

**PS 39 Diversity and Inclusion Book of the Month: April**  
**Theme: Awareness of Learning, Emotional and Physical Differences**

**Book Title:** Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You  
By Sonia Sotomayor

**Grade Level:** K / 1st

**Book Summary:**

Feeling different, especially as a kid, can be tough. But in the same way that different types of plants and flowers make a garden more beautiful and enjoyable, different types of people make our world more vibrant and wonderful.

In *Just Ask*, United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor celebrates the different abilities kids (and people of all ages) have. Using her own experience as a child who was diagnosed with diabetes, Justice Sotomayor writes about children with all sorts of challenges--and looks at the special powers those kids have as well. As the kids work together to build a community garden, asking questions of each other along the way, this book encourages readers to do the same: When we come across someone who is different from us but we're not sure why, all we have to do is *Just Ask*.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Based on the title, "Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You", what did you think the book was about?
- Did you know who Justice Sotomayor was before reading this book? Why was writing this story important to her?
- Justice Sotomayor said "Just the way gardens have different plants, and different trees, and different kinds of flowers, and different birds and animals that populate the garden, we in our society have different kinds of people, too, doing different kinds of things." Did you enjoy the imagery of a garden when comparing differences? Do you think it's a good comparison? Why or why not?
- Every child's story ends with a question to the reader. Why are these questions important? Can you relate to any of them? Some examples are below:
  - Are there times when you need medicine to be healthy?
  - How do you use your senses? Give an example. (hint: getting around in the dark)
  - Do you ever wonder if people understand you?
  - Do you ever feel frustrated? Give an example or two.
  - What helps you learn? Explain.
- Think about the children in the book --noting that different abilities are often what makes an individual unique and everyone is unique in their own way. Were you able to recognize the differences among the children and relate them to your classroom, neighborhood, and/or family?
- When speaking about her book, Justice Sotomayor refers to children being courageous. Why are these children courageous? Does it take bravery to be different **and** to be yourself?
- Discuss the author's final message. Why does she encourage us to 'Just Ask'?
- If you were to represent your class with a garden of wildflowers, what would it look like? What colors would you use? Which plants would it have?