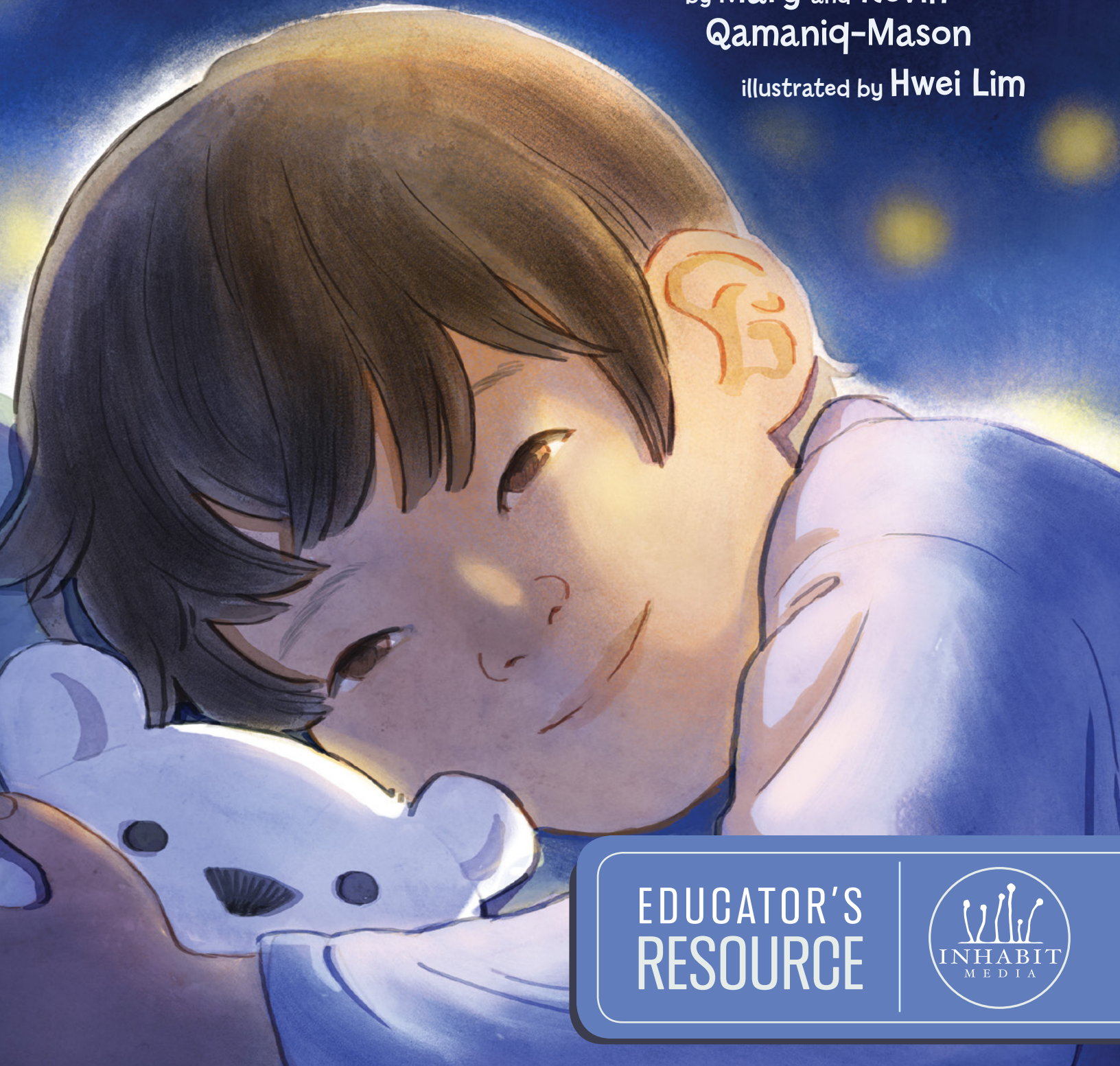


I Am Loved

by Mary and Kevin
Qamaniq-Mason

illustrated by Hwei Lim



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



I Am Loved

About the Book

Pakak is in a new foster home, with new people, new food, and new smells. Feeling alone and uncertain, Pakak finds comfort in a secret shared with him by his *anaanattiaq*, his grandmother, and in the knowledge that he is loved no matter how far away his family may be.

Written as a gift for Inuit children in care by foster parents Kevin and Mary Qamaniq-Mason, this book is lovingly imbued with cultural familiarities that will resonate with children who, like Pakak, are navigating the unknown.

This educator's resource has been written for Kindergarten to Grade 2 classrooms. The discussion questions and activities can be adapted as needed.

Teachers can use the book in the classroom in a number of ways, including:

- To investigate the meaning of family
- To further explore the concepts of identity, sadness, uncertainty, and hope
- As part of discussions about social emotional health

Note to Educators

It is important to be sensitive to the experiences your students may have had with family. Some home and family environments may be more complicated than they seem. Try to ensure that all students are feeling comfortable during class discussions and adjust discussion questions and activities as needed. Some discussion questions and activities are marked with ** to indicate that they are better suited for use with older students.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions and Activities

Tell students that you are going to read a story called *I Am Loved*. Ask students to think of the kinds of actions or words that make them feel loved. You may wish to have students write a journal entry about what makes them feel loved.

Choose from one of the two following activities:

- Write the word "Family" on the board or chart paper. Have students brainstorm words and phrases that come to mind when they hear the word "family" and record them

on the board or chart paper. Revisit this list of phrases and words with students after sharing the story to see how their understanding of family has been confirmed or changed.

OR

- Have students do a think-pair-share. Play some music and have students walk around the classroom. When the music stops, have students partner up with whoever is closest. Give the partners about a minute to talk with each other about the question, “What does a family look like?” After a minute, restart the music and repeat a few times so that students have an opportunity to talk to several different classmates. Bring the class back together and have students share some of the ideas that came up in their discussions, and take notes of their ideas on the board or chart paper.

Tell students that the story you are going to read is about a boy who lives with a foster family. Check your students’ understanding of what a foster family is, and confirm or correct their understanding.

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

- What are some of the new experiences Pakak describes in his new home?
- Has Pakak been living with his foster family for very long? How do you know?
- Why is Pakak living with a foster family?
- Pakak says that when he feels alone, he thinks of the important secret that his anaanattiaq (grandmother) told him. What was the secret? Do you ever feel lonely? What do you do when you feel lonely?
- How does Pakak’s anaanattiaq make him feel loved when she lives so far away?
- Show pages 22–23 and 24–25 to students and ask what they notice about the illustrations. How do the illustrations connect to the main message in the story?



- Pakak has a very large family and he says, “Even if I don’t see them very much, they are still my family.” What message is Pakak telling about what it means to be family?
- One of the main messages in the story is that even people who live far away or who you don’t see very often are still family. Ask students, “What does Pakak mean when he says, ‘Even when we can’t see or hear each other, I know that my heart is talking to their hearts?’” Why do you think Pakak takes comfort in this idea?
- **Pakak is Inuit but his foster family is not. Do you think that this might make Pakak’s adjustment to his foster family more or less difficult? Why?
- **Kevin and Mary Qamaniq-Mason are the authors of the story and have themselves been foster parents. In an interview published in Nunavut News (November 15, 2020), the authors explain that they wanted to communicate the following message to Inuit children in non-Inuit foster families: “Even though you’re away, you’re a part of the Inuit family and community right now, you’re never really apart.” How do the authors and illustrator (Hwei Lim) communicate this message in the story?



Activities

Connecting with a Character

Pakak experiences many different feelings throughout the story. Go through the story, page by page, and show students the illustrations again. Have students identify the different feelings Pakak is having at different points in the story. You may wish to read parts of the story again out loud to the class. Record the feelings on the board or chart paper as students identify them. Examples of feelings include safe, comfortable, happy, uncertain, sad, lonely, scared, angry, and loved. Challenge students to explain why Pakak may be feeling each of the emotions they identify.

Then, have each student select one of the positive emotions the class identified from the story and draw a picture of something or somebody that makes them feel the same way. If appropriate, have students write a word or sentence that describes their picture.

What Is a Family?

Revisit the list of phrases or words the students associated with family before reading the story or the notes you took after the students discussed the question “What does a family look like?” Is there anything the students would like to add to or delete from the list or notes? Go through each of the items on the list or in the notes and see if students can connect the ideas to something that happened or was described in the story.

Family and Culture

Pakak is Inuit but his foster family is not. People from different cultural backgrounds eat different foods. The different foods a family eats together can be, in part, a reflection of their culture. One of the differences Pakak describes between his old home and new home is that his new family makes unfamiliar food. Have students talk about and then draw and write about the food their own families enjoy eating together and how it makes them feel.

Responding to the Story

- family
- love
- secret
- scared
- angry
- sad
- fun
- happy
- different

Have students choose one of the words and draw two pictures. The first picture should show how the word is used in the story, and the second picture should be about themselves and the word. For example, for the word “happy,” a student may draw a picture of Pakak sledding

and a picture of themselves eating ice cream. Then have students write a word or sentence under each picture.

Land, Sun, Moon

Pakak feels loved not only by people, but also by the natural world around him, including the land, sun, and moon. Reread pages 20–21 to students. Have students retell what was read by drawing pictures of how the land, sun, and moon make Pakak feel loved.

Feeling Connected

In the story, Pakak talks about the different people in his family that he feels connected to, even if they are not physically present. This includes his *anaanattiaq* (grandmother), *anaana* (mother), grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and cousins. Pakak feels connected to his family just by thinking about them. Another way to feel connected is to write a letter. Have students think about somebody they feel connected to but don't see very often, such as a family member, friend, or teacher. Have students draw and/or write a message to their special person to tell them that they are thinking of them.

