am growing my COURAGE when I...

I am growing my KINDNESS when I...

I am growing my CURIOSITY when I...

I am growing my CONFIDENCE when I...

I am growing my CREATIVITY when I...

Something else I want to grow is...

Measure Again Later!

Put today's date here: _____

Come back to this page someday.

Have you grown?

Not taller.

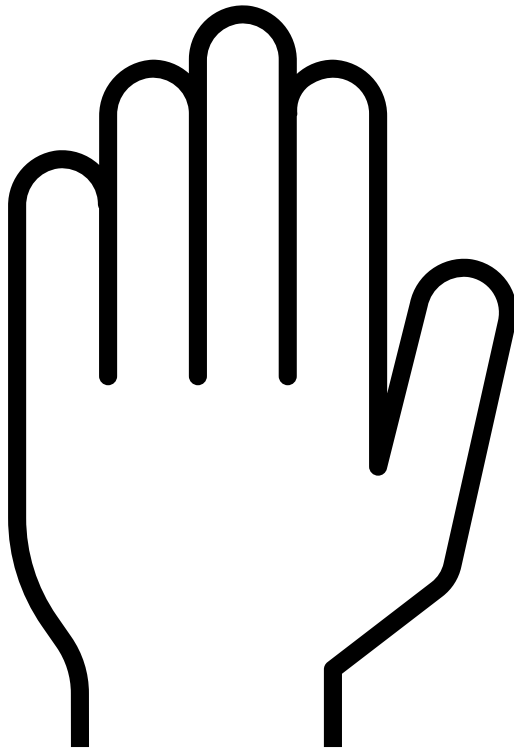
Inside.

HELP ME SEE YOU

Sometimes People Don't Know What We Need Until We Tell Them: This is where we lean into the second half of Jahan's message: *being seen and advocating for yourself*. Jahan raises his hand in class—but his teacher can't see it. So Jahan finds another way. That doesn't mean Jahan was doing anything wrong before. It means he discovers that sometimes we have to help other people understand what we need.

MY "PLEASE NOTICE" HAND

Decorate around your hand below. Then write something inside it that you would like other people to notice about you. *Something I'm really good at... Something I want to learn... Something that is hard for me... Something that helps me... Something I wish people understood about me... Something I'm proud of...* And importantly: **You don't have to answer all of these.** Your hand belongs to you.



PRACTICE FINDING YOUR VOICE

Finish one or two:

I need help with...

I would like a turn to...

I feel left out when...

I feel included when...

Something I want my teacher or grown-up to know is...

You don't have to change who you are to deserve to be seen.