**Big Questions**

1. What makes it possible for us to connect to others? What gets in the way?
2. Is justice for all possible? Or will injustice always exist?
3. How does my race, culture or ethnicity shape who I am?
4. What are the limits of my ability to help or serve?
5. What are the greatest obstacles to teaching and learning?
6. What are the qualities of a good teacher?

**Opening Exercise/Activity**

With both of the options below, the activity can be done first individually where each participant takes some time to reflect individually and then it can stop here or be shared in a pair or shared in the larger group.

* Think of a time you had a responsibility that you had to fulfill. Did you feel obligated or proud to have that responsibility? How did if affect you or someone else?

**Clarification Questions**

1. What do we know about the narrator?
2. What is the narrator’s main responsibility? Why is he responsible for it?
3. Does Francisco want to move to Fresno?
4. After reading about Francisco’s first day working at the Sullivans’, why do you think he was dreading going to Fresno?
5. Why do the boys hide when the school bus drives by?
6. Why does Papá become alarmed when he sees the school bus? How do you think he feels about the fact that his children cannot regularly attend school?
7. When does Francisco start school? When does Roberto start school? Do you think this makes it hard for them to do well in school?
8. Why does Panchito “feel relief” when his father and Roberto leave to go to work the morning of his first day of school?
9. What challenges does Panchito face at school? Why does he face these challenges?
10. What do you make of the relationship between Mr. Lema and Panchito? In what ways can Mr. Lema help Panchito? In what ways is he unable to help?
11. How do you think Francisco felt about Mr. Lema? Do you think he like him? Why?
12. Francisco is very excited to get home and tell his parents about the good news that Mr. Lema is going to teach him how to play the trumpet.  What happens when he arrives home? How do you think Francisco felt? How would you feel if you were Francisco?
13. Would Mr. Lema still give Panchito one-on-one attention if he knew that he would be forced to leave? Is giving Panchito this attention worth Mr. Lema's time or should he be focusing on other students? Why or why not?
14. What do you think Panchito is thinking when he comes home from school and sees the cardboard boxes packed up again?
15. Is there a point at which Panchito should stop helping his family and look out for himself? If so, when might that point be? If not, why not?

**Significance Questions**

1. What is “the circuit”? How does “the circuit” impact Panchito and his family?
2. Are there any positive effects of “the circuit”? If so, what are they?
3. Why is the family moving at the end of the story? How does it influence the narrator?
4. How would you describe the narrator’s communities? When is he an insider and when is he an outsider?
5. What kinds of injustices are represented in this story?
6. Is/should the narrator be angry at the end of the story? With whom or what?
7. Whose responsibility is it to give this boy a better life?
8. Does this story strike you as fair? Why or why not?

**Implication Questions**

1. What, if anything, does this story make you think about in your AmeriCorps life?
2. In AmeriCorps, do we experience a “circuit”? If yes, can you provide details?
3. How does the circuit impact you and your work?
4. What is the life of an AmeriCorps staff person like as you think about the program year?
5. What makes it possible for us to connect to others? What gets in the way?
6. What are the limits of my ability to help the other AmeriCorps programs in the room? What are the greatest obstacles to teaching and learning?
7. Whose responsibility is it to ensure Nebraska AmeriCorps programs are strong?

**Closing Exercise/Activity**

The below 2 options can be done 1) individually only; or 2) individually and then share in a pair, small group or large group:

*Option 1*

Name 1 question or thing you are thinking about that this reading or discussion raises for you.

*Option 2*

To whom do you have responsibilities in this year and what does this story make you think of in terms of your responsibilities as an AmeriCorps member?