

Book Review Discussion Questions



Provided by *Focus on the Family* magazine

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Book reviews cover the content, themes and worldviews of fiction books, not their literary merit, and equip parents to decide whether a book is appropriate for their children. A book's inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by Focus on the Family. You can request a review of a title you can't find at reviewrequests@family.org.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Echo



This historical, coming-of-age book by Pam Muñoz Ryan is published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

Echo is written for kids ages 8 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why do the boys at Friedrich's school beat him up? When Friedrich's father confronts the school's headmaster about the incident, how does the headmaster excuse the boys' behavior? Why do people fear those who look or behave differently than they do? What problems are created in society if those in power can freely harm those who are different from them? In what ways did Hitler's Nazi party use German citizens' fears about others as an excuse to persecute, imprison and ultimately murder those who stood out in their society? Are there countries today whose leaders have misused a similar power? What are some modern-day movements that promote fear?
2. What is the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring, which Elisabeth mentions? What conditions mark Friedrich as someone who needs to get surgery, by law? Do you think it is acceptable to

try to prevent genetic defects in the population by stopping diseased people from having children? How does Jesus regard those with diseases or people who are differently abled? Instead of avoiding people with physical or mental challenges, how can you reach out to them to actively bless their lives?

3. What traumas in Mrs. Sturbridge's past have made her reserved and closed-off from the world? What did Mrs. Sturbridge's late father think she needed in her life to bring her joy again? Have you ever experienced the loss of a close friend or family member? What was your grieving process like? During the hardest moments, how did you find joy and hope for the future? How can helping another person in need benefit you in overcoming your own pain?
4. How is Ivy's school, Lincoln Annex, different from Lincoln Main as an elementary school? What are the principal's reasons for segregating the Mexican children from the white children? Even if they are not official, do you notice any racial divides in your town or school? What can you do to make friends across races and ethnicities?

An Echo in the Darkness



This historical fiction book is the second in the "Mark of the Lion" series by Francine Rivers and is published by Tyndale House Publishers. *An Echo in the*

Darkness is written for kids ages 18 and up.

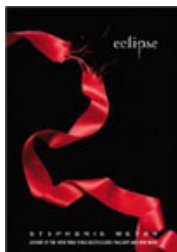
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why is Marcus angry and confused? Who does he believe caused Hadassah's death? Is he correct in blaming God?
2. What does Marcus learn about the reason for Hadassah's suffering? Does any eternal good come out of the hardships Hadassah and Marcus face? How has God worked out your hardships for you or someone else's good?
3. Which characters must forgive someone who has grievously wronged them? What did Hadassah do after forgiving Julia? Who did Prometheus forgive? Who must Marcus forgive for sending Hadassah to her death?
4. What do you find most difficult about forgiving others? What does each character find difficult

about forgiving others? What is each character's reward for forgiving the person who has wronged them? What is your reward?

Eclipse



This romantic vampire fantasy book is the third in the “Twilight” series by Stephenie Meyer and is published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of the Hachette Book Group.

Eclipse is written for kids ages 9 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why do Jacob and Edward consider battles “fun,” something they hate to miss out on?
2. How does Bella see herself? Why does she feel hopeless without Edward or Jacob in her life?
3. Why does Edward want to get married before sleeping with Bella? What are Bella's views on sex and marriage? What does the Bible say about sex and marriage?
4. Do Jacob or Edward ever act inappropriately toward Bella? When? Does their desire to protect and love her make it OK for them to keep secrets from her, keep her in “custody” or kiss her violently? What can happen when the lines between love and possessiveness get blurred in real-life relationships? What is

the difference between obsession and love?

Edge of Apocalypse



This action/thriller book is the first in the “The End Series” by Tim LaHaye and Craig Parshall and is published by Zondervan. *Edge of Apocalypse* is

written for readers 17 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. When Abigail finds herself in a difficult situation, what does she do before making decisions? What part should prayer play in your decisions? Does God want you to pray about everything, or only the things that are really important?
2. Joshua has been trained in the military to handle situations on his own—to take the bull by the horns, so to speak. Is this a good quality for a man to have? How could wanting to take care of everything all by yourself help you and others? How could wanting to take care of everything all by yourself keep you from asking God for help? How might it hinder your relationship with Him?
3. Cal was kidnapped and almost killed. What did Joshua realize had gotten in the way of his relationship with his son? How can pride be a good thing? How can pride be a bad thing? Joshua took Cal for granted. Do you take anything in your life for granted? Why shouldn't you do this?

4. *Edge of Apocalypse* describes a United States of America in which Christians are regularly persecuted for their faith. What would you do if you were persecuted for believing in God? Would you claim allegiance to Christ even if it meant the loss of friends, your school, a job, family or even your life?
5. This book describes a scenario the authors think could happen as the end times draw nearer. What does the Bible say about the end times? Should Christians devote themselves to thinking about the end times? What does Christ say about being ready in Matthew 25:1-13?

Edison's Alley



This science fiction, mystery, humor book by Neal Shusterman and Eric Elfman is published by Disney Hyperion Books, an imprint of Disney Book

Group. *Edison's Alley* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

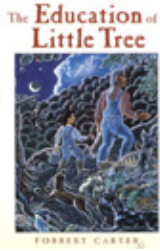
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What do you think of the narrator's suggestion that whenever a third party enters a relationship, there's bound to be friction? Which relationships in the story demonstrate that principle? When have you dealt with a tricky situation involving three people vying for each other's attention? What happened?

2. When people who have used Tesla's items are forced to give them back, how do they ultimately respond or feel? How does it change their outlook on their future? When have you had a taste of something good and been motivated to work harder to enjoy that feeling again?
3. Why does Mitch grow increasingly motivated to bring down the Accelerati? When have you been so angry with someone that you could think of nothing but getting revenge? What happened? What does the Bible say about revenge?
4. Edison points out that inflated pride destroys success. Which characters demonstrate this principle? When have you seen pride harm you or others? How is pride talked about in the Bible?
5. What do you think about the authors characterizing Thomas Edison as a villain? When have you read something unexpected or even disturbing about a historical figure or a famous person of today? How did it make you feel to read this? Did you believe it? Why or why not?
6. Why does Nick save Jorgenson's life? Have you ever seen someone treat an enemy with undeserved kindness? How did it make you feel? Why did Jesus tell people to love their enemies?

The Education of Little Tree



This historical-book by Forrest Carter (real name Asa Earl Carter) was published by Delacorte Press; this copy is a 2004 reprint by University of New Mexico Press. *The Education of Little Tree* is written for kids ages 13 to 18.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How do the Cherokee people view nature? What does Granpa tell Little Tree about animals and hunting? What does Granma tell him about the spirit in nature and in himself? In what ways is her version of the spirit different from the Holy Spirit of the Bible? How do Granpa's and Granma's beliefs about God and faith differ from your own?
2. What do Little Tree's grandparents mean when they say they *kin* each other? How is that different than just loving each other? What are some ways in which Little Tree's grandparents show love and understanding for each other, him and their friends? How does Little Tree know he's loved? What behaviors from others make you feel most loved and understood?
3. Why doesn't Granpa stop Little Tree from buying a calf? Why does Granpa show a needy man how to make a chair rather than just giving the man a chair? What are some other life lessons

Granpa teaches Little Tree? Which lesson is the most powerful to you?

4. Why is Granpa so forgiving of people, including the cantankerous Coon Jack and the proud sharecropper who refuses Granma's moccasins? How does he justify their rude behavior? How can you be more understanding of people you come across who are angry or rude?
5. What does Little Tree learn about money and value from Mr. Wine? What is the difference between being stingy and frugal? What things and people do you value most in your life?
6. What are some ways in which Little Tree and his family experience prejudice? How do you feel about the way Cherokees are treated in this story by those who call themselves Christians? What are some ways you can demonstrate God's grace and love to people who are different from you?
7. Why does the government believe Little Tree's grandparents are selfish for keeping him? What does Little Tree miss by not going to a regular school or living in town? What does he *gain* by having a life in the woods with his grandparents? What are some things you've learned in your life by taking a path different from the one everyone else has taken?

El Deafo



This graphic novel, memoir, contemporary book by Cece Bell is published by Amulet Books, a division of ABRAMS. *El Deafo* is written for

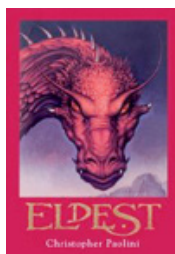
kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What are some of the things that frustrate Cece as a deaf person? What would have frustrated you the most if you were her? What did you learn about how to communicate with a deaf person?
2. At one point, Cece feels as though she is walking through the world in a bubble of loneliness. Describe a time when you felt like this. Can you think of someone you know who may be lonely? What can you do to be a friend to her or make her feel appreciated?
3. Cece describes her friendship with Laura like she is a fish that has been caught on a hook. What do you think she means by this? Have you ever felt that way about one of your friendships? Cece tells Martha about *el deafo*. Do you have a friend with whom you can share secrets? How do you know that your friend won't tell your secrets to others?
4. Why does Cece use her hearing aid to listen for the teacher while the other students misbehave in the classroom? Is this a good decision? Explain. Why does she make this choice? What would you have done in her situation?
5. What do you think would be the hardest thing about being deaf? What would scare you the most if you could not hear? Can you think of anything positive that would come from being deaf? How has this book helped you better understand deaf people?

Eldest



This fantasy adventure is the second book in “The Inheritance Cycle” by Christopher Paolini and is published by Knopf Books for Young Readers, a division

of Random House Books. *Eldest* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Eragon witnesses a lot of bloodshed. What does he believe is the meaning of human life? What does the Bible say about humankind's purpose in life?
2. Eragon swears fealty to Nasuada. How does he know she will be a good ruler? Does he approve of all her choices? Eragon also agrees to become an honorary member of Hrothgar's family. What do the dwarves expect in return for giving Eragon this honor? How does Eragon feel his many promises of allegiance are helping him? How does he feel they are hurting him?
3. Where does Roran want to move the women and children in Carvahall? Why does Sloan object to moving them to the Spine? How does Katrina choose between obeying her father and following Roran? What would you have done if you were Roran? Katrina's father? Katrina?
4. On the way to Ellesmera, Arya begins teaching Eragon about elvish customs and manners.

Why is it important that he does not offend the elves? Why is he judged by a higher standard than other humans? Arya says that elves value courtesy above all else, but Eragon says elves have simply invented complex ways to insult each other. Who do you think is right? How would you navigate the courtesy of elves?

5. Eragon hears that Arya experienced great sorrow in her life. What is the source of Arya's sadness? Why did her family disown her? Is she glad to be reconciled with her surviving family? How important are family relationships in your life?
6. Why does Oromis say that power without morality is dangerous? Which character in *Eldest* is the main example of a powerful person who has no morals? Where do you see people like this in your own life?
7. Do the citizens of Carvahall forgive Roran for the trouble he has caused them? Does Roran forgive Eragon for the trouble he has created? What does Roran say he will make Eragon do as payment for Garrow's death and Katrina's capture? How does Roran react to Eragon when they meet again? Why is forgiveness important in this story? How is it important in your life?

Election Madness



This pre-teen slice-of-life story by Karen English is part of the “Nikki & Deja” series published by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin

Harcourt Publishing Company. *Election Madness* is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

The age range reflects readability and not necessarily content appropriateness. Search for a review of this book for parents at PluggedIn.com/book-reviews.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What kind of friend is Deja? How does she treat others? Would you want to be her friend? Explain your answer.
2. How does the election madness change Deja's behavior? Do you think she learns any valuable lessons from her failed campaign? If you were Deja, what valuable lesson would you have learned?
3. Why does Nikki fear her parents are getting divorced? How do you feel when you hear us or other adults fighting? Who can you talk to if you about your feelings when you don't want to talk to us?

Eleven



This mystery book written by Patricia Reilly Giff is published by Yearling and Wendy Lamb Books, both imprints of Random House Inc.,

and is written for ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Because of her father's job, Caroline must move to many new places. Have you ever had to move? How did it make you feel to leave your friends? What could you do to help a new student at your school?

2. Sam has difficulty reading. What subjects are your favorite in school? What subjects do you find the hardest? What things can you do to try and improve your grades in those difficult classes?
3. Mack's anger and refusal to speak to his daughter made him move to Florida and lose contact with his family. Ephesians 4:25-26 says, "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." Why do you think God gives us this command? What would have been different for Mack and Sam if Mack had followed this command? How might your life change if you obeyed this command?
4. Sam tells several lies throughout the story to cover his snooping. Have you ever lied about something you did? How did it make you feel? What could Sam have done differently?

Eleven



This pre-teen slice-of-life story by Lauren Myracle is the second in "The Winnie Years" series published by Dutton Children's Books, a division

of Penguin Young Readers Group. *Eleven* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why is Winnie hesitant to hang out with Dinah? Why does Dinah behave differently than some of the other girls? Why

does Winnie decide to be Dinah's friend in spite of what people think?

2. What are some of the things Winnie does to gain the acceptance of others? What have you done to impress someone else or prove yourself? How did you feel about it afterward?
3. What are some things you like about being your current age? What are some hard things you must face at your age?

The Elfstones of Shannara



This fantasy, adventure book is second in the "Sword of Shannara" series by Terry Brooks and is published by Dey Rey Books, a division

of Random House Publishing Group. *The Elfstones of Shannara* is written for kids 14 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How does Crown Prince Arion Elesseidil treat his younger brother, Ander? When did their relationship begin to sour? If you have siblings, how would you describe your relationship with them? How can the desire for power, respect, or our love lead to sibling competition? If you want to seem smarter, better or more valuable than your sibling, how can you begin to examine your priorities? What can our family accomplish if we support

each other and work together instead of competing?

2. What makes Wil Ohmsford want to become a Healer? How does Uncle Flick feel about his dream? What process does he go through with the elders of Storlock in order to receive training? Have you ever had to work hard to get into a place or position where you wanted to be? If you encounter resistance when attempting something difficult, how can redoubling your efforts or trying a creative approach open doors for you? If your family doesn't support your dream, how can you show them respect while following your plans?
3. Why does Wil think the Elfstones stopped working for him? What makes Amberle think the way Wil tried to use the Elfstones' power is opposed to his own deepest nature? As a follower of Christ, what are your responsibilities toward others? How might God want you to use the gifts He's given you for others?
4. What responsibilities does Ander Elesedil take on himself when Arion stops coming to important meetings with their father? What good parts of Ander's personality does King Eventine begin to see as a result? Who in your life has modeled the qualities of faithfulness and reliability? How have you and others benefitted from that person's steady commitment? If a talented person has a certain job or position but they're not faithful to fulfill their duties, how can that cause suffering for the people around them? The next time you're in a dull or tedious situation, how can you use it as an opportunity to practice faithfulness?
5. Why did Amberle flee from her position as a Chosen? In what

ways did she misunderstand how the Ellcrys was trying to communicate with her? What does Moses in the Bible misunderstand about how God might want to use him? Read Numbers 11:14. What caused him to feel overwhelmed? Why is it easy for people to feel overwhelmed when they sense a great destiny or an important mission that they must fulfill? What do you feel is God's calling on your life? How does this calling give you purpose? How can you continually remind yourself that God is directing you and that you aren't alone?

Elijah of Buxton



This historical fiction novel by Christopher Paul Curtis is an Apple Signature book published by Scholastic, Inc., and written for kids ages 9 to 10.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Do you agree with Elijah, that once you start lying, it isn't hard to keep lying? Have you ever told a lie that led to more lies? What happened? What does the Bible say about lying?
2. Why does Ma say black people like talking and telling stories? How does storytelling empower a culture, especially one that has little or no freedom?
3. Why is Mr. Leroy so angry when Elijah starts to use the n-word? What does that word mean to him? Why does he insist it

should be buried? How can a single word be powerful enough to produce rage, despair or other emotions?

4. Why did Pa say Mr. Leroy wasn't thinking clearly after Zephariah stole his money? Have you ever viewed a situation the way you wanted it to be rather than the way it really was? What were some decisions you have made based on your emotions? What happened?
5. How does Elijah change his reputation from that of being the boy who threw up on Frederick Douglass? How does he prove he is maturing? How do you think the community will respond to him when he returns with the baby?
6. What were some signs that Zephariah wasn't a good man? Why do you think Elijah was fooled by him? When you meet someone new, what do you look for to determine whether to trust him or her? Have you ever trusted someone who lied to you or let you down? What happened? What did you learn from the situation?
7. Did Elijah fail because he couldn't save all the American slaves he found? How did he make the best of the situation? Do you have to do something huge and earth-shattering to be a hero? Explain your answer.

The Elite



This romance dystopian book by Kiera Cass is published by HarperTeen, a division of HarperCollins, and written for kids ages 12 and

older.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

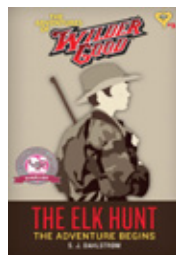
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Have you ever known someone like America, who treated you differently based on her current feelings or circumstances? How do you feel when you're treated this way? What does the Bible say about true friendship? How does this differ from America's situational love and kindness?
2. Why does King Clarkson ignore America and treat her differently than the other girls? When have you been snubbed by someone you wanted to impress? When have you snubbed someone else? Explain.
3. How does America's decision to talk about the diary on live TV impact Maxon and his confidence in her? When have you been betrayed by someone you trusted? When have you broken someone else's trust? Why is broken trust so hard to repair?
4. Do you know anyone who is experiencing physical or emotional abuse, like Maxon does at the hand of his father? Whom should you tell about what you

know? Why is telling the right person about this important?

5. Why does the king think so highly of Queen Amberly? When is complete obedience a positive character trait? When is it a negative trait? To whom should you be obedient? Why is it important to be obedient to God?
 6. Why does America reveal the contents of the diary on live TV? When have you done something dramatic to cause change? What happened? Does America do this to fight for justice or for revenge? What does the Bible say about seeking revenge against those who wrong you?
 7. What's wrong with the way Maxon and Celeste act toward each other? Why is self control important in relationships? How might they be hurting each other physically and emotionally? How does this kind of contact dishonor God and His plan for male-female relationships?
2. Why does Wilder begin cutting the elk carcass without waiting for Gale to tell him what to do? When is it best to "just figure it out," as Wilder's dad says? In what situations should you ask for help before diving in and trying something alone?
 3. What does Gale give Wilder as a special souvenir from his first elk hunt? When has someone given you an expensive or extravagant gift? What was it, and what did it mean to you?
 4. Why is Gale's friendship so special to Wilder, even though the man is much older than he? When have you had a special friendship with a grandparent or other much older person? What made that relationship important to you? How was it different from your friendships with people your own age?
 5. What might have happened if Gale and Wilder didn't keep moving after Wilder's leg was hurt? When have you had keep going, even though you were physically hurting, tired or frustrated? Why is it important that you don't give up, even when life is hard? What does the Bible say about perseverance? Who will help you in your times of need?

The Elk Hunt



This adventure book by S.J. Dahlstrom is published by Paul Dry Books. *The Elk Hunt* is written for kids ages 8 to 13.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What are some ways Wilder proves himself to Gale? What are some valuable things that you've learned from adults by patiently watching and listening?

Elsie's Endless Wait



This first historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Elsie Dinsmore" series by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz. *Elsie's Endless Wait* is written for kids

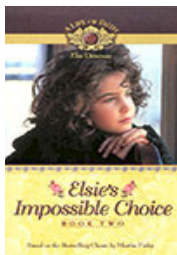
ages 10 to 14.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How does Elsie try to win her father's love? Do you think her goal is realistic? How might her plan have eventually damaged her own spirit? Have you ever tried to earn God's love? Why does God love His children?
2. What is Horace's attitude toward discipline? What is his opinion on forgiveness? Does he express love and grace to Elsie? Do his actions reflect God's treatment as the perfect Father? How are they different? What characteristics make God the perfect Father?
3. As the Dinsmore children watch Horace and Elsie grow in their relationship, how does their opinion of Elsie change?

Elsie's Impossible Choice



This second historical fiction book in the “A Life of Faith: Elsie Dinsmore” series based on the best-selling classic by Martha Finley is published by

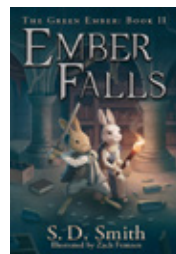
Zonderkidz. *Elsie's Impossible Choice* is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How did Miss Stevens tempt Elsie to compromise her obedience to God in small ways? How did her father tempt her to compromise her faith in large ways? How did Elsie demonstrate her faithfulness to God in small ways? What does God's Word say will be the reward for faithfulness? What has tempted you to turn away from God? What are some ways you can remain strong in your faith, no matter the temptation?
2. What motivates Elsie to obey God? Is she right in obeying God over obeying her father? How does Horace try to obtain Elsie's obedience? Is this appropriate? What does the Bible say about submitting to authority? Have you ever been in a situation where you had to choose between earthly and heavenly authority? What did you choose? What were the consequences? Can you think of a time when you should obey and earthly authority over God's commands?
3. How did God use the negative circumstances in Horace's life for good? Why do you think God allowed Elsie to go through such pain? What does this tell you about God's desire to save Horace? Have you ever been through a difficult experience that God used for good? How can you maintain a positive attitude when things aren't just? How will you remember God's blessings, even when you are in an unfair situation?

Ember Falls



This fantasy adventure by S.D. Smith is the second book in “The Green Ember” series published by Story Warren Books. *Ember Falls* is written for

kids ages 8-12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. In the prologue, what does a young prince wonder? How does his servant respond to his reflection on how he will die? Do you agree with his servant, that it's better to live your life in the present than to skip ahead? What do you think he means by this? What does Jesus say about worrying? (Look up Matthew 6:25-34 in your Bible if you are not sure.) What do you worry about? How can I help you trust God more in this area?
2. Before the war begins, what does Heather tell Lord Ramnor about winning the war that day? Is she correct in saying that they did not have to win the war that day, but needed to win the battle? What do you think she means by this? How does this give her and the soldiers hope to face the day? Think about how you might apply Heather's advice to a problem you are dealing with in your own life.
3. What does Heyward tell Heather he saw one of the votaries do during a battle? As the votary

fought, how did this person look? What do you think gave the votary his assurance of what he was doing, even in the face of death? What gives us confidence in the face of trials? Read John 11:25-26 in your Bible. What did Jesus tell His friend Martha in this passage? How can this passage inspire you when you are afraid?

4. Who is Heather's best friend? How do you know they are good friends? What do they give up for each other, without the other asking? Who are your best friends? What qualities do they possess that make you like them? How do you work out your differences? What is something you could do to show them how much you appreciate their friendship?

An Ember in the Ashes



This fantasy adventure by Sabaa Tahir is the first book in "An Ember in the Ashes" series published by Razorbill, a division of Penguin Young

Readers Group. *An Ember in the Ashes* is written for kids ages 8-12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What doesn't Elias like about the privileged life of a Mask? What do you think motivates his desire to leave Blackcliff? What, if anything, would you have enjoyed about being a Mask? What things would you not have liked? If you had the choice to stay or leave,

as Elias did, which would you choose? Explain.

2. Why do the Martials believe they are better than the Scholars? Can you think of people in our world that seem to have more power or importance than other people? How do you think television motivates you to consider some celebrities, athletes or politicians as being better than you? From what or whom do you get your confidence and feelings of self-worth?
3. In the beginning of the story, why is Laia constantly afraid? How does she grow stronger throughout the novel? What motivates her to change? What things were you afraid of when you were younger? How did you outgrow those fears? If you are still afraid, what can you do to help yourself overcome them?
4. Why are the Scholars forbidden to read? How are these reasons similar to or different from the reasons that masters prohibited their slaves and some men forbid their women to read in some cultures today? Why do you think people in power want to keep others from reading? What would you do if someone prohibited you from reading?

The Emerald Atlas



This fantasy by John Stephens is the first book in "The Books of Beginning" series published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House

Children's Books, a division of Random House Inc. *The Emerald Atlas* is written for kids ages 8-12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What task must Kate, Michael and Emma carry out in order to fulfill their destinies? What duties does God give to you in your life? How can you accomplish them?
2. What does Gabriel tell the kids about the painful screeching of the morum cadi? What are some things you fear in life? How can you overcome that fear? Who can help you?
3. What kind of a king is Hamish? How would you feel about following a king like him? What are some of his negative behaviors? Why is it difficult to honor a leader who makes choices with which you disagree? What does the Bible tell us about obeying leaders? How could he have been a better king?

Emily Climbs



This second drama book in the "Emily Novels" by L. M. Montgomery is published by Starfire, an imprint of Random House Children's

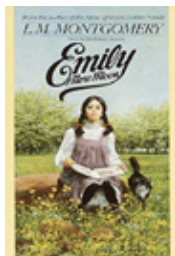
Books and is written for kids 10 to 13.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Someone plays a trick on Emily, and she wrongly blames her best friend. What assumptions did Emily have that helped her blame the wrong person? What should she have done before blaming an innocent person?
2. If you have a disagreement with a friend, what are some things you can do to resolve it correctly?
3. Aunt Ruth accuses Emily of being sly and often thinks the worst of her. Do you have anyone in your life that always thinks the worst of you? If so, how do you cope with the situation?
4. How do you think God would want you to behave?
5. What can you do when you feel that things in your life are going in the wrong direction or that your life is spiraling out of control?
6. What part does God play in your hard times? How can He help you through bad things?
7. Emily took a stand against what she thought was wrong. Give an example of how you have done that in your life. What is a stand that you would like to take today? What is one thing you can do to take that stand?

Emily of New Moon



This first coming-of-age, historical book in the “Emily” series by L. M. Montgomery is published by Frederick A. Stokes and is written

for kids 9 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How does Emily feel toward God when her father is dying? What does her father tell her about God? How does being reminded that God is loving help Emily get through her father’s death? How does remembering that God is loving help you get through difficult times?
2. Why does most of Emily’s extended family not want her? Have you ever felt unwanted by friends or family? Explain.
3. Describe Emily and her Aunt Elizabeth’s relationship. What compromise do they reach to restore peace? Have you ever had to surrender your personal desires to make peace with someone? Explain. How did this relationship grow because of what you did?
4. How often do Emily and Ilse fight? How are their personalities different? What helps them become good friends? How are your friends different from you? How do they help you be a better person?
5. What does Emily think immediately after she cuts her bangs? Have you ever made a mistake you thought you would never be forgiven for? What happened? What should Emily have done the minute she made this mistake? What happens when she finally tells her family what happened? Are the consequences of admitting to her mistakes as bad as she thought they would be? Have you ever had to admit to something like Emily did? How

did admitting your mistake help to fix the problem?

The Emperor’s Code



This mystery adventure book by Gordon Korman is the eighth book in “The 39 Clues” series and is published by Scholastic Inc. *The Emperor’s Code* is

written for kids ages 9 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How did Dan feel when he was alone and lost in China? How realistic is it that he made it to Mount Everest without any money or being able to speak the language? How would you feel if you were abandoned in a foreign country? What would you do?
2. What clues lead you to believe that Nellie is more than an au pair? What does she do that convinces Dan and Amy that she is on their side? Are they safe traveling the world with her assistance? Explain. Who might her boss be?
3. What did Dan learn about being a celebrity when he traveled with Jonah? What is appealing about Jonah’s life? What is unappealing about it? What do you hope your life will be like when you’re an adult?

The Empty City



This adventure/fantasy novel is the first in the “Survivors” series written by Erin Hunter. The novel is published by Harper, a division of HarperCollins publishing. *The Empty City* is written for ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. If you were a dog, what type of dog would you like to be: a Wild Pack dog, a Lone dog, or a Leashed dog? Why?
2. Why do the dogs call humans longpaws? Discuss some of the other words they use, such as Big Growl, treasure pouches and loudcages. What does each refer to, and how might that name have been given? What are some events around you that could be given names like these?
3. Why does Lucky liked being a Lone dog? Why does he resist becoming the head of a pack? Why do other dogs resist becoming Pack dogs? Would you resist becoming the head of a pack? Explain. Would you resist becoming a Pack dog? Explain. Why do the Leashed dogs like their masters? If you have a pet, how do you take care of the animal? If you don't have a pet, what kind of pet would you like to own? How would you take care of it?
4. What catastrophic event takes place in this book? How do

longpaws and dogs react to it? If you had to leave your home in a hurry, what one item would you take with you? Why?

The Empty Envelope



This mystery is the fifth book in the “A to Z Mysteries” series written by Ron Roy. The novel is published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House LLC, a Penguin Random House Company. *The Empty Envelope* is written for ages 8 to 10.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. If you were a dog, what type of dog would you like to be: a Wild Pack dog, a Lone dog, or a Leashed dog? Why?

The Enchantress Returns



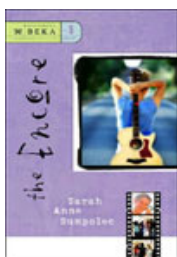
This fantasy, fairy tale book is second in the “Land of Stories” series by Chris Colfer is published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group. *The Enchantress Returns* is written for kids 10 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why didn't the twins' father want them to be raised in a world of privilege? Does privilege always ruin one's character? What are some ways that wealth harms people? How can wealth be used to serve people? If you had a million dollars, what would you do with the money?
2. Who was Rumpelstiltskin's friend in prison? Would you agree that the flower never judged, condemned or mocked him? Explain. Why is it important to choose your friends carefully? What are some things that you like best about your friends? What are some characteristics you look for in a friend?
3. Ezmia quotes the old saying that what does not kill you, makes you stronger. What does that mean? What is something hard that you have had to go through? What did you learn from it once you'd gotten through that difficult time?
4. Cinderella's stepmother says that some sins are forgiven but never forgotten. Why did people still hate her? Why did Cinderella forgive her? Can you think of a time when someone hurt you? How did you feel? Were you able to forgive them? If so, how? Why is it important to forgive people who hurt you?

The Encore



This fifth coming-of-age book in the “Becoming Beka” series by Sarah Anne Sumpolec is published by Moody Publishers. *The Encore* is written for kids 13

to 18.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Lucy is made to believe that having sex means she'll be popular. She ends up having sex and then wants nothing to do with the popular crowd. How does your circle of friends react to pressure to have sex?
2. What makes it difficult to take a stand and not become involved in premarital sex? What can you learn from Lucy's experience? Why do you think Lucy did not want anything to do with the popular crowd after she and Ethan had been together?
3. Mai was angry with Beka and wanted Beka's job as the editor of the school newspaper. Have you compared yourself to someone you viewed as perfect? What did you do about your jealousy? How did you misjudge that person? How has someone misjudged you? What happened? What do you wish had happened?
4. How would you categorize Mark's feelings for Beka? How did Beka feel when she saw him kissing another girl after they broke up? How has someone you

liked betrayed you? How was your situation a blessing in disguise as this situation was for Beka?

Ender's Game



This mystery book-science fiction book by Orson Scott Card is the first in the “Ender Quintet” series and is published by Tor Books, a division of

Macmillan Publishers. *Ender's Game* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How would you describe Ender's relationship with his brother? Why might Ender still want Peter to love him? Who is someone you don't get along with? Why is there a rift in the relationship? What steps can you take to mend the relationship? Why would you want to have a good relationship with this person?
2. What is Ender's logic about hurting others? Is he right? Why does he later regret his decisions? Have you ever made a decision that seemed good at the time but had an undesirable outcome? What was the situation? What could you have done differently? What did you learn from that situation?
3. How did Graff treat Ender? How does Ender treat Bean? How does Ender justify his actions? Do you agree or disagree that someone must be hurt in order to become

better at something? Why or why not?

4. Why doesn't Graff want Ender to rely on adults for help? Have you ever needed help from the adults in your life? Tell about a time that they helped you. Tell about a time when adults did not help you. Can you rely on the adults in your life for help?

The Enormous Egg



This adventure, humor book written by Oliver Butterworth and illustrated by Mark Crilley is published by Little, Brown Books

for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc.; the edition reviewed was published in 2009. *The Enormous Egg* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Dr. Ziemer want Nate to give his own speech on TV, rather than read the one written by the talk show host? Does Nate make the right choice? When have you been influenced by listening to someone who was speaking from the heart? What did you like or dislike about this speaker?
2. Why doesn't Nate want to sell Uncle Beasley? When have you had something that was more valuable to you than money? What was it? Why was it so meaningful to you?

3. Why does Nate refuse to give up on the egg, even though it isn't hatching as quickly as he thinks it should? When have you kept hoping for something, even though it seemed impossible? What happened?
4. Why does Senator Granderson dislike everything that is not fully American? What do you think would happen if a politician made comments like his today? How can you show your pride in your country without ignoring other countries? Why is it important to be kind and cautious with your words, even when you disagree with someone?
5. How might this story be different if it had been written today rather than in the 1950s? How might modern technology, like the internet, have played a role? What would you think if you saw a story online about a baby dinosaur?

Epos the Winged Flame



This fantasy written by Adam Blade is the sixth in the "Beast Quest" series and is published by Scholastic Inc. *Epos the Winged Flame* is written

for kids ages 8 to 10.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why did the people build their village so close to the volcano?

Would you want to live that close to a volcano? Explain.

2. Tom is always glad when someone says he looks like his father. Which of our qualities [those of your parents] would you like to have as you grow up?
3. How does Malvel try to discourage Tom from completing his quest? How have others tried to discourage you from doing something? Did they succeed? If not, how were you able to overcome your doubts?
4. How did Tom's friends help him succeed? Could he have succeeded alone? Explain. How have your friends helped you succeed in an area? Why was this situation made better because of others being involved?

Eragon



This fantasy adventure is the first book in "The Inheritance Cycle" by Christopher Paolini and is published by Knopf Books for Young Readers, a division

of Random House Books. *Eragon* is written for kids ages 13 and up.

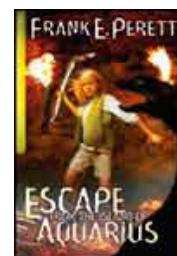
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What motivates Eragon once his uncle is killed? Should people do things to get revenge? What are some possible dangers when a person acts out of vengeful motives? What does the Bible say about revenge?

2. Why does Eragon have a tough time deciding whether to let Angela tell him his fate? Would you want to know your future? Why or why not? What does God say about your future? What does God say about people who try to tell others their future?
3. What does Ajihad mean when he tells Eragon the boy must retain his freedom because it's his true power? What can happen to a person who devotes his allegiance fully to another human being?
4. How does Eragon's power and responsibility as a Rider change him? To what qualities and bits of advice from his past does he still cling?
5. What does Saphira mean when she tells Eragon that he needs to put aside his fear in order to accomplish his responsibility to the future? What is your responsibility to the future (or, those who come after you on this earth)?

Escape From the Island of Aquarius



This second Christian suspense book in the Cooper Kids Adventures" series by Frank E. Peretti is published by Good News Publishers,

Crossway Books. *Escape From the Island of Aquarius* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Who does Kelno believe is god? Do you know anyone who believes this, also? Why do you think it is easier for people to believe in themselves than it is for them to believe in God?
2. Why is it so difficult to give God control of your life? What things in your own life would you rather figure out for yourself? What would it take for you to relinquish control to God?
3. How does Dr. Cooper feel after he thinks Lila has been killed? What does he remember about his revenge versus God's revenge? Have you ever wanted to take revenge for something? Did you give that situation to God, or did you take care of it yourself? What was the result?
4. How does Adam show God's love to the villagers? How do you show God's love to unbelievers in your life?

Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library



This adventure, mystery book by Chris Grabenstein is published by Random House and is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

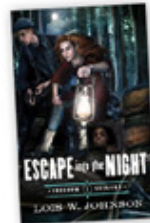
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How did the library impact Mr. Lemoncello as a boy? How have

libraries changed since this book was written? How has a library helped you?

2. What does Kyle do with his \$500.00 gift card? What motivates Kyle to use it on his family? What does Charles Chilton do with his gift card? Do you think he is happier because of what he bought? How does blessing others with what you have benefit them and you?
3. What rule does Charles bully his teammate into breaking? How does breaking the rule affect his teammates? How does it affect Charles? What are some rules around you that people break? How do these rules being broken affect you?
4. What is Kyle's reaction when he hears that someone is in trouble in the library? What is Charles' reaction? How might you have reacted? How might helping this person have hurt someone's chance of winning? Why is it important to assist those in need?
5. What does Sierra discover about interacting with others at the end of the novel? How do you interact with people face to face? How do you interact with people online? What different set of skills do you need for each one? What makes interacting with people uncomfortable? Why is it OK to be uncomfortable sometimes?
6. What hurts Kyle's chances of winning in this competition? Why might reading be important to you or for your life? With which of the authors and novels mentioned were you familiar? How much time do you spend reading? What would be a good summer reading goal for you? What would be a good winter reading goal for you?

Escape into the Night



This science fiction/historical fiction novel by Lois Walford Johnson is the first in the "Freedom Seekers" series published by Moody Publishers,

River North Division. *Escape into the Night* is written for kids ages 9 to 16.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Libby initially believe slavery isn't so bad? What happens to change her mind?
2. Why does Libby think Jordan looks like royalty in a way? What causes him to seem dignified in spite of his circumstances? Have you ever found yourself standing up to a problem? How has a deep sense of direction, conviction or purpose helped you?
3. What does Jordan say about hate when Libby asks if he hates his master? When have you had a hard time forgiving someone? How did you feel inside as you carried a burden of hate or anger? Were you able to forgive? If so, how did it feel? What does the Bible say about forgiveness?
4. Why is Pa willing to help slaves escape, even though he could be put in jail for it? Have you or someone you know ever been in danger for standing up for a belief? What happened?
5. Talk about some of the never-give-up families in this book, both those made up of blood relatives and those that aren't. Why

are families so important? What is unique and special about your family?

Escape to Freedom: The Underground Railroad Adventures of Callie and William



This historical novel by Barbara Brooks Simon is part of the “I Am American” series published by the National Geographic Society. *Escape to Freedom* is

written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What did you know about the Underground Railroad before you read this book? What new facts or information did you learn? What would have been the scariest part of being a slave running to freedom?
2. Who helps and supports the slaves while they are on the run? Why do these people risk their lives to help strangers?

Esperanza Rising



This historical fiction, drama by Pam Muñoz Ryan is published by Scholastic. *Esperanza Rising* is written for kids ages 11 to 13.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

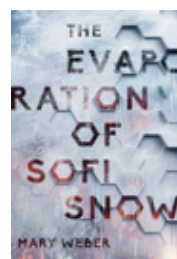
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Esperanza have trouble getting along with the people on the train? How are those people different from her? How are they similar? Describe someone who is more different than similar to you. What do you have in common? How should you treat someone who is different than you?
2. At first, why do Esperanza and her family have a hard time adjusting to their new lives? What is one way that they do adjust? What is something that you have had to adjust to or something new that you've tried? What was hard about adjusting or doing this activity? What was fun about doing something new or adjusting?
3. At first, why don't Esperanza and Marta get along? How does Esperanza help Marta later? Tell about a time when someone was rude to you or you were rude to someone. How should you respond when people are rude to you? How can you keep from being rude to others?
4. How does Esperanza help Abuelita move to the United States? How does her family help Esperanza adjust to life in a new country? How does hard work help Esperanza's family stay together? How important is our family to you? What does our family do to stay connected? What would you be willing to give up to keep us all together?
5. At first, why does Esperanza have trouble working? How does she initially respond to manual

labor? What helps her understand the importance of hard work? Why are the chores and homework that you do important? How have you learned the importance of hard work?

6. How does Esperanza change from the beginning to the end of the story? What causes her to want to care and provide for her family? Why do kids need to grow up? What will you do when you grow up to take care of your family and make a difference in the world?

The Evaporation of Sofi Snow



This science fiction, dystopian, suspense/thriller by Mary Christine Weber is published by Thomas Nelson, a registered trademark of HarperCollins

Christian Publishing Inc. *The Evaporation of Sofi Snow* is written for kids ages 15 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

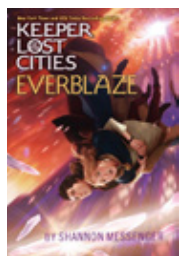
1. What is Sofi's relationship with her mom? Did your opinion about her mother change by the end of the book? Why or why not? Do you know what I do for a living and for the family? What would you like to know about my work? Do you know what choices brought me to where I am now? Would you like to know? What choices can you make now to

help you go in the direction you want to go?

2. How do you think Sofi's childhood affected the person she is now? How did it affect her relationship to Shilo? What events have shaped your life? How did they affect you and your relationship to your friends and in our family?
3. How did the pictures of Miguel change your opinion of him? How does he explain them? Why doesn't he let himself be blackmailed? Why is it hard to blackmail someone who is innocent of wrongdoing? What can you learn from Miguel? Why might the Bible in 1 Timothy 3:2 tell leaders to be "above reproach"? How can you apply this in your life?
4. What is Sofi's relationship to Miguel? How old was she when they first met? What did he do to hurt her? How could she have protected herself from that rejection? What are our family's rules to protect you from this kind of emotional pain? How will our rules help you?

Please see the R document for the sequel, *The Reclaiming of Shilo Snow*.

Everblaze



This fantasy book is the third book in the "Keeper of the Lost Cities" series by Shannon Messenger. It is published by Aladdin, a division of Simon &

Schuster. *Everblaze* is written for kids ages 8 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Sophie repeatedly consider withholding the truth about her discoveries or experiences from her parents? Do you agree or disagree with her decisions? Explain. What would you have done if you were in her place?
2. Why does Keefe tell Sophie that their families don't decide who they are? Do you agree that each person must decide who he or she is? Explain. What have you used to search for your identity? What do these Scriptures say about your identity: Genesis 1:27; Psalm 100:3; Jeremiah 1:5; John 1:12; John 15:15; Ephesians 2:10; and 2 Corinthians 5:17?
3. How does Sophie justify breaking the laws of telepathy and going into King Dimitar's mind? What were the consequences of her actions? What could she have done differently? Why do we have laws? What is a hard law for you to follow? How do you force yourself to obey that law?
4. What does Mr. Forkle tell Sophie that they can do with anger and the pain of disappointment? Are they able to use it to fuel them to rise to above it? How might using anger and pain for motivation be a good thing? How might it be a bad thing? What happens when Brant uses anger and pain to fuel him? How do you handle anger and pain?
5. Why does Sophie feel guilty over Kenric's death? Is she responsible for it? What's the difference between being responsible and being used? What have you recently felt guilty over? What was the reason for your guilt? How did your guilt help you

learn to be a better person? How did you let it go?

6. Why is Grady so angry over Brant's treachery? Have you ever felt betrayed by a friend or a loved one? What was the situation? Have you ever betrayed someone? What was the situation? How can you make this betrayal right?

Everless



This suspense/thriller, supernatural realism book is first in the "Everless" series by Sara Holland. It is published by HarperTeen, an imprint of

HarperCollins Publishers. *Everless* is written for kids ages 16 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What do you think about the idea of melting a coin into tea in order to gain an extra month or year to live? Would you be able to take time to live longer if you knew someone else would have a shorter life? Explain. What would you do differently if you thought you would live forever on this earth? As a Christian, you will live for a time on earth and then for eternity with God. What might you do differently because you know this?
2. What good memories does Jules have from her childhood? How do you think those memories affect her decisions when she returns to Everless, especially in

relation to Liam and Roan? Have you ever let your feelings for someone, good or bad, influence your relationship with them? What can you do to keep from judging people based on your emotions? What can you do to discern more about others based on their actions?

3. Sempera is made up of many distinct classes of people — nobles, merchants, the poor. Where might you live in such a world, if you were to live as you currently do? How is our nation similar to Sempera? How is it different? What things can you do to help bridge the gap between people who are different in your school or town?
4. Why does the Queen allow Caro to take possession of her mind? What first influences her? How do the books you read, television you watch and music you listen to influence you? How is influence versus possession different? In what ways is reading the Bible a good influence? How will it help you not be influenced by the wrong voices?

Everything, Everything



This drama, romance by Nicola Yoon is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. *Everything, Everything* is written for kids ages 15 to 18.

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Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. When does Madeline first develop a habit of lying to her close friends and family? When do you think her lying finally went too far — when she lied to her mom and said there was nothing unusual going on in her life; when she lied to Carla about not touching Olly; or to Olly about having pills that would allow her to manage her disease? When did you lie to keep something hidden? What should you have done instead?
2. Do Olly's visits brighten Madeline's life enough to balance out the potential threat to her health? Why is living in isolation hard for Madeline? How are people today isolated, even though they don't have SCID? Who do you know who might be isolated and need a visit or some encouragement?
3. Why does Carla feel that her relationship with her own daughter is not as good as the connection between Dr. Whittier and Madeline? Would Madeline and Dr. Whittier's close relationship have been possible if Dr. Whittier had allowed her daughter to live a normal life? At what ages do children rely wholly on their parents? When did you start to do a few small things independently? How is growing independence an important part of the process of maturity? Do you feel you have enough independence now?
4. Why does Olly's mother think her domestic abuse situation isn't bad enough to justify leaving? Is Mrs. Bright right to endure her situation and hope that things might improve? If a trusted adult or family member is being

violent or verbally abusive, what is the best course of action to take?

5. Why does Madeline think that loving Olly is the biggest risk she has ever taken? What could she lose if he doesn't love her back, or if he does love her back and she is still unable to leave her home? How have you felt similar to Madeline? How is your philosophy of love similar or different? Explain.

Everything for a Dog



This realistic fiction by Ann M. Martin is published by Feiwel and Friends, an imprint of MacMillan. *Everything for a Dog* is written for

kids ages 9 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How did Charlie act around his mother? Did he give any hints about what he thought about her crying? Why do many children have trouble being around adults who cry?
2. Loneliness seems to be a recurring theme for some of the characters. Why is Charlie lonely? Why is Henry lonely? Why is Letty Lewis lonely? How does each of these characters move forward and away from loneliness? Have you ever felt lonely? What can you do to change that feeling?

- How does Henry feel when he realizes that not being allowed to have a dog has nothing to do with the expense, his behavior or his being responsible? Is his father's reason for not wanting Henry to have a dog—he wanted to spare Henry from a painful loss when the dog died—valid?
- Have you ever lost anyone near to you? Have any of your pets died? What most helped you cope? How might you help someone else who grieves a similar loss?
- Charlie lives in a rural area where hunting is part of the culture. Why does he dislike guns, call hunters “murderers” and think hunting should be outlawed? Is he right about hunting? How have Charlie's emotions caused him to take a stand on hunting?
- Is Henry right to buy a leash, collar and treats and keep Buddy a secret from his parents? What would you have done in his place?

Evil Star



This science fiction/fantasy suspense thriller is the second in “The Gatekeepers” series by Anthony Horowitz and is published by Scholastic

Publishing. *Evil Star* is written for kids ages 10 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Why don't people believe Jared when he mentions that the Amabo family members are not what they seem? How does his initial selfishness hurt his ability to convince others about what he saw? Did Jared learn to share?
- Why do others view Mopsy's enjoyment of life, ability to think the best about others and optimism as naive? What does she do that causes people to view her as immature? Should she stop behaving in this way just to please others? What should she do?
- What is one thing that keeps Jared from believing in God? How is his confusion about a good God allowing bad things to happen to people answered by Andrea? Do you agree that people use their freewill to choose to do bad things to others? Where is God in the midst of these bad things?
- What terrified the Amabos? Do evil men like Victor really exist or are they only found in books? How does Victor strike terror into the hearts of people? What is Victor's primary goal?
- Daniel, one of Jared's school-mates, said that Mattu had secrets to keep. What does he mean by that? Why is he willing to back up whatever Mattu says happened? Does the truth matter?
- How are the refugee coordinators helpful? How are they tough? What made Kirk Crick unlikeable? What made George Neville likeable? How can two men have the same job and treat people so differently?
- What was Alake's inner struggle? How do bad memories and guilt hurt people? What helped Alake start to feel human again? How

did a touch of love and being treated like a valuable human being change Alake?

Exile



This fantasy, suspense/thriller novel by Shannon Messenger is the second in the “Keeper of the Lost Cities” series and is published by Aladdin,

an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's publishing division. *Exile* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Sophie never felt normal in the human world. How does she feel in the Elven world? What things make her different? How is she the same as her friends? Do you like to stand out in a crowd or would you rather fit in?
- What things make you unique? How could you help someone else feel comfortable in a new situation like school or Sunday school?
- How does Grady feel about not saving his daughter, Jolie? What does the guilt do to him? How has guilt affected Jolie's fiancé, Brant? What does it do to Alden? Think about a time when you felt guilty. Why did you feel this way? How did the guilt physically affect you, if it did? When is guilt a good thing? When is it a bad thing? What is the difference?

- Who does Fitz blame for what happened to his father? Is Sophie to blame? Have you ever argued with a friend or sibling? What was it over? What is the best way to avoid fighting with a friend or your siblings?
- Why might Dex be so jealous of Sophie's other friends, like Fitz and Keefe? Have you ever been jealous of a friend's other friends? If so, what did you do to help get over those feelings? How does Keefe make Dex feel better about himself? How can you help your friends from being jealous of each other?

Exposure



This mystery/thriller novel by Kathy Reichs and Brendan Reichs is the fourth in the "Virals" series and is published by G.P. Putnam's

Sons, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group, The Penguin Group. *Exposure* is written for kids ages 11 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

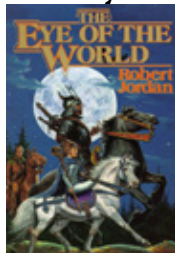
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Tory and the boys feel like aliens at the academy. Have you ever felt like you didn't fit in? What are some solutions to helping someone acclimate to a new school? What do you do to make a new person feel welcome?
- Tory has difficulty forgiving Ben for his part in helping the Gamemaster. How does her lack of forgiveness affect the group?

What changes occur after she decides to forgive Ben? How did trying to view the incident from Ben's perspective work to change Tory's mind? Have you ever had trouble forgiving someone? How did you resolve it? Find what the Bible has to say about forgiveness.

- Tory talks with the other Virals about their purpose and super abilities. She believes they should use them to make a difference in their world. Do you know what gifts God has given you? Do you make good use of them? Cite some examples.

The Eye of the World



This fantasy, coming-of-age book by Robert Jordan is the first book in the "Wheel of Time" series published by The Bantam Group, 1990; the edition reviewed

was published by Tor, a division of Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, in 2009. *The Eye of the World* is written for 12 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- What does a feverish Tam reveal about Rand's origins? How does Rand feel about the revelation? How important are the details of your birth to you? How might they affect the person you will become? How might one's past affect the person but not dictate the person's future? How might a person's choices play a larger role in whom the person becomes than the choices of others at the

individual's birth? Does your identity in Christ depend more on your past or on what Christ has done for you? Explain. How does your identity in Christ help you thrive as an individual?

- How does Rand react to the news that Egwene can channel magic and potentially become an Aes Sedai? Why does he still not trust Moiraine even after all the good deeds she's done for him and his friends? Have you ever had a friend discover a new talent or take up a new interest that you weren't a part of? Describe how that felt and what you did. Knowing what you know today, how could you have supported this friend even better?

- Why is Mat so intent on finding treasure in Shadar Logoth? What happens to him when he takes a dagger from the city, despite his friends' warnings? Have you ever felt like you needed something so desperately you couldn't wait? How have you given into your impulses to own something now instead of waiting? What happened? How does being patient and waiting on God's perfect timing help you in the long run?

- By the time they reach Caemlyn, how are Mat and Rand's attitudes toward their lives and their future? What reason does Mat list for growing increasingly pessimistic? What do you do when you're caught in a bad situation? If you can't get out of the situation, how can you manage your attitude? How might placing your hope in God allow you to get through even the most difficult situations?

- What kinds of things does Ba'alzamon say to Rand when he visits his dreams? What does Rand say when Ba'alzamon claims him as his servant? Once

you decide the values you want to have, how will you be able to stick with those values or causes? If you are tempted to stray from your chosen path — for example choosing popularity over integrity or choosing money over service — what strategies will you use to remind yourself of who you want to be?

Eyes of the Dragon



This fantasy book by Stephen King is published by Signet, an imprint of New American Library, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. Editions have also

been published by Viking Press and Time Warner Paperbacks. *Eyes of the Dragon* is written for adults, but it is on the recommended reading lists for many high schools.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

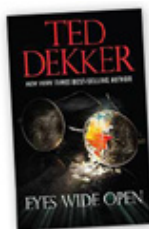
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Sasha insist that Peter use a napkin even though Roland and other nobles have terrible table manners? How do your table manners compare to Peter's? To Roland's?
2. Why does Thomas accept Flagg's offer to see things in the castle, even though they frighten him? Tell about a time when you felt lonely. How did Thomas's refusal of Peter's friendship make him lonelier? Why might it have been hard for him to accept?
3. Why does Thomas make poor choices? How does his father's treatment of him spur him on to

making wrong decisions? Who is responsible for his choices? Describe a situation where you made a choice based on something someone else did. How much responsibility do you have for your own behavior?

4. Why does Roland lean so heavily on Flagg for advice? Although Roland finds thinking difficult, is that an excuse not to do it? What do you find difficult to do? What could you do to improve in that area?
5. Many of the characters eat and drink excessively. What does the Bible say about gluttony? Does what (and how) you eat affect you spiritually as well as physically?
6. Peyna and Dennis both realize the part they played in Peter's imprisonment. How do they feel when they realize Peter is innocent? What do they do to make it right? Tell about a time you made a mistake that affected someone else. How should you deal with mistakes you've made in the past?
7. When Peter is unfairly imprisoned, how does he act? If you were Peter, how would you feel toward Thomas? Why does Peter choose to forgive his brother?

Eyes Wide Open



This Christian thriller by Ted Dekker was originally published as four smaller Kindle ebooks—*Identity*, *Mirrors*, *Unseen* and *Seer* in the

“Outlaw Chronicles” series. It was published as a traditional book by Worthy Media and is written for kids ages 15 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why do you think Gram keeps eHow do Christy and Austin see themselves when the book begins? How are they imprisoned by their impressions of themselves? What lies do the staff members tell them that play into their fears and false beliefs? What lies does society tell you about who you are and who you should be?
2. What does Outlaw tell Christy and Austin about their true selves? How does God view His children, according to His word? In what areas do you struggle to believe you are beautiful and whole?
3. Why does Christy stab her own body near the end of the book? What does this “suicide” represent?