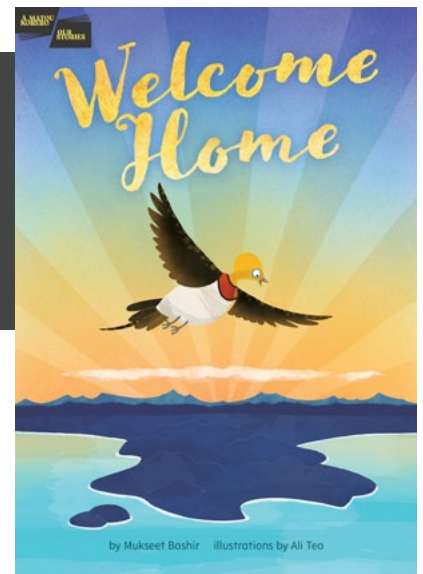


Kaiako Support Material

Welcome Home
by Mukseet Bashir
illustrations by Ali Teo



Welcome Home is one of a series of picture books intended to support, reflect, and celebrate the Muslim community of New Zealand. The series focuses on wellbeing, resilience, diversity, and inclusion and is intended for use with children in early learning settings and at Level 1 of The New Zealand Curriculum.

Welcome Home is a story by Mukseet Bashir, a young Muslim Aucklander who came to live in New Zealand as a child. It is intended to represent the experience of people who migrate to Aotearoa to make a fresh start, often coming as refugees and leaving behind a dangerous or unstable situation.

The story's purpose is to support migrant children to find a sense of home and belonging in their new country, while encouraging acceptance, unity, and kindness in their classmates. It includes a variety of themes: feeling homesick or out of place, building resilience against discrimination, finding a sense of belonging and identity in a new home, keeping traditions alive, and the importance of kindness.

When sharing the story with children, your purpose and approach will vary depending on the group. However, the first time you read the story, it is likely that you will focus on conveying the storyline, making connections, and building understanding. Later, you can go deeper into the perspectives of the characters and the story's message.

Reading books together and discussing them fosters children's oral language, social and emotional development, self-concept, and sense of belonging. It's not always necessary to read the whole book at once. You could read and discuss just a few pages and/or illustrations. See Te Whāriki Online "[Talking together: Te kōrerorero](#)" for more on this.

Your learning community will have its own ways of thinking about, talking about, and making real the values and messages carried in this and the other stories. You could incorporate the following ideas in your talk and what you plan around the story.

Curriculum links

Whether you work in an early learning or school setting, this book offers rich opportunities for learning across the curriculum.

In terms of **Te Whāriki**, the book connects most strongly to the principles of **Relationships | Ngā Hononga** and the strands of **Wellbeing | Mana atua** and **Belonging | Mana whenua**.

In terms of **The New Zealand Curriculum**, the book connects most strongly to the key competencies of **relating to others**, and **participating and contributing**, to the **Relationships with Other People** strand of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum, and to the social science curriculum strands: **Identity, Culture, and Organisation** and **Place and Environment**.

Read *Welcome Home*

Prepare for the reading by practising reading it aloud, checking your use of voice and gesture, and thinking about the prompts you might use.

Tell the children the title and briefly introduce the story. *This is about a bird whose name is Syed. He lives in a place far away. One day, he is caught in a storm and finds himself a long way from home.*

Ask questions to get the children thinking about what home and feeling welcome means.

- *What do we mean when we say we feel "at home"?*
- *What did it feel like when you first came to our centre/school? What helped you to feel welcome here?*

Have a map or globe handy to show the children where Syed might live. (Sandgrouse live in the Middle East, Asia, or northern Africa.) Draw out the fact that Syed's home is a long way from Aotearoa and that some things might be different there.

- *What might be different about where Syed lives?*

As you read the story, use questions and think-alouds to prompt connections and foster empathy.

- *The wind was "howling like a wolf". That sounds scary!*
- *Poor Syed. Imagine not knowing where you are or where you're going. How would you feel?*
- *Here are some more birds. Do you think they will help him?*
- *Nazneen also got blown to Aotearoa in a storm, and she likes lentil seeds, too. That must make Syed feel less alone.*

Prompt the children to make connections to feeling lonely, homesick, or different. As they talk, encourage them to use words from their own languages to describe their feelings.

- *This story reminds me of a time when ... For me, it felt like ...*
- *Have you ever felt lost or homesick or left out? What happened? Did anyone help? How did they help? How did that make you feel?*
- *Syed missed his home so badly it was "like an ache". Have you ever had that feeling? What happens to your body when you feel sad and lonely? Do you have things that you do to make yourself feel better?*

Be mindful that some children may have their own experiences of being a refugee and may be sensitive to reading the story. Monitor and tune in to any responses in children as they may be very subtle.

Talk about the story

Discuss the messages in the story, drawing on the sense of connection and empathy the children have established.

- *Why do you think Syed was being left out?*
- *Some of the birds were very unkind. Why do you think they were like that?*
- *What did Rima the ruru do to help Syed feel at home? How will Rima's friends help?*
- *Nazneen says that all the birds are different. Do you think we are different from each other? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?*

Talk about what it means to be a migrant or a refugee. Make connections between Syed's experience and that of people who have had to leave all they know and move to a new place.

- *If you had just come from far away to a new place, how would you want to be treated?*
- *What are some ways you can help someone who is feeling lonely or homesick?*
- *Has something like this happened to someone you know?*

Talk about how people who have immigrated to a new place sometimes feel rejected, just like Syed did, and that this is not OK. Talk about the values that are important in your setting related to making people feel welcome, such as manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and kindness. Use those words to talk about the story and the behaviours that show people are living by those values.

- *In our place, we think it is important to show manaakitanga. Which of the birds showed manaakitanga in the story?*
- *What are some of the ways we show manaakitanga to people who come here?*
- *Are there some things we could do better?*

Talk about how traditions make our homes feel familiar, and how when people leave their country to make a new home elsewhere, they take their traditions with them. Part of welcoming migrants and refugees to Aotearoa is acknowledging and accepting their traditions. This makes them feel more at home and helps them to keep their traditions alive.

- *What are some traditions that are important to you and your family? Let's write them down.*
- *Do you know about these traditions? Do some of our families have traditions that you would like to learn more about?*
- *What are some of the traditions we have in our centre/school? Can you see some family traditions that we could make part of how we do things here?*

Take action to foster a welcoming culture

Discuss the final picture of Syed with his new friends, reminding the children that there was something different and special about each of the birds. Talk about the fact that everyone in your learning community is special and unique. Have the children think, pair, and share things they appreciate about each other.

Discuss how we need to make people feel included and valued and not just when they are new to the community. Celebrate cultural days and invite parents and whānau into the community to share stories and aspects of their culture. Find ways to make this part of everyday life. For example, you might record or video a whānau member reading a story or talking about a photo of home and then have this available for the children to listen to or watch again when they wish. You could include signage in children's home languages and integrate their songs and dances into routines, such as the call to mat time. The children might learn to make cultural artefacts, which could then be used daily.

Explore the strong connections in te ao Māori between people, birds, and the natural world in Aotearoa, which is shown through legends, conservation, and taonga. Encourage the children to think about their relationship with their local environment. This could be a springboard for exploring the relationship people from a range of cultures have with the fauna and flora in their home countries.

For older children, have them write a letter to Syed welcoming him to Aotearoa. *What would you tell him about Aotearoa? What would you say to make him feel at home?*

Extend the discussion to include how to make your learning community's values evident in the way you do things. Focus on what happens when someone new joins the community. Invite the children to work with you to create a welcome kete for children and whānau members who are new to the community (and possibly to the country) that will help them feel safe and accepted. The kete could be displayed on the wall with ideas written or drawn on pieces of paper shaped as shells, fern leaves, or birds. Encourage the children to think about what being welcoming looks, feels, and sounds like.

Discuss, and perhaps sketch, the relationships between birds and plants – plants give birds seeds, and birds spread them. Talk about how Syed and Nazneen like lentil seeds, but in Aotearoa, they must find new seeds they like. Connect this to the experiences of people in your learning community who have had to adjust to the kinds of food available. Develop this into an inquiry into the foods people enjoy and how these relate to what is available in the local environment. Invite in whānau from migrant families to share the food they enjoy, what they miss, and how they have adapted.

Where to go to for more information

Te Whāriki Online draws together research, digital resources, and examples to support early learning kaiako, helping to implement a rich curriculum. See especially the sections on "[Identity, language, and culture](#)", "[Self-management and regulation](#)", and "[Talking together: Te kōrerorero](#)".

The Identity, language, and culture section includes a story describing how one kindergarten went about supporting former refugees.

He Māpuna te Tamaiti is intended to help support children's social and emotional competence, engagement, and learning.

The Inclusive Education Guide series offers strategies for supporting positive peer relationships.

For Each and Every Child is a bilingual picture book explaining the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in child-friendly language.

Stories of 10-year-old Syrian Refugees (UNICEF) has stories in the voice of young refugees.

That's Us is a campaign by the Human Rights Commission to combat racism.

Sparklers offers a range of activities to support children's wellbeing, including suggestions for how to boost kindness.

Birds of the World has information about birds that includes maps showing their range.

For websites on New Zealand birds, see:

- [New Zealand Birds Online](#)
- [Forest and Bird](#)
- [Tiritiri Matangi](#).

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand is a federation of several regional New Zealand Muslim Associations. Its site includes contact details for [Islamic Centres in New Zealand](#).