***A Chair for My Mother***by Vera B. Williams

Discussion Questions:

1. The story is told by Rosa. Her mother works at the Blue Tile Diner. She is a waitress and her job is to take orders and deliver food to the customers who buy their meals at the diner. What kind of a resource is a waitress? *(A waitress is a human resource.)* What is another way to refer to these “customers?”  *(consumers)*
2. Can you name another human resource in the story? *(The firefighters are also human resources.)*
3. Why does the owner of the Blue Tile Diner sometimes pay Rosa when she visits after school? *(Rosa cleans the salt and pepper shakers and fills the ketchup bottles. Rosa works and so she earns income—or money.)*
4. Who else in Rosa’s family earns income? *(Rosa’s mother earns income as a waitress.)*
5. Part of the money Rosa’s mother earns is paid by her boss who gives her a pay check once a week or twice a month. Part of her income is from tips—money customers pay her for doing her job carefully and efficiently. What does Rosa’s mother do with the pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters she gets from customers who tip her*? (She asks Rosa to count the coins and then put all the coins into the biggest jar her mother could find at the diner.)*
6. One terrible afternoon, the apartment Rosa shared with her mother and grandmother burned down and all of their possessions were lost. Once the family got a new apartment right below Rosa’s aunt and uncle, what problem did they have? *(They had lots of space but a scarcity of furniture.)*
7. How did neighbors and friends help Rosa and her family with their scarcity problem*? (They each brought over something they could spare and gave these things to the family.)*
8. Even though Rosa,her mom and hergrandmother now had a home and the furniture they needed, something was still scare in their apartment. What was scarce? *(A comfortable place to sit was scarce.)*
9. Rosa, her mom, and hergrandmother worked together to sort the coins and to roll them so that the bank would accept them. What did the bank give Rosa’s mother in exchange for all the neatly rolled coins? *(The bank gave her ten dollar bills.)*
10. How did Rosa and her family travel to the furniture stores? *(They rode on a bus. When they rode, they paid a fare; this money is for the service of riding the bus.)*
11. Rosa and her mother sat in chairs in four different stores before they chose the chair they wanted to buy. Why did they not buy a chair at the first store they visited? *(They thought they could make a better choice if they had more information. They wanted to see all the chairs available before choosing the one that was best for them.)*
12. Why don’t Rosa and her family ride back home on the bus? *(There is no practical way to bring a chair home on a bus. There would be a scarcity of space for the chair and for the other riders.)*
13. Saving coins until the jar was full took a long time. Do you think Rosa, her mother, and her grandmother made a good choice about how to spend the money they saved? *(Yes, the chair has many benefits the entire family can enjoy, and it will last a long time.)*
14. If you saved a jar full of coins, what would you be saving for? What would you be willing to give up to get your choice?