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

Fablehaven

This fantasy is the first book in the “Fablehaven” series by Brandon Mull and is published by Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division. Fablehaven 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 Seth repeatedly disobey Grandpa’s rules? What problems result from his disobedience? Are Grandpa’s punishments harsh, fair or indulgent? Explain your answer. Does the fact that Seth doesn’t always understand the full reason behind Grandpa’s rules and reasoning make it OK for him to disobey? What does the Bible say about how to treat elders or those in authority?

2. Why does Seth experience punishments from the creatures of Fablehaven that Kendra does not? How does Muriel become evil? What does it mean to have “respect for what is off-limits,” as Kendra says? How do Seth and Muriel fail in this area? How does this principle apply to your life? What are some items or situations in your world that are best avoided altogether rather than explored out of curiosity?

3. What feelings and emotions does Lena share with Kendra about mortality? Why does she find it so distasteful and fearful? How do you feel when you think about aging and death? What do you believe will happen to you after you die?

4. Why do Grandpa and Grandma care enough about the preserve that they are willing to give their lives in service for it? What gives Kendra the courage to approach the Fairy Queen, even though she knows others have died by doing so? Is there anyone or anything for which you would risk or sacrifice your life? Explain your answer.

Fablehaven: The Rise of the Evening Star

This fantasy is the second book in the “Fablehaven” series by Brandon Mull and is published by Shadow Mountain Publishing. A reprint is published by Aladdin Books, a division of Simon & Schuster. Fablehaven: The Rise of the Evening Star 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:

5. What problems arise because Kendra and Seth cannot tell their parents about Fablehaven? Why does Grandpa Sorenson lie to Kendra and Seth’s parents about the reason he needs his grandchildren to come visit him? What would you do in this situation?

6. Tanu gives Seth and Kendra a brief sample of bottled negative emotions. How does Seth react when he takes the fear potion? How does Kendra react when she takes the shame potion? What does Tanu say about the power emotions have to distort a person’s outlook on life? What strong or negative emotions have you experienced? How can knowing God and His Word help you deal with your emotions?

7. Why does the Sphinx caution Seth against being too reckless? How does he say that Seth’s recklessness has threatened Fablehaven in times past? What decisions have you made too quickly, instead of waiting for advice? What was the result of your decision?

8. How does Seth endanger himself by sneaking away without permission to sell batteries to his satyr friends? Can you describe a time when you didn’t want to ask dangerous? After their first task with Errol goes well, why does Kendra still have doubts about helping Errol steal an amulet from the Society of the Evening Star? What kind of doubts have you had about people? How do you decide if you can trust someone?
for permission? What happened? Why do you think parents want their kids to ask for permission for certain things?

**Face of Betrayal**

This mystery, suspense, Christian book by Lis Wiehl and April Henry is published by Thomas Nelson Inc. *Face of Betrayal* is written for kids ages 18 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. What new information did you learn about domestic violence from this story? Why do women like Cassidy sometimes fail to recognize the dangers they face? How can you monitor your own relationships to prevent yourself from becoming a victim of violence? How can you support a friend or acquaintance in circumstances like this?

2. What kind of men does Nic meet online as part of her job? Why might it be dangerous to share personal information and chat with strangers online? How can you protect yourself and your loved ones from cyber-predators?

3. Which characters are or have been sexually active outside of marriage? What consequences do they suffer? What does the Bible say about God's plan for sex? Whether you are single or married, what are some practical ways to follow God's plan in a sex-saturated world?

4. What does each of the Triple Threat women believe about a higher power? With which woman do you most identify? Explain. In what ways can people's life experiences influence their belief systems? As a Christian, how can you share your faith with someone whose views are different from your own?

5. How did the disturbing depictions of murder, rape, and domestic violence in this book impact you? How do you feel God wants you to respond to issues like these in your world today?

**The Face on the Milk Carton**

This mystery coming-of-age novel by Caroline B. Cooney is the first in the “Janie” series published by Ember, an imprint of Random House Children's Books. *The Face on the Milk Carton* is written for kids ages 12 years 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 kind of boyfriend is Reeve? In what ways is he sensitive to Janie’s feelings and emotions about her kidnapping? In what ways does he only seem concerned about his own interests?

2. What is a cult? What are some cults you’ve heard about, and what do you know about them? How does a cult differ from a church or a more traditional religious group?

**Fading Tracks**

This fiction book is the first in the “Boarding School Mysteries” series by Kristi Holl and is published by ZonderKidz, a division of Zondervan.

*Fading Tracks* 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 about Jeri’s choice to go out riding on her own in search of the abandoned house? Is there a less dangerous choice she could have made that might have still helped her friends?

2. What does Jeri do when Betty, the secretary, receives a mysterious phone call while Betty is away from her desk? What could Jeri have done instead of lying?

3. Have you ever thought God might be telling you to do something, like Jeri does when she feels God leading her to the woods? What happened? How can you know whether you are following a message from God or just doing what you want to do?

4. Why do you think the headmaster seems mean? Have you ever formed an opinion about someone before you knew much about him or her? How can you try...
to understand people who have gone through difficult times?

Fahrenheit 451

This science fiction, Dystopian book by Ray Bradbury is published by A Del Rey Book, published by the Ballantine Publishing Group, a trademark of Random House Inc.. Fahrenheit 451 is written for teenagers ages 14 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. What would happen if everyone in our society were allowed to outlaw or burn the books they didn't like? What would be lost? What would be gained? Would more be gained or lost?

2. What are some ways characters keep themselves numb so they don't have to think about the realities of life? How do people in our society do this today? What do you do when you want to escape reality?

3. What distracts Montag on the train while he's trying to memorize lines from the Bible? What hampers your ability to focus on the people and activities that really matter, even when you *want* to pay attention to the right things?

4. What do you think of Beatty? How can he be familiar with many famous writings and still believe the world is better without them? Which books have had the greatest impact on your life? What was meaningful about them?

5. Why are there so many suicides and attempted suicides in Montag's society? In what ways do you think technology and social media add to the problem of suicide in our society today? What can you do when you feel empty? How can you help some who may feel isolated?

6. What three things does Faber say are missing from their society? In what ways is this like the world today?

Fairest

This fantasy, romance by Gail Carson Levine is published by HarperCollins Publishers and is written for kids 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. Aza causes trouble for herself by wanting to be beautiful. What doesn't she like about her looks?

2. Do you like how you look? How much time do you spend longing to look like someone else?

3. In the end, Prince Ijori tells Aza that she is not too large. Instead she has a beauty that is unique to her. What is one way to be positive about a physical trait of yours that you don't like?

4. Aza found that she was only hurting herself by being harder on herself than those who made fun of her. How are you hard on yourself? How are you fair and how are you unfair to yourself? How can you change the way you treat yourself?

5. When Aza was looking out for others, she no longer thought about her shortcomings. How can you apply this rule to your life?

Fairest

This science fiction, romance by Marissa Meyer is published by Feiwel and Friends, a division of Macmillan Publishers and is written for kids 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 does Levana feel about the monogamous, faithful love between Evret and Solstice? Why do these emotions amaze her? Have you seen these traits being modeled by us or other adults in your life? Why are these important traits to have in a marriage?

2. What are some things that Levana wants as Luna's economy grows? When do you find yourself wanting more things than what you already have? How does Levana's greed keep her from enjoying what she has? How does it become dangerous for Levana or those close to her? Why is being greedy a bad idea for you? What can you do to }
be more content with what you have?

3. Why does Levana think Luna deserves to take control of Earth? What is faulty about her logic? Do you think that those who are more advanced should have the freedom to take what they want when they want it? When have you felt entitled to things that did not belong to you? How does feeling entitled hurt you?

4. How does Levana betray Evret? Why doesn’t Evret feel betrayed before he dies? Tell about a time that someone was mean to you. How did he or she betray your trust? What feelings come from feeling betrayed?

5. What does Levana use to make herself look better and escape the unpleasant realities of her life? Have you ever felt so unhappy that you believed your own lies to make you feel better? What is a better way to handle sadness or disappointment? What can we do to help you when you feel this way? What does the Bible say about calling on God in prayer when you are sad, angry or disappointed?

6. How does Levana live in Channary’s shadow? Have you ever felt like you were living in another’s shadow? What was the situation and is it still ongoing? Does God see you? What is your value in God’s eyes? What would help make you feel seen by others?

Fairest of All

This fairy tale, humor, adventure book is first in “Whatever After” series by Sarah Mlynowski. Fairest of All is published by Scholastic Inc. and written for kids ages 8 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. Why is Snow so afraid of everything? How does she change by the end of the story? When have you been afraid of something? How did you overcome your fear?

2. Why does Abby refuse to return home the first time the magic mirror offers to help her? When have you had a friend do what was best for “you” rather than what was best for her? What are some ways you can be more selfless as a friend?

3. Why do you think the mirror warns the kids not to tell their parents where they’ve been? Why might it be even more dangerous for the children to keep secrets from their parents? What should you do if someone tells you to keep something secret from us?

4. Why doesn’t Snow marry the prince right away, like the fairy tale says? How did you feel about her decision to wait and get to know him better?

5. Why is it a good idea to take your time to think and pray about important decisions?

6. What does Abby realize when she sees Snow White’s happy ending is different than expected but still good? When have you had to do something new that made you fearful or unhappy, like Abby when she moved to Smithville? How did your story in this area turn out in the end?

The Fairest Beauty

This fairy tale romance book by Melanie Dickerson is published by Zondervan and 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. The only portion of the Bible Sophie has had access to is the Gospel of Luke. How does she feel about this book? What new parts of Scripture does Gabe share with her? How does this expand her understanding of God and her faith? What was the first Scripture that meant something to you? Who helped broaden your knowledge of Scripture?

2. Some of Gabe’s reasons for attempting to rescue Sophie are more selfish than honorable, and he defies his parents’ wishes by searching for her on his own. How does this add to his struggle once he begins to fall in love with Sophie? What does he do to attempt to make things right? How might the story have ended if Gabe had chosen a different course of action?
3. The story of Snow White has been retold many times for over a century. What other versions are you aware of? What are some common elements in the various stories? What are some significant differences? What role does beauty, along with physical appearance in general, play? What do you feel the overall message of the story is? How might you relate this message to your life?

4. Gabe worries that his plans to wed Sophie might not line up with the Lord’s will for their lives. How do Bartel and Duke Baldwin encourage him to find an answer? What conclusion, if any, does Gabe come to? When have you had similar feelings regarding your hopes for the future and God’s will? What did you find helpful in discerning where your plans might differ from the Lord’s?

5. Duchess Ermengard chooses death over surrender. Why do you think this is? When she realizes she is going to die, she feels she can’t ask the Lord for mercy because of all of the wrong things she has done. What do you think of her logic and motivation for asking for God’s help?

The Fairy-Tale Detectives

This fantasy novel is the first book in “The Sisters Grimm” series by Michael Buckley and is published by Amulet Books. The Fairy-Tale Detectives is written for kids, ages 8 to 12.

Falling Kingdoms

This fantasy book is first in the “Falling Kingdoms” series by Morgan Rhodes. It is published by Razorbill, an Imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. Falling Kingdoms is written for ages 14 and up.
situation? What could you or they have done differently?

Family Reminders

This historical fiction book by Julie Danneberg is published by Charlesbridge Publishing. Family Reminders is written for ages 8 to 11.

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 things make Mary happy or unhappy? What makes her life with her family special? What makes you feel special in our family?

2. How would you feel if someone in our family were suddenly disabled? How would you feel if you couldn't walk or use your hands?

3. Why was Mary's father so sad? How do you think Mary feels when her efforts to encourage her father to carve and play don't work? What do you do to cheer up people in your life?

4. What prompts Mary's decision to sell some of her carvings? Would you sell something that was important to you if you knew it would help your family? Explain.

5. How does Mary make things better for her family? How does her family life become happier? What in our family has been difficult to go through? When have things been tense or not so happy? When has our family been its happiest? Why might families have to go through hard times together? What might families receive after going through tough times together?

His followers to treat people who find themselves in these circumstances? What are some wise and tangible ways you can help a person in need?

5. What does Armand think is Madame Calcet's greatest fault? How does she change through the story? When have you had a prideful attitude that got you into trouble? Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." What does that mean?

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them—"Harry Potter" Companion Book

This fantasy book written by Newt Scamander (a pen name for J.K. Rowling) is published by Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic Press. It is written for kids 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 it important that Muggles do not notice magical creatures? Have you ever thought that any of the creatures described in the book were real? If yes, which ones and why? Do you still feel this way?

2. What is the difference between being classified as a "being" versus a "beast"? Which classification is more desirable and why? Why might centaurs and mer-people refuse "being" status and
prefer to be classified as beasts? What was gained? What was lost?

3. Why did the McCliverts trans-figure the McBoons into the monstrous five-legged Quintaped? How can anger be dangerous? What are some ways that anger can be controlled? How is revenge dangerous? What does the Bible say about revenge? How can you keep yourself from getting your own revenge?

4. Why might Ron write a note saying that not all werewolves are bad, even when they have a M.O.M. classification of XXXXX? Do you think he is correct? Why or why not? If you read something in a textbook, is it always true?

### Fantastic Mr. Fox

**This fantasy, adventure by Roald Dahl and was published originally by George Allen & Unwin in the UK and Alfred A. Knopf in the U.S.; the review was written from a book published by Puffin Books, a division of the Penguin Young Readers Group. It is written for kids 7 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. How does Mr. Fox get food for his family? How does this reflect what foxes really do? If Mr. Fox were a person, what would you tell him? Why shouldn’t you take what you want? What can you do to earn the things you want?

2. Why doesn’t Mr. Fox give up after three days without food or water? How do his children show that they still have hope? Why is hope important? Why might God say to place your hope in Him? If your hope is placed somewhere else, what might happen to the hope? If you place your hope in God, how might that hope remain?

3. How does Mr. Fox’s creativity help his family? In what areas are you creative? How might you use your creativity to bring hope to others?

4. Who gets the animals into the mess they’re in? Who tells Mr. Fox that he is responsible? Why is Badger willing to forget what Mr. Fox did? How is Mr. Fox’s solution better for everyone? Tell about a time when you got someone in trouble. How did you work to make things better?

### Far From the Madding Crowd

**This classic romance of the 19th century was written by Thomas Hardy and was first published in 1874 in Corn Hill Magazine. Editions are now published by Oxford University Press, Penguin Classics, New Canadian Library and Harper Collins Publishers, among many others. The book was originally written for adults but is now required reading for some Advanced Placement English classes.**

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 Gabriel’s behavior throughout the book exemplify his love for Bathsheba?

2. How does Hardy use names to represent the personalities of his characters, particularly—Oak, Bathsheba, and Boldwood? If you were in this book, what would your name be? How would it represent your personality?

3. How does Bathsheba change throughout the novel? How do her relationships with each man help create that change in her? What might you have done differently if you were she? How can you apply the lessons she learns to your life today?

4. What are the consequences of Bathsheba sending a valentine to Boldwood as a practical joke? What would you have done to rectify the mistake? Have you ever played a joke on someone that backfired? What happened?

### Far From the Tree

**This coming-of-age, contemporary, drama was written by Robin Benway and was published by HarperTeen, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. It is written for kids 15 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. How does Peach's birth change Grace's life? What are some decisions Grace makes well, in spite of the challenges before her? Using this situation as an example, why do you think God designed sex to be shared between one man and one woman in a marriage relationship?

2. Describe Maya's relationship with Claire. Why does the Bible say sex between two women or two men is wrong? Why is this still unacceptable to God, even if the two people of the same sex love each other and are committed to one another? How can you respond to gay friends and the homosexual community at large in a way that would honor Jesus and His example of love for all people?

3. Why do Maya and Joaquin initially push away people they love? When have you fought against something or someone you wanted because you were afraid of being hurt? What emotional injuries in your past make you fear being hurt or rejected again in the future?

4. Why do you think Maya's mom started drinking so heavily? In what ways does her behavior impact others? When have you seen alcohol or another addictive substance cause havoc in someone's life?

5. What are some specific ways different characters help each other feel loved and secure? What are some ways people in your life, including parents, extended family and friends, have made you feel part of something bigger than yourself? How can you be a loving support to others in your life?

6. What are some of the hardships Joaquin faces in foster care? Which of his experiences would have felt most painful to you, and why? What are some tangible ways you can support kids in foster care or other people who may be estranged from their families?

7. How do Maya's and Grace's adoptive parents treat them? Why do the girls still struggle emotionally, even though their adoptive parents are loving and supportive? What are some of the questions or challenges Maya and Grace deal with because they are adoptees? What are some ways you can be sensitive to the needs and concerns of adoptees and their families?

8. If you are an adoptee or spent time in foster care, what parts of this book especially resonated with you? What are some things you'd still like to find about your history? How do your adoptive parents feel about your desire to learn about or meet birth parents? What might be some of the unique struggles and concerns “they” experience as nonbiological parents?

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

1. Why does Arkady admire Bazarov so deeply? In what ways does this admiration cloud Arkady's judgement? When have you let someone's opinions steer your own beliefs and actions? Was it a good or bad direction? Explain. What made you recognize there was a problem or that this was a good relationship?

2. How do Bazarov's and Arkady's views differ from the beliefs of their elders? How do the young men look at and treat their fathers because of their own “enlightened” beliefs? How do you think your generation's views differ from my generation's views? When have we failed to see things in the same way because of our generational differences? How were we able to clear up this conflict?

3. What is nihilism? What situation causes inner conflict for Bazarov regarding his nihilistic views? Why does Arkady move away from nihilism after spending more time with Katya? What is your opinion of nihilism? How does it compare to Christianity? Explain.

4. How does Bazarov's attitude toward life impact those around him? Does your outlook on life reassure and uplift others or elicit hopelessness? Explain your answer. In what ways can you use your life to encourage others? Even when things seem hopeless, how does God's presence help you have hope?

5. How are women viewed and treated in this book? Which women eventually find love and happiness? What is the best way for a woman in our society to find true love and happiness?
What are some methods many women try that fail to provide true, lasting fulfillment?

The Fault in Our Stars
This contemporary novel by John Green is published by Dutton's Children's Books, a division of the Penguin Group. The Fault in Our Stars is written for kids ages 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. Hazel and Augustus talk a great deal about An Imperial Affliction. Augustus believes the “Dutch Tulip Man” may be God. How do his musings about the character compare with his thoughts about God? How might God have been able to comfort the characters in this book, if they were real, if they’d let Him?

2. How does Augustus make his wish count? How does serving others benefit the person serving? If an organization granted you a wish, what would yours be and why?

3. Augustus fears being forgotten. How do his beliefs about God and the afterlife lead him to this fear? How is God able to help you with this fear? How would you like to be remembered? How do those living forget the day-to-day of those who were once here but still remember them?

4. Hazel’s father says the universe calls out to be noticed. What does Romans 1:19-20 say about how God speaks to us through nature? What is illogical about thinking of the universe as a person?

5. Do you know others with cancer? How does it make you feel to be around them? If it’s someone your own age, what things could you suggest doing together that wouldn’t tire him? How could you let him know you are there for him?

Fawkes
This historical, coming-of-age, Christian fiction book by Nadine Brandes is published by Thomas Nelson, a registered trademark of HarperCollins Christian Publishing Inc. Fawkes is written for kids ages 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. Who are the Keepers? Who are the Igniters? Why does Thomas have a hard time deciding between being a Keeper or an Igniter? Discuss a time when you had a hard time deciding between two different viewpoints. What helped you decide in the end? What can you do to not be confused but make godly choices?

2. What is the Stone Plague? How are plague victims treated? Why does Emma treat Thomas kindly even though he has the plague? How do people treat Emma because of her heritage? Read Mark 12:28-31. Discuss these verses and how it applies to the story. How can you apply them in your own life?

3. What do the Keepers believe about White Light? Why were the Keepers afraid to speak to White? What happened because of their fear? What things are you afraid of doing? How can you overcome irrational fears?

4. Why does Thomas join Catesby’s plot? What makes him question his loyalty to the plot? What does he do when he realizes killing the king is wrong? What happened because of Thomas’ letter? Discuss a time you were afraid to do the right thing. What decision did you make and what were the consequences? Why is it important to do the right thing even when it’s hard or might make people angry with you?

5. How is Thomas’ life changed when he gives in to White Light? What happens to the people who don’t invite White Light into their lives? What does Thomas do to share the truth of White Light? How is White Light similar to a Christian’s salvation? What can you do to share your salvation with the people in your lives?

Feed
This science fiction, dystopian book by M. T. Anderson is published by Candlewick Press. Feed is written for kids ages 9-12.

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 has the feed impacted Titus and his friends? How do the internet and social media affect you and your friends? What similarities exist between Titus’ feed and your internet usage?

2. Why do Titus and his friends continually seek pleasure in extramarital sex, drinking and computer games that act like drugs? What might be a better way to meet those needs? Where do you turn to meet those needs in your life?

3. Which adult do Titus and Violet respect? How is Violet’s father different from the other adults in the novel? What adults do you respect in your life? Why do you respect these adults?

4. What is the main point that the author is trying to get across? How does consumerism destroy Titus’ and Violet’s planet? What part of consumerism, not shown in this book, has value? What might be the right balance between the consumerism in this book and how consumerism should work? How can you find that balance in your life?

5. How does Violet’s choice to fight the feed affect her ability to get medical attention? When have you let consumerism overpower you? What consequences do you face when you focus on the material things you want instead of what God wants for you? What does the Bible say about how God provides for your needs?

The Fellowship of the Ring

This fantasy by J.R.R. Tolkien is the first in “Lord of the Rings” trilogy and was originally published by George Allen & Unwin in 1954. Many other companies, including HarperCollins Publishers, Mariner Books, The Science Fiction Book Club and Unwin Books have published editions of the book. *The Fellowship of the Ring* is often read by 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. The main question, throughout the book, is whether to destroy the ring. Do you agree with Frodo that the ring needs to be destroyed? Why or why not?

2. Was Smeagol evil at first? How did the ring initially affect him? How did the ring continue to affect him? Discuss how greed and the lust for power can transform a people—from the book and in our world.

3. Why is it important for the fellowship to represent so many races of Middle Earth? What gifts or abilities does each member bring to the fellowship?

4. How does the loss of Gandalf affect the fellowship? Have you ever lost someone important to you? Have you ever tried to complete a difficult task without guidance? How did the change of leadership also change the outcome of the task?

5. Why does Frodo decide to make the journey to Mordor alone? Do you agree with his choice? How does his choice end the fellowship of the ring? What would you have decided if you’d been in his place? How is his choice brave? How is it foolish?

Fences

This play by August Wilson is published by Plume Books, part of NAL Penguin Inc. *Fences* is written for adults but is sometimes studied by high school classes.

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 this play called *Fences*? What does a fence symbolize to Rose? What does it mean to Troy? Which character’s definition would you agree with? Explain.

2. Why do Troy and Cory have such a strained relationship? How does Troy’s past determine his treatment of Cory? What might have improved their mutual understanding of the other’s beliefs and desires? What relationship is strained in your life? What might be the cause of the strain? How can God help you in this area?

3. Which character best demonstrates forgiveness? Explain your answer. What does the Bible
say about forgiveness? Why is it important for you to forgive others? How does forgiving others help you?

**Ferno the Fire Dragon**

This fantasy novel written by Adam Blade is the first in the “Beast Quest” series and is published by Scholastic Inc. *Ferno the Fire Dragon* 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. When Tom first asks to be the one to journey to the king, the villagers tell him he is too young. Can you think of a person in the Bible who was told the same thing? (His story is in 1 Samuel 17: 20-49.) Have you ever been told that you were too young to do something? Looking back, were you too young?

2. Malvel is described as having once been a good man who turned evil after looking to magic to make him happy. To what things do people in our world look to make them happy? How do these things, even if they are good things, change people? What does God want you to pursue? Why might He want you to pursue Him?

3. Read Ecclesiastes 4:12. How is the friendship between Tom and Elenna an example of this proverb?

**Fever 1793**

This historical fiction book by Laurie Halse Anderson is published by Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing and 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. Mattie had to endure many things. Did you find her situation frightening? Depressing? Explain.

2. Do you think God took care of Mattie, or do you think she survived these troubles because she was a strong person?

3. Why do you think tragic events, such as the epidemic written about in this book, are allowed to happen?

4. In what ways did God provide for and take care of Mattie, in spite of all the terrible things that were taking place?

**The Fighting Ground**

This historical, adventure book by Avi is published by HarperCollins, the edition reviewed was published in 2009 and is written for kids 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 Jonathan so anxious to fight in the war? What does he imagine or expect war to be like? When have you rushed into something dangerous or irresponsible because you had built up an unrealistic picture of it in your mind? What happened?

2. What hard truths about war does Jonathan discover? How does he feel emotionally and physically after the experience? When have you gone through a difficult situation you know you’ll never forget?

3. Who are the good guys and who were the bad guys in this story? Why does Jonathan wonder whose side he’s on? When have you witnessed a situation where it was difficult to tell the heroes from the villains?

4. How did you feel about Jonathan going to war when his parents had told him not to? Why do you think they didn’t want him to go? What would you have done if you’d been in his place? Why?

5. Talk about the battle Jonathan fights within himself during this 24-hour period. With what thoughts and feelings does he wrestle? How does he react in the situations he faces? What would you have done differently if you were Jonathan?

6. How is the corporal on the right side but isn’t a good guy? What events show the evil in his heart? Why shouldn’t people fall evil men, even if they are fighting for a good cause? How did Jonathan learn this the hard way?
File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents

This humorous mystery book by Lemony Snicket is part of the “All the Wrong Questions” series published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents 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. How do you think young Lemony Snicket knows so many big and interesting words? Name a few words you’ve learned in this book.

2. What kind of a role model and mentor is S. Theodora Markson? How does Snicket feel about her? What are some characteristics of a person who is a good role model? Can you think of someone who fits this description?

3. What is Lemony Snicket’s secret to solving so many cases? What skills does he have that make him a good detective? How could some of those characteristics help you in your life?

4. Why does Kelsier choose to love Mare, even though his friends suspect that she betrayed him to the Lord Ruler? Have you ever been hurt or betrayed by someone you trusted? How did you learn to forgive him or her? What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Why is it important to forgive those who have hurt you? How does forgiving others benefit the forgiver?

5. Why does the Lord Ruler want to be worshiped as a god? How does the Lord Ruler’s nature differ from God’s nature? How does the Bible describe the true nature of God?

The Final Empire

This fantasy novel by Brandon Sanderson is the first book in the “Mistborn” series published by Tor Books, an imprint of Tom Doherty Associates, LLC. The Final Empire 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 does Reen teach Vin not to trust anyone? Have you ever been given advice that was harmful? Explain. Have you ever given poor counsel to others? Explain. What could you have done differently? Is it possible to go through life not trusting others? Why or why not?

2. Why does Vin choose to stay with conman Camron, even though he beats her? Have you ever chosen to remain in a bad situation out of fear of what might happen? Do you know anyone who has? What was the situation? How have you responded to it? How can I help you with this situation?

3. Why doesn’t Kelsier share his plan to die at the hands of the Lord Ruler with his friends? Has anyone you cared about ever withheld important information from you? Have you ever not shared important information with us? What was the situation? What can we do to encourage you to trust us with things that are important to you?

4. Why does Kelsier choose to love Mare, even though his friends suspect that she betrayed him to the Lord Ruler? Have you ever been hurt or betrayed by someone you trusted? How did you learn to forgive him or her? What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Why is it important to forgive those who have hurt you? How does forgiving others benefit the forgiver?

5. Why does the Lord Ruler want to be worshiped as a god? How does the Lord Ruler’s nature differ from God’s nature? How does the Bible describe the true nature of God?

Finn Family Moomintroll

This humor, adventure, fantasy book by Tove Jansson is the third book in the “Moomins” series. Originally published in 1948 in Finland; this English version published by Square Fish, an imprint and trademark of Macmillan, was published in 2010. Finn Family Moomintroll 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 happens when Moomintroll’s appearance changes and his friends think he’s someone else who is “criticizing” Moomintroll? When have you defended a friend who was being
teased or criticized by others? What happened?

2. Why do Moomintroll and Snufkin hide the Hobgoblin's hat from Moomintroll's parents? What is the result of this deception? When have you lied to us? What happened? What should you have done? Explain.

3. Why is the Hemulen sad when he completes his stamp collection? What is the difference between being a collector and an owner, as Moomintroll points out? What kinds of things do you like to collect? What do you like about being a collector?

4. Why does Moominpappa feel like no one understands him? How does writing his memoirs help him? When have you felt misunderstood? When have you tried writing things down or using your words to express your feelings?

5. What kind of person do the Moomins and their friends expect the Hobgoblin to be? What is he actually like? When have you been kind to others and made unexpected friends because of it?

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

1. What makes Fireheart and Cloudkit different from the other cats in ThunderClan? How do the other cats treat them because they aren't clan born? How does this different treatment make Fireheart feel? What are some things that make you different from other people? How do those differences make you feel? Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." With this verse in mind, how do you think God wants us to treat people who are different?

2. Why does Graystripe break the warrior code? How does Fireheart react to his friend’s decisions? What happens because of Graystripe’s actions? Discuss a time when you or one of your friends broke the rules. What were the consequences of breaking the rules? Why are rules important?

3. Who is Brokenstar? Why was he banished from ShadowClan? What does he do to punish ThunderClan for helping banish him? What would have been a better way of dealing with his anger toward ThunderClan? What things can you do to help you calm down when you feel angry?

4. Why doesn't Fireheart trust Tigerclaw? What things does Tigerclaw do that make him seem untrustworthy? Why does Fireheart have to listen to Tigerclaw even though he appears to be bad? Discuss a time when someone in charge did something you didn't think was right. Explain how you responded. How should you respond when an adult or someone in charge does something you think is wrong?

5. Why do Graystripe and Fireheart argue? How does the argument make Fireheart feel? How do you feel when you and your friends argue? What helps Fireheart and Graystripe be friends again? How have you and your friends dealt with arguments?

Fire Prophet

This fantasy novel by Jerel Law is the second in the “Sons of Angels, Jonah Stone” series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of Thomas Nelson Inc. *Fire Prophet* is written for kids ages 11 to 15.

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 Jeremiah finally discover and demonstrate his spiritual gift? Why is it important to speak God’s truth? How is God’s truth powerful?

2. How did Jonah know a woman needed his help? Who passed her message and need for help along to Jonah? What might have happened if Jonah had ignored the voice telling him to act on her behalf? When have you felt God urging you to help someone around you? How did you respond?
3. What act guided Jonah, his friends and the angels? What does the Bible say about the power of prayer? How does prayer give you strength in daily life?

4. What does Abbot Hugo send Brother Bernard to follow Arthur? How does Brother Bernard feel about this duty? Is it ever OK to follow someone and pry into the person's personal life? What made them think Arthur was in danger? How can you tell the difference between feeling concerned over a friend's well-being and just being overly curious about a person's activities?

3. Why does Abbot Hugo send Brother Bernard to follow Arthur? How does Brother Bernard feel about this duty? Is it ever OK to follow someone and pry into the person's personal life? What made them think Arthur was in danger? How can you tell the difference between feeling concerned over a friend's well-being and just being overly curious about a person's activities?

4. Why does Brother Bernard think Grockle is? On what evidence does he base his assumption? How do the monks' views of Grockle affect the way they treat him? What does the Bible say about how people should treat animals in their care? Have you ever seen an animal cruelly treated or kept in a space that was too small for it? How do you treat your animals, or how would you treat an animal in your care?

2. How does David spend his time helping Lucy? Have you ever devoted your time to helping a younger child or sibling? Do you remember anyone taking an interest in your life when you were younger? How did the person's support make you feel? How could you volunteer your time to help a younger person?

5. How does Lucy react to Conker's death? Does planting the tree in Conker's honor help her recover? Have you ever lost a pet? How did your friends and family help you deal with your grief? If you know someone whose animal dies, what kind of support can you offer him or her?
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. What character traits do each of these young women look for in their dates? What character traits would you look for in a guy? How would you want a date to treat you? How would you treat a date?

2. Is it better to focus on dating or on developing friendships with others? What are some ways that you can show God’s love to your friends? Is there anyone new at your school or church you could reach out to?

3. How do the girls in this book compare themselves to others? How have you compared yourself to others? Was it beneficial? How can you focus on God’s vision for you instead?

First Day Jitters

This beginning reader book by Julie Danneberg, with illustrations by Judy Love, is published by Charlesbridge, a registered trademark of Charlesbridge Publishing Inc., and is written for kids ages 5 to 8.

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 were you nervous about starting something new? How did you feel as you got ready to go into the new building or classroom? When did you start feeling better? What helped you feel more relaxed?

2. What advice would you give someone who is starting a new school or new school year?

3. What is surprising about the ending of the book? What kinds of things make teachers and other grown-ups feel nervous? What might they do to calm themselves down when they feel scared?

The First Escape

This fantasy illustrated novel (short for illustrated novel) is the first book in “The Dopple Ganger Chronicles” by G.P. Taylor and is published by SaltRiver Books, a division of Tyndale House Publishers. The First Escape 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 was Muzz Elliott’s pencil holder on her desk? How does the pot’s skull-like look add to the tension in this story?

2. Who is set on vengeance when it comes to Charlotte Grimdyke? What are two ways that Sadie gets revenge on this girl? Why is there such animosity between the two? Why does God say that vengeance belongs to Him and not to us? How does trying to get revenge hurt us more than whomever offended us?

3. What lie does Erik tell the policeman on the corner? Why does Erik lie to him? Why do you think he felt he had to trick the policeman instead of telling him the truth? From how he treated the law, what does Erik believe about the police?

4. Why did Sadie and Eric go into Potemkin’s house? Why is it important for children not to go into the houses of strangers? What happens because they went into his house?

5. Even after they escaped Potemkin’s house, how did Potemkin reappear in their lives? Was he a good or evil influence? Do you think Sadie and Eric will see Potemkin again in future books?

6. Read Leviticus 20:6. How does God feel about séances? How does Saskia figure out how Cicely’s group is making the séance look real? When Saskia falls against some of the contraptions in the secret room, what happens in the library? Is Madame Raphael one of the tricks? How do Muzz Elliott and Saskia describe Madame Raphael? What is eerie about Madame Raphael? What is good about Madame Raphael? Why can't anyone else see her?

7. What are some of the consequences for Sadie’s and Saskia’s actions at the orphanage? If they are able to get away with their antics, how will they learn to behave? How do the girls feel when they are caught? Why is it important to be sorry about what you do wrong? How can Sadie and Saskia be drawn closer to God if they don’t understand
1. How does Ally describe her brother Travis? Why does she use the word “big” instead of “older”? How would you describe your siblings? What kind of brother or sister do you want to be? What do you do to help them? How does doing that help you as well?

2. What character is seen as spiritual in the story because she isn’t human? Does Madame Raphael help Saskia grow in spirituality or in the Christian faith? What is the difference?

3. Why does Albert like the character Flint from “Star Trek”? How are the two characters similar? What fictional character do you identify with? Why? Can you think of a character you would like to become? What qualities make you want to be like that person? What can you do to help you grow into that kind of person?

4. How is Shay the same as the boys who bully Albert outside of school? What does she use as her weapon? Why might Shay act like she does? Do you know someone like Shay? What do you do when you hear them being cruel to someone else? How do you use your words to build up others and not hurt them?

5. What does the drawing of the black cube say about how Ally feels about herself? If you could draw, what picture would you design to describe yourself to someone new? How does Ally’s gift for drawing help her express her feelings? What can you do to help you express your emotions?

6. Which of the students in Mr. Daniels’ classroom are you most like? Why do you think you are like that character? What talent or ability do you have? How can you use it to help your friends or family?

Fish in a Tree

This contemporary, drama book by Lynda Mullaly Hunt is published by Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA). Fish in a Tree 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:

1. How does Ally’s reading disorder affect how she behaves in class at the beginning of the story? How would it have made you feel if you were in her class? Why did Ally want to keep her inability to read a secret? What would have happened if she had admitted her trouble earlier? What is your hardest subject in school? Who could you ask to help you understand it better?

2. How does Ally describe her brother Travis? Why does she use the word “big” instead of “older”? How would you describe your siblings? What kind of brother or sister do you want to be? What do you do to help them? How does doing that help you as well?

3. Why does Albert like the character Flint from “Star Trek”? How are the two characters similar? What fictional character do you identify with? Why? Can you think of a character you would like to become? What qualities make you want to be like that person? What can you do to help you grow into that kind of person?

4. How is Shay the same as the boys who bully Albert outside of school? What does she use as her weapon? Why might Shay act like she does? Do you know someone like Shay? What do you do when you hear them being cruel to someone else? How do you use your words to build up others and not hurt them?

5. What does the drawing of the black cube say about how Ally feels about herself? If you could draw, what picture would you design to describe yourself to someone new? How does Ally’s gift for drawing help her express her feelings? What can you do to help you express your emotions?

6. Which of the students in Mr. Daniels’ classroom are you most like? Why do you think you are like that character? What talent or ability do you have? How can you use it to help your friends or family?
Flight of the Phoenix
This fantasy book is the first in the “Nathaniel Fludd, Beastologist” series by R.L. LaFevers and is published by Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. *Flight of the Phoenix* is written for kids ages 7 to 11.

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 happened to Nate's parents? Are they really dead? Why didn't they write him notes like Aunt Phil said they should have?
2. What will Aunt Phil learn when she starts investigating Miss Lumpton? What was Miss Lumpton's top priority? How can greed be dangerous and harmful?
3. Why can't Nate bring himself to throw Greasle overboard? How does she end up helping him? Why are trusted friends of great value?
4. How does Nate behave at the beginning of the book? How does he change and grow through his experiences? Have you ever faced something difficult that helped you grow into a stronger person? What happened? What did you do to rise to the challenge?

Flip Flop
This second teen chick-lit, Christian book in the “Real TV” series by Wendy Lawton is published by Moody Publishers. *Flip Flop* is written for kids ages 14 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. Briana prays a lot. Why do you think God didn't give her what she asked for?
2. Are there areas of your life in which you try too hard to control things?
3. Have you ever asked God what He might want to reveal to you?
4. What are some ways Chickie, Sebastian and their parents share their faith without being preachy or turning people off? How could you practice these behaviors in your life as you interact with others?

Flora and Ulysses
This humorous story by Kate DiCamillo, with illustrations by K.G. Campbell, is published by Candlewick Press and 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 does Flora believe she should observe rather than hope? Why does she feel she must become a giant ear in order to understand the world? Where does she get these ideas? What events make Flora less cynical as the book goes on? What does Dr. Meescham say about hope and belief, and how do you feel about her statements? What does the Bible say about hope?
2. What is the meaning behind Dr. Meescham's squid picture? Who in this story experiences loneliness, and how can you tell they are lonely? What do you think of Dr. Meescham's statement that loneliness makes people do terrible things? When have you felt especially lonely, and what did you do about it?
3. Why does Flora want so desperately for Ulysses to be a superhero? How does she think life will change for her if Ulysses is something more than an ordinary squirrel? When have you wished for a superhero, or for something unexpected or miraculous to happen in your life? How did you think this would make you or your circumstances different? How does having a hero like Jesus change your life?
The age range reflects readability and not necessarily content appropriateness.

Flowers for Algernon

This science fiction, drama book by Daniel Keyes is published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company and is written for kids ages 14 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. What moral and ethical questions does this book present? How do you feel about Charlie's experimental surgery? What did you think of one character's suggestions that this surgery goes against God's will? What are doctors and scientists doing today to make people different than how they were born? Are the moral and ethical questions similar or different? Explain.

2. Why are Charlie's bakery co-workers and others hostile to him as he becomes more intelligent? What might they be afraid that he'll remember? In what ways do they show that they don't like his being smarter than they are? When have you felt your self-confidence undermined by being around someone who was smarter or stronger than you? What happened?

3. How do the scientists treat Charlie? How does our world's treatment of those with special needs demonstrate your view regarding the value of human life? Those with special needs demonstrate your view regarding the value of human life?

4. What does Charlie learn about knowledge as he becomes increasingly smart? What does he feel must be paired with knowledge for him to live a fulfilled life? Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Does knowledge increase or decrease his happiness? Explain. Based on this book, what is needed for peace of mind and happiness? Based on what you know about life, what is needed for peace of mind and happiness?

5. How does Charlie's view of God change once he becomes more intelligent? In what ways does our society equate religion with weakness or lack of intelligence? How would you respond to someone who suggested weak-minded people created the "myth" of God? How do you know God is real?

6. Why does Charlie visit the Warren State Home when he knows he may have to return to live there? When have you tried to prepare yourself for a difficult task or season you knew was ahead?

Flyte

This fantasy, adventure, paranormal book by Angie Sage is published by Katherine Tegen Books, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers and 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 was Simon's dream? How was his dream of becoming an Apprentice to the ExtraOrdinary Wizard crushed? Why did Marcia choose Septimus? How does that motivate Simon to serve DomDaniel? Do you think Septimus would have made the same choice if Simon had been chosen instead of him? Tell about a time when you became jealous of someone else. How were you able to let go of those feelings of jealousy?

2. In the Epilogue, Beetle says that awful things happened at home when Darke Magyk came into the Wizard Tower, because the Darke stuff stuck to him while at work. Although Magyk does not exist in our world, can you think of other negative things that might "stick" to you? How does playing a violent video game affect you? How might watching a TV show or listening to certain music "stick" to you? What can you do to be free from these kinds of things?

3. Septimus is the seventh of seven brothers. How is he like his brothers? How are they different? Thinking about your own family, in what ways are you like your brothers or sisters? How are you different?

4. What is Septimus willing to do to keep Jenna safe? How do you show that you care for others in your family? What are some new ways you can show you care for your relatives?
For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy
This historical, suspense/thriller book by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley is published by Dell Laurel-Leaf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House Inc. It is written for kids 9 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 are Suzanne's parents so adamant that the children must obey the Germans' rules? How do they feel when they learn Suzanne was spying for the French? Talk about a time you broke rules but felt like you did it for a good reason.

2. How do you feel about the many lies Suzanne tells in order to spy for France? What does the Bible say about lying? Is lying always wrong, or are there ever circumstances where lying is acceptable? Explain your answer.

3. What is Suzanne's constant prayer during the war? Why does she ask for strength rather than protection or safety? What are some areas of your life in which you need God to provide some extra strength?

4. What are some of the feelings and emotions Suzanne experiences while spying for her country? Imagine someone offered you a dangerous job like that. How would you respond? If you accepted, how do you think you would feel as you carried out your duties?

5. Why are characters like Suzanne and Dr. Leclerc willing to put themselves in grave danger for their country? Under what circumstances would you risk your life for something or someone else?

6. What does it mean to be a hero? Who are your heroes? What characteristics make someone heroic? In what ways would you like to be more heroic??

Forged by Fire
This coming-of-age novel by Sharon Draper is the second book in the "Hazelwood High Trilogy" and is published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. Forged by Fire is written for kids ages 12 years 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 do drugs and alcohol impact Monique's and Jordan's behavior throughout the book? Why does Gerald drink as a teen, even when he's seen how dangerous alcoholism can be?

2. How does the knowledge Thomas has gained help him as a warrior? What does Katherine mean when she tells him he possesses something of even greater value? What knowledge had you gained? What do you possess that is of greater value than knowledge?

3. Why does Thomas go to such great lengths to prevent bloodshed in battle? How does he do it? How do his fellow leaders respond?
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Jonah remembers how jealous Katherine would get when their parents spoke of how lucky they were to adopt Jonah. Have you ever felt jealous of a family member or close friend because you felt that person was being treated better than you? What happened that made you feel that way? How did you get past those feelings?

2. Katherine wonders how her decisions and activities will affect people's perception of her. Do you wonder how others see you? Do you believe they see you for who you really are? How would you like to change the way people perceive you? How might God see you?

3. Jonah remembers when his father saved him from a riptide. Does he think his father can save him now? What situation have you been in where you thought things were so bad that no one could help you? How were you saved? Whom do you wish you had talked to about it at the time?

4. Chip is angry at his parents for not telling him he was adopted. Have people ever kept a secret from you? How did it make you feel after you found out? What could they have done differently? Have you kept a secret from others? How did it make them feel after they found out? What could you have done differently?

5. JB tells the survivors that returning to the past is the only way to fix the time ripples. Jonah is scared because going back may cause his life to end with a horrible death. Have you ever faced a decision that you thought would lead to an unappealing outcome? What was the decision? How did you handle the situation?

6. After Jonah tells JB that he and Katherine won't return from the 15th century without Chip, Chip is surprised that Jonah is keeping his promise to help him. Has anyone made an important promise to you that was kept or broken? How did that make you feel? Have you ever kept or broken an important promise to someone else? If you have ever broken a promise, why did you break it? How can you fix it now?

If you are considering a review of this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What role does forgiveness play in this book? Which characters demonstrate forgiveness, and how do they do it? Tell about one situation in which you needed to forgive someone. Was that the best way you could have demonstrated forgiveness to that person?

2. What was Kim like when she left for Mexico? What changed during her time on the missions field? Who and/or what helps facilitate those changes? If you've gone on a missions trip, tell how you were changed.

3. How do you feel or react when you encounter professing Christians whose behavior doesn't seem to live up to their confession of faith? What can you do to demonstrate a Christ-like attitude toward those people?

4. When have you been forced into a situation, as Kim was, that required you to do something you didn't think you could? How did you grow or change when you tried doing something in the face of failure or the impossibility of a task?
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What kind of business do Mac and Vince run? What are some good things Mac does for his customers? What are some bad things Mac does? Is Mac a good character or a villain? Explain your answer. How could Mac have helped people without breaking the rules? What would you have done if you were in Mac’s place?

2. What is the business that Mac and Vince are running? What are they doing with their money? How do you make money? Why is it important to save your money? How can you be a good steward of your money without letting it become an idol?

3. What are some examples of characters doing the wrong things for the right reasons? What does it mean when someone says, “The ends justify the means”? Is that biblical? Who can you talk to when you feel you are facing a situation where doing the wrong thing might yield a good result?

4. What kind of business does Staples run? Why did he start his business? How does this kind of gambling hurt people? How else could Staples have helped his sister? How is gambling a dangerous activity? Why is it better to not gamble?

5. Why does Vince steal from the business? What does Mac do when he finds out? What would you do if someone steals from you?

Frankenstein


Frankenstein is written for kids ages 14 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. What modern scientific research bears similarities to Frankenstein’s experiments? Do you think God will ever allow people to create other human beings in this manner? Explain your answer.

2. In what way is Frankenstein likened to God in this story? How do the monster and creator feel about one another? How does God view His creations, in spite of our sin? Instead of ignoring or trying to eliminate us, what did God do (Romans 5:8)? How is God’s reaction different from Victor Frankenstein’s reaction?

3. What drives Victor to chase the monster all over Europe? How does the monster feel after he has exacted revenge on his creator and his creator dies? Have you ever been motivated by a desire for revenge? What does Romans 12:19 say about getting revenge when someone wrongs you?

4. What does Frankenstein fail to consider when he enters into his experimentation? What consequences does he encounter when his creature turns on him? When have you had a plan backfire on you? In retrospect, what did you fail to consider up front that might have changed the outcome?

5. Why does the monster seek to build relationships with humans? How might this story have been different if the monster had been able to make friends? Why are relationships so important to us as humans, and what can happen when people aren’t able to develop strong bonds with others? Who are your closest friends? How can you strengthen the bonds of friendship with those people?

Frankie Sparks and the Big Sled Challenge

This contemporary book for beginning readers by Megan Frazer Blakemore is the third book in the “Frankie Sparks, Third-Grade Inventor” series.

It was published by Aladdin, an imprint of Simon and Schuster and is written for kids ages 7 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. How does Frankie feel about going over Extreme Maximus in the opening of the book? Why might her words not match her...
feelings? How does Frankie feel about going over Extreme Maximus with her friends? What makes it easier for her to be brave the second time? What is one activity that you have done alone and with friends? Which did you like better? Why might that be?

2. Who is Frankie really competing against? Why might she want to design a better sled than Lila’s? How does her doing this cause her to fail? Tell about a time when you did something with the wrong motivation. What would have been the correct motivation for you? How might things have been different if you’d had the right motivation?

3. When a runner on their sled breaks, how does Maya show she’s a true friend? What does the truth help Frankie do? Who is one of your good friends? How has this friend been honest with you when you were messing up? Did you like what this person said? How did his or her words make you a better person?

4. What does Frankie’s change of heart allow her to do? What does she end up enjoying about the competition? How is she able to treat others differently? In what area might you need a change of heart? How might God want you to behave in this area of your life? What should you do to move forward?

Freckle Juice

This humorous book for beginning readers by Judy Blume was published by Dell Yearling, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House Inc. Freckle Juice is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

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 could trade something about your looks with one of your classmates, what would you trade and why? Why does Andrew want freckles so badly? Do you think he should want freckles? Explain. How is it easier to see things as being silly when the story isn’t about you? How might your wanting to change something about your looks be just as silly?

2. Why does Andrew believe Sharon when she tells him she can help him get freckles? Would you have believed her? Why or why not? When have you wanted something so badly that you believed it would happen even though it was silly?

3. How would you feel about having a friend like Sharon? What advice would you give her to help her be a better friend to others?

4. How does Nicky feel about his freckles? Why is it difficult for us to like ourselves just the way we are? How might the teacher’s words help both children?

5. What are some things that are unique and special about Andrew? What are some things that are unique and special about you?
5. How does Beth trick Jones to leave the train? Whose plan is it? What makes Mary's plan successful? What would you have done to get Jones off the train?

4. Name some of the heroic qualities Harriet demonstrates. Who are your heroes and why do you admire them? Which heroic characteristics would you most like to develop in yourself? How can you do that?

How can you help other new kids adjust to a new school or church?

**Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman**

This historical book by Dorothy Sterling is published by Scholastic Inc. 

*Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman* 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 do people tell Harriet about herself when she is young? Why doesn't she let slavery, lack of education or her head injury hold her back? When have you passed up the chance to do something that interested you because you didn't feel you were good enough? Where does the Bible say can you get extra strength and courage?

2. Why do Harriet and people such as the Quakers repeatedly risk their lives for others? For what or for whom would you risk your life?

3. What are some of the things the slaves say or do that demonstrate their faith in God? How do your words and your choices show others what you believe?

**Friendship According to Humphrey**

This Christian fictio contemporary adventure book by Betty G. Birney is the second in the “Humphrey” series and is published by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin books. 

*Friendship According to Humphrey* is written for kids ages 7 to 9.

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 does Martin Bean do to bully others? When have you been a bully to others? When has someone bullied you? What does Garth's mother want him to do? How does her advice work in the story? How might it work in your life?

2. What does Gail accuse Heidi of doing? Does Heidi cheat while playing the board game? How does Og scare Humphrey? What does he mean to do? Tell about a time when someone was trying to be friendly but upset or scared you?

3. Have you ever been the new kid at school or church? How long did it take for you to feel like you fit in? What things or people helped you in the process?

**A Friendship for Today**

This historical fiction novel by Patricia McKissack is published by Scholastic Inc. and 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. What does Rosemary do that makes the adults in her life consider her a pioneer? What struggles does she face as one of the few black students at a white school? When have you felt like you were in the minority? How did it feel, and how did you handle it?

2. Why does Grace initially bully Rosemary? What events cause their relationship to change? What can you do if someone bullies you? How can you help another person you see being treated badly by others?

3. What does the word tolerance mean? How does this relate to racism? How is this word most often used today?
The Friendship War

This contemporary, humor book by Andrew Clements is published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. The Friendship War 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 does Grace say about how much both of her parents worry? What does Grace think is the difference between planning and worrying? How can planning be good? How can it quickly lead to worry? Read Philippians 4:6-7. How can you practice not worrying?

2. Describe Ellie and Grace's friendship at the beginning of the story. How does Ellie treat Grace? How is this a healthier friendship? Read Proverbs 17:17. Who do you think is the better friend out of these three? Who is a good friend to you? How can you be a better friend to that person?

3. What does Ellie do to upset Grace with the pretty pinwheel button? How does Grace plan to get revenge? What does Hank think of her plan? In what way does Grace demonstrate humility when she and Ellie make up? How do Hank and Ellie sacrificially show kindness to Grace when she goes to visit Mrs. Porter, the principal? What do these three learn about friendship and responsibility? What can you learn from them? How can this lesson be applied in your life?

Frindle

This drama by Andrew Clements is published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. Frindle 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. Nick shows us that you don't have to be the "most popular" or "most athletic" to be a winner. What are some qualities that make Nick likeable and successful?

2. What are some ways we can be creative without disrespecting authority?

3. Do you think Mrs. Granger is a good teacher?

4. What do you think about the way she reacts to Nick's new word?

Frog and Toad All Year

This beginning reader book by Arnold Lobel is part of the “Frog and Toad” series. It is published by I Can Read Books, a trademark of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. Frog

and Toad All Year is written for kids ages 5 to 9.

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 Toad feel about sledding when he thinks Frog is with him on the sled? When have you felt scared to try something on your own but braver when you had someone with you?

2. What is Frog searching for in the second chapter? What does it mean when something is “just around the corner”? When have you been excited about something that was about to happen in your life?

3. What does Toad try to do for Frog on a hot day? When have you tried to do something nice for someone but everything went wrong?

4. Why do Frog and Toad rake leaves for each other? When have you surprised someone with a special gift or act of service?

5. What does Toad start to do when Frog is late for their Christmas celebration? When have you worried about things that didn't end up happening? What does God want us to do when we feel worried?
Frog and Toad Are Friends

This beginning reader, picture book by Arnold Lobel is part of the “Frog and Toad” series. It is published by I Can Read Books, a trademark of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. Frog and Toad Are Friends is written for ages 5 to 9.

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 Frog want Toad to get out of bed in chapter one? How does Frog trick Toad into getting out of bed? What is inappropriate about Frog's actions? When have you been anxious for everyone to wake up so you could start a particularly exciting day?

2. Why does Frog give Toad his bed in the second story? When have you put your own needs aside to help or comfort a friend?

3. What does Toad lose in chapter three? When have you lost something that was important to you? What did you do without it, or how did you find it?

4. Why is Toad embarrassed when he and Frog go for a swim? How do you feel about Frog and the others laughing at Toad? When has someone laughed at you? How did you feel, and what did you do? How should the animals have treated Toad?

5. Why is Toad sad in the final story? What does Frog do to make him feel better? When have you received a note or letter that lifted your spirits? What did it say? Who could *you* encourage with a letter today?

Frog and Toad Together

This beginning reader book by Arnold Lobel is part of the “Frog and Toad” series. It is published by I Can Read Books, a trademark of HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. Frog and Toad Together is written for ages 5 to 9.

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 Toad so concerned when his to-do list blows away? When have you forgotten something you were supposed to do? What happened?

2. What does Toad do to make his flower seeds grow? What does it really take to make seeds grow? When have you planted a seed, and what happened? What do you like about growing seeds?

3. What food tempts Frog and Toad? When have you eaten too many cookies, or too much of some other food you liked? How did you feel afterward?

4. Why do Frog and Toad wonder if they're brave? Do you think they're brave? Explain your answer. When have you had to do something brave?

5. How does Toad feel at the beginning of his dream? What does he learn about fame and friendship from his dream? Finish this sentence: To me, a good friend is more important than ___.

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

This adventure book by E.L. Konigsburg is published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division and 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 does Claudia think running away is the answer to her problems? What kind of new problems might young people create for themselves by running away from home? Why might running away from home be more dangerous today than it was in this story?

2. What kind of injustices did Claudia feel she was suffering at home? How else, besides leaving, might the children have dealt with the things they didn't like at home? How are Claudia and Jamie unjust in their treatment of their family? How is Jamie unjust to his friend Bruce?

3. Why are Claudia and Jamie a good team? What role does each child play while they're away...
from home? When do you get along best with your siblings?

4. Why did Claudia want to come home different from when she left? Have you ever wanted to change something about yourself or be someone else? What would you change if you could? How would this change improve your life?

The Frontiersman’s Daughter

This Christian historical romance book is by Laura Frantz and is published by Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group. The Frontiersman’s Daughter is not age-level ranked. It has been marketed for adults and mature young adults 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. Would you have wanted to leave the civilized cities of the East to homestead in Kentucky? How do the dangers of this time period affect Sara Click? Ma Horn? Ezekial?

2. How do Lael’s life experiences and personality fit her ability to be a fine herbalist? What makes her unsuccessful as a teacher? Do you see any of these traits in yourself? How are you similar to or different from Lael?

3. What are some of the good character qualities found in the Click family—Ezekial, Sara, Lael and Ransom? What character qualities do individuals have that concern you? How might they have handled their lives differently if they were true believers in Christ?

4. How is Lael blind to Simon’s and Captain Jack’s worldly sides? What might her life have been like if she had married either man? Have you ever wanted something then later been relieved that you didn’t get it? Explain.

5. Who does Lael have a hard time forgiving? How does not forgiving this person hurt her? How does forgiving this person change her?

6. How does Ian hold true to his Christian convictions or bend them? Is he a good example of God’s love for others at Fort Click? For Lael?