

*A Place Where Sunflowers Grow: Questions to Talk About*

1. Share about a time when you were unfairly punished. Explain the cause of the punishment and your feelings during and after the punishment took place.
2. The word “internment” means to imprison a group of people without a trial. The internment of Japanese Americans took place during a war. Give some reasons why this punishment was unfair.
3. Mari’s family could only take what they could carry when they left their home to go live in the Topaz Internment Camp. What would you have taken if you were in their situation?
4. Mari’s mother explained that it takes time, patience, and care to make sunflower seeds grow in a desert. Tell about a time that you had to work hard for a long time to make something good happen.
5. Mari and her family worked to make the best of a bad situation. What are some of the things that they did to make their time in the Internment Camp less miserable?
6. Write a journal entry about a typical day in your life. Then, imagine that you were living in the Topaz Internment Camp. Write a journal entry about what a typical day in the camp might be like. Compare your journal entries. Are any of your daily activities the same? What are the differences between the ways you spent your day?

7. The illustrations in this book help tell the story of Mari's life in Topaz. Look at the pictures and jot down what you learned about camp life. Then, draw pictures to share more about your journal entry telling about a day in your life.
  
8. Drawing and painting was a way in which Mari and her family were able to let go of their sadness about living in Topaz. What are some of the things that you do to change your mood when you are unhappy?
  
9. The author tells us that the U.S. Government apologized to the internees in 1988. What else do you think the government should have done to make up for the wrongful punishment?
  
10. The author wrote the story in book English and Japanese. Why do you think she decided to use both English and Japanese to tell the story? If you are able, rewrite your journal entries in another language and share them with someone who can read the language you chose.