



# Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon

written by Simran Jeet Singh and illustrated by Baljinder Kaur



## Reading and Activity Guide

### BEFORE READING

- + *What is the farthest you've ever run? What did it feel like? Did you enjoy it?*
- + *Have you faced any challenges or obstacles to a goal you set for yourself? While it is remarkable that Fauja was able to overcome his inability to walk, this is not how every person's story turns out. Help students to see that it isn't because the person isn't trying hard enough.*
- + *What do you know about Sikhi(sm)? Check out the following document to learn more. While you may not follow these traditions, it is important to help children understand Fauja's full story. There is also a glossary of terms to help clarify unfamiliar parts of the story.*

### DURING READING

- + *Fauja's mother used to say to him, "You know yourself and what you're capable of. Today is a chance to do your best." What is something that people tell you that motivates you to try your hardest?*
- + *Running brought a smile to Fauja's face, what activity makes you smile just to do it?*
- + *Why do you think people were attacking those who looked like Fauja just because of how they looked? Be prepared to talk about racism and xenophobia; depending on the age and interest of the child, this may include what resulted after 9/11. It can be tempting to try and avoid these conversations, but even young children need to talk about these topics and hear from trusted adults, as you model honesty, humility, grace, and a desire to learn and love more.*

### AFTER READING

- + *What questions did you have throughout the story? How could we learn more? Some children may be curious about vocab or Fauja's story while others may want to learn why students like Fauja would not have been able to go to school. Lean into what interests your child.*
- + *Fauja dealt with people treating him differently based on his disability, age, race, and religious background. While he might not be who some would expect to be the hero of a book, how does that change who we can see as heroes in everyday life?*

### Springboard Activities:

**Activity #1: Tell Someone's Story** - Simran Jeet Singh, the author of the book, has said that as a child, he rarely found books in the library with characters who looked like him or his family. That can really leave you feeling unloved, unnoticed, or unwanted. Who is a person in your life who may feel that same way for whatever reason? Get to know them and tell their story. Maybe your mail carrier stops by your house every day and you still don't know their name, what they like, why they like being a mail carrier, etc. Ask them questions, get to know them. Write a story just for them.

**Activity #2: Family Fun Run** - As a family or a class of students, go outside for a run or walk. Try doing this everyday for a whole week to see how you improve. As you walk or run each day, talk about what you see and people in your neighborhood, who works in your grocery store or at your library. Discuss how you as a family can get to know your neighbors better, even during this pandemic.

