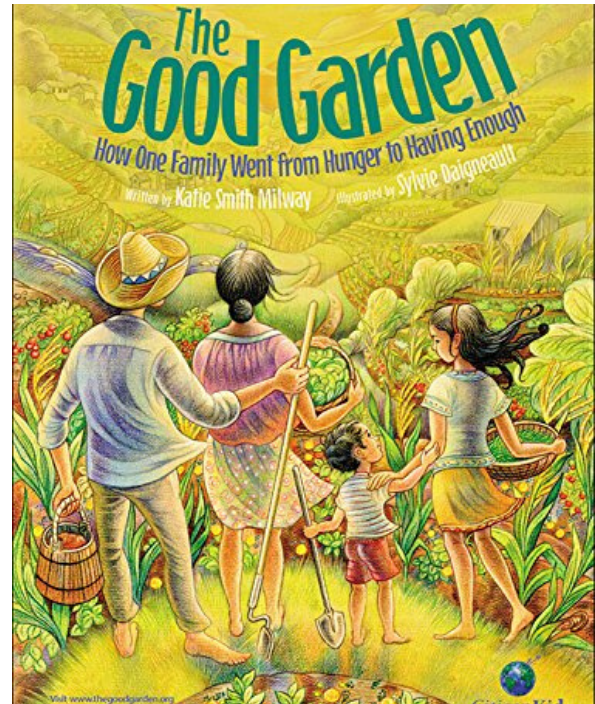




THE GOOD GARDEN

KATIE SMITH MILWAY

Maria Luz's family depends on the food that they grow in their garden. When the crops don't grow as well as they do usually, a hard choice is in front of her family: her father must leave and move far away to work and make money for the family to survive the winter. Maria Luz meets a teacher who helps their town learn a new way to farm, a way that helps the crops to grow better, this year and for years in the future. Can the new things she's learned save her family and all the other families in town?



Questions:

1. Sometimes when people use the same land for a long time to farm, the dirt becomes dry and bad for farming. If you were a farmer and your dirt started to go bad, how would you feel? What if you depended on your crop for money? For food?
2. This story takes place in Honduras, which is in Central America, south of Mexico. People may speak a different language there, and have a different culture, but do they feel differently in their hearts? In the ways that matter, are we more different than them, or more the same as them?
3. How would you feel if you didn't have enough food? How would you feel if your father was going far away to work so that you could have enough to eat?
4. Would it be easy to learn in a school with no windows? What would that feel like?
5. How do you think Maria Luz feels when her teacher has an idea of how to make the land good again?
6. When someone is doing something that seems strange or silly to you, should you make fun of them, or try to see if there is something to learn from them? Why?

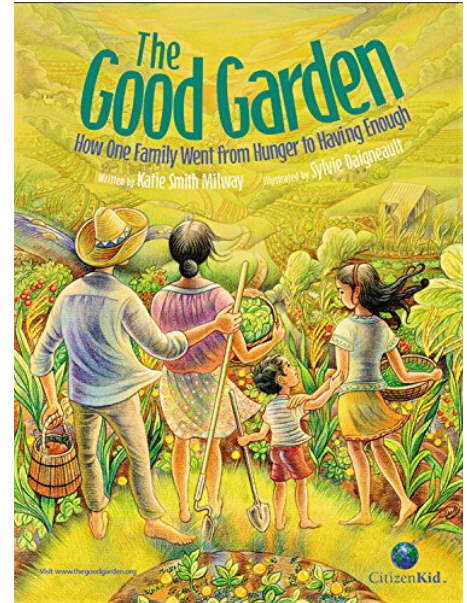


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Questions:

7. How do you think Maria Luz feels when her friend Alfredo moves away? How do you think Alfredo feels?
8. How do you think Maria Luz feels when she is trying the new ways of planting at her home? How do you think her brother feels when he comes to help?
9. How would you feel if you knew there was only a tiny bit more food at home and no money for more?
10. How does Maria Luz feel about the coyote? How can you tell? Is it easy to tell how someone feels from their facial expression and body language?
11. How does Maria Luz feel when she sees her father? How does he feel when he sees her? How would you feel seeing your dad for the first time after a long time apart?
12. Do grown-ups know everything? Should they try to learn from kids when they can, or is it true that kids can learn from grown-ups but grown-ups can't learn from kids? Does that mean that you could learn something from kids who are even younger than you?
13. At first they were afraid to go to the market and sell their vegetables themselves. Was it brave of them to go, even though they were scared? What did they learn by being brave and trying a new way of doing things?
14. What does hope feel like? How can you help someone who is having a hard time feel like there is hope for a better day tomorrow?