**Opening Activity or Discussion**

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 there or be shared in a pair or shared in the larger group.

Option 1

If you could ask the smartest person in the world just one question, what would you ask?

OR

Option 2

As an AmeriCorps member serving in our program, what are 3 questions you would like to ask and have answered?

**Clarification Questions**

1. Why does the emperor decide to ask his three questions?
2. What are the 3 questions? How do you think he settles on these three?
3. Who did the emperor initially ask to answer these questions for him?
4. What do you think of these questions?
5. How would you characterize the first round of answers to the emperor’s questions? Why are they unsatisfactory responses?
6. Why does the emperor go to the hermit? What does he expect to learn there? Why does he expect a seemingly “enlightened” man will be able to solve his dilemma?
7. What happened when the emperor asked the hermit the 3 questions?
8. When the emperor asked the hermit his questions, the hermit only listened, but did not answer him, only smiled. Why?
9. Why did the emperor stay to help the hermit in his garden?
10. Why do you think the wounded man was put into the story?
11. What does the hermit teach the emperor? How is this lesson taught? Do you think the emperor has had his three questions answered?
12. What do you think of this emperor?
13. In the end, who were the main people that taught the emperor lessons?
14. In what way did the emperor finally get enlightened?
15. What lessons did he learn?
16. In the story, there is something that the emperor and the wounded man have in common – what is it? Why do you think they both had a moment where they forgot why they were there or were confused?
17. At the end of the story, the following words were shared – “The strongest of all warriors are these two—Time and Patience” – what do you think of this statement?

**Significance and Implication Questions**

1. Are these 3 questions relevant to AmeriCorps or our program?
2. Are there questions you grapple with during your service? If so, what are they?
3. As an AmeriCorps member, are there important things you must remember at all times?
4. What are 3 simple questions you have about AmeriCorps or your program?
5. What are 3 deeper questions you have about AmeriCorps or your program?
6. Do you approve of the emperor asking his kingdom for advice?
7. Do you agree that the present is the most important time? Why or why not?
8. What do you think are the 3 most important questions in life?
9. "Who is your hermit?"

**Closing Exercise/Activity**

The below 3 options can be done 1) individually only; or 2) individually and then share in a pair, small group or large group:

Option 1

What do you want to focus on in this year?

Option 2

What makes a strong leader? What are the top 3 qualities that make a strong AmeriCorps member?

Option 3

What are some valuable lessons you have learned in your time with AmeriCorps or our program?