

★“The call to revel
in the glorious
patchwork that is ‘us’
blazes forth from this
paean of acceptance.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review



“Celebrates the
potential found in
every child.”

—*Booklist*

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY GUIDE FOR

patchwork

MATT DE LA PEÑA

Newbery Medal-winning author

CORINNA LUYKEN

New York Times bestselling illustrator

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Matt's dedication to his own children (Miguel and Luna) as well as all young children reading this book. What might he mean when he uses the phrase, "stitching their very own story"?
2. What do you notice about the way Corinna uses color/patterns/movement to illustrate the introduction of the children in the story versus the way she uses color to illustrate those children as adults? Why might she have made those choices? What does it say about growth and "finding yourself"?
3. Have you ever felt like someone else is determining *what* you should be or *who* you should be when you become older? How does that make you feel? Do you have friends or family members that have already had their future predetermined by adults? How do you feel about that?
4. Why do you think Matt included "mini stories" of lots of different children instead of one child's story in *Patchwork*? How might the story and message have been different if he had crafted the text with only one individual child's growth?
5. Look carefully at the illustration of the girl on the page that begins, "You are more than a single note . . ." Then look carefully at the illustration of the girl on the next page that begins, "You are a symphony . . ." Compare and contrast the facial expressions, colors, patterns, and emotions being portrayed. Why might the same girl be portrayed in such a different manner between the two pages? Think about how the lines of text play a part in that change.
6. Think deeply about each of the children described in *Patchwork*. Instead of looking at *what* they do, carefully think about *who* they are. Can you relate to any of the children pictured in the book? Do you see your friends or family members in any of the children on the pages? If so, which ones?

ACTIVITIES

1. What are some of the “pieces” of your patchwork quilt today? Think about the hobbies, talents, sports, school subjects, and/or other activities that you feel you are great at already and color them in different shades of one color. What are some that you would like to try out in the future? Add those to your patch and color those in shades of another color.
2. Matt uses the metaphors, “You are more than a single note—played again and again” and “You are a symphony” to describe the layers and parts that make up who we are as human beings. Listen to any of the following symphonies and describe how the single instrument at the start of each piece of music differs from when all of the instruments come together. What happens as more instruments are added to the piece? How does it make you feel?
 - Beethoven’s, “**Symphony 5**”
 - Tchaikovsky’s “**Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies**”
 - Pachabel’s “**Canon in D Major**”
 - John Williams’ “**Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone - Suite**”
3. Toward the end of the book, Matt writes, “You are the sounds plucked from all of the places you’ve been and all the people you’ve met and all the feelings you’ve felt.” Think about all of the elements of your life and what makes you you. Make a list of the special sounds, places, people, and feelings that make up your unique and individual symphony. Then add them to the notes of your own symphony (or poem) and create a title for your piece.



[Click here for more *Patchwork* activities!](#)

[Click here for the educator guide for Matt de la Peña’s picture books!](#)

[Click here for the educator guide for Corinna Luyken’s picture books!](#)

This guide was written by Sarah Cordova. Sarah Cordova is a nationally recognized literacy consultant who works in elementary and middle school classrooms across the country supporting administrators, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers in developing and implementing effective and engaging reading and writing practices.



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