

Read this biography to learn about one immigrant's experience. Take turns reading each part and leading a discussion of the questions that follow.

## **Biography of José Rodríguez**

*José Rodríguez is a 22-year-old baseball player from the Dominican Republic. José immigrated to the United States to play professional baseball.*

My name is José Rodríguez. My dream has been to play in a major league baseball stadium in America. Today, that dream will become a reality. I'm from the Dominican Republic, or the D.R. Back home, just about everyone plays sandlot and club baseball. When I was 15, baseball scouts started calling me. They told me I could be a professional baseball player. "You could be famous," they said, "like Sammy Sosa and Pedro Martínez."

- *What is pulling José to the United States?*

I lived in one of the many poor villages in the D.R. For as long as I can remember, I've had a hunger to play baseball and make money. Lots of money. I dropped out of school to train at one of the major league scouting camps in Santo Domingo, the capital of the D.R.

Most kids who trained with me weren't recruited. They returned to their villages to live like vagabonds. Not me. I got a one-way ticket to the United States of America. Before I boarded the plane, my recruiter said, "This is a test. If you fail, you will go back to your village poor. Your family's future is in your hands." I knew then I'd do everything possible to support my family back home. Like many other families, mine would count on money sent from someone outside of the D.R.

- *What is pushing José away from the Dominican Republic?*
- *How might José's immigration affect his family?*

It wasn't long before I was pitching in the minor leagues. My coaches and managers pushed me hard. Within weeks I was the team's ace pitcher, winning five of my first six games. Each pitch brought me closer to the majors. My host family and the whole town welcomed me. I felt like an ambassador of Dominican culture. I sang hymns in the local church choir—in Spanish! In the off-season, I flew back to the D.R. Within three years, a Double-A team drafted me. Three weeks later, I was called up to pitch in the major leagues. This was my chance. Today, I will pitch in the major leagues. I walk onto the field from the bullpen. Fans shout encouragement to me in Spanish. The organist plays "El Toro" ("The Bull") instead of "Charge!" This is my opportunity to turn this American pastime into an international sport.

- *What opportunities has José had in the United States that he may not have had in the Dominican Republic?*
- *How might José and other immigrants like him affect American society?*