

# Book Review Discussion Questions



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Provided by *Focus on the Family* magazine

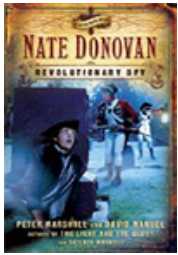
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Book reviews cover the content, themes and worldviews of fiction books, not their literary merit, and equip parents to decide whether a book is appropriate for their children. A book's inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by Focus on the Family.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

# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## Nate Donovan: Revolutionary Spy



This historical adventure by Peter Marshall, David Manuel and Sheldon Maxwell is second in the “Crimson Cross” series and is published by the B&H Publishing Group. This book is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. How do the Quakers feel about war? If you were faced with Charles’ decision to go to war or uphold Quaker family beliefs, what would you choose? How do you think Charles could justify his decision?
2. What does Nate do when faced with the same decision? How does he sneak behind his parents’ back to join the spy network? Do you think he was right or wrong to do this? Why do you think the teenagers in this story disobey their parents’ wishes?
3. What laws do people break to stand up for their beliefs? In what situations is God honored and in what situations is God dishonored when someone obeys and disobeys authority in this book?
4. What happens to Rachel when she does not take her mother’s

advice about Captain Andre? How does the mother know what he is like?

5. Why do you think Mr. Donovan changes his mind about the patriot pastor?
6. Name situations in the lives of these characters where you saw God at work.

## Nate the Great



This mystery, humor, beginning reader book in the “Nate the Great” series by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, with illustrations by Marc Simont is published by

Dell Yearling, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House Inc. *Nate the Great* is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://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 cases Nate mentions having solved in the past? When have you found something a friend or family member was missing? What name could you give to these cases?
2. Why does Nate leave his mom a note before going to Annie’s house? What might have happened if he hadn’t left a note?

Why is it important for you to let your parents know where you are?

3. Why was Annie’s painting so special to her? When have you painted or created something that made you really proud? What was it, and why did you like it so much?
4. What food does Nate love to eat? What is your favorite food? What do you like best about it?
5. What does Harry do to annoy Nate and Annie? If you have younger brothers, sisters or cousins, what do they do that annoys you? How do you react when they get on your nerves? How does God want you to treat others, even when they bug you?

## Nate the Great Goes Undercover



This mystery, beginning reader book in the “Nate the Great” series by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat, with illustrations by Marc Simont is published by

Yearling, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. *Nate the Great* is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://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 cases Nate How does Nate determine that the trash isn't being taken by a \*person\*? When have you known someone like Oliver, someone you consider a pest? How is Nate kind to Oliver? How can you be kind to people who annoy you? How might you be an "Oliver" to someone else? How can you stop annoying that person?
2. What kinds of animals does Nate study while working on this case? Which of these animals interest you the most? What are some interesting facts you learned about animals that are active at night?
3. What does Nate say in the notes he leaves for his mother? What would I (or your mother) say or do if you left a note saying you were going out for the night? Should a child go out at night alone? Explain the dangers.
4. When has something weird or mysterious happened in your house or neighborhood? Was the mystery ever solved? If so, who figured it out and how did they solve it?
5. What are some of the ways Nate investigates the case? What are some ways you can investigate when you want to learn more about something in history or nature?

## Naya Nuki: Shoshoni Girl Who Ran



This adventure book in the "Amazing Indian Children" series by Kenneth Thomasma is published by Grandview Publishing Co.

*Naya Nuki: Shoshoni Girl Who Ran* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. When Naya Nuki prepared to run away from her captors, she stole items, such as a buffalo hide. Do you think her actions were justified in her situation?
2. We may never face a dangerous journey like Naya Nuki's, but what can we do to demonstrate courage and strength in our own lives?

## Need



This contemporary paranormal romance by Carrie Jones is the first book in the "Need" series and is published by Bloomsbury USA

Children's, a division of Bloomsbury USA. *Need* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Zara memorizes the technical names for phobias as a way to conquer her own fears. Do you have any fears? How have you found a way to combat them?
2. Grief is a powerful emotion in this story. Have you ever lost someone close to you? If so, what things helped you cope with your loss? What was the hardest thing to deal with? How might you be able to help a friend who was coping with grief?
3. On Zara's first day of school she can already pick out the different cliques. Does your school have cliques? Where do you fit in? Do you ever wish you could be part of a different group? Have you ever tried to make a friend in another group? If so, what happened?
4. Zara takes a lot of risks in her effort to discover her stalker's identity. Would you have run alone at night? How could she have discovered his identity without putting herself in danger?

## New Horizons



This first mystery book in the "Mandie: Her College Days" series by Lois Gladys Leppard is published by Bethany House Publishers, an

imprint of Baker Publishing Group. *New Horizons* is written for kids ages 10 to 15.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why should or shouldn't Mandie have kept the news of her moving into a boarding house a secret from her grandmother?
2. How did Mandie and Celia react to the girls who continually ignored them? How could Mandie and Celia have better handled the situation?
3. What did you learn from how the girls at the college judged Mandie?
4. Was Mandie's method of treating those who said mean things about her and her grandmother reasonable or would you say that her grandmother's approach was more appropriate? Explain.

## New Kid Catastrophes



This humor book by Bill Myers is the first in the "TJ and the Time Stumblers" series and is published by Tyndale Kids, a division of

Tyndale House Publishers. *New Kid Catastrophes* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What lesson did Herby and Tuna think TJ should already have learned? Was TJ already the leader that they so admired? What things does she still have to learn?

2. How does showing favoritism get TJ into trouble? What could she have done differently so she didn't behave inappropriately toward Doug or Naomi? How does favoritism help Hesper? How does it hurt her? How has favoritism hurt you?
3. Who turns out to be the heroes in this book? How should a person's worth be measured? How does God measure our worth?
4. How do Hesper's thoughts give her away? Would you like your thoughts to be broadcast for everyone to hear? How would your broadcasted thoughts make your life easier? How would they make your life more difficult? What can you do to train your thoughts so others would not be hurt if your thoughts were broadcast?

## New Moon



This romantic vampire fantasy book is the second in the "Twilight" series by Stephenie Meyer and is published by Little, Brown and

Company, a division of Hachette Book Group. *New Moon* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. How do Carlisle, Edward and the other Cullens try to make the best of their unwanted circumstances? How can you generate something good from the difficult situations you face in life?

2. Do Bella and Edward have a healthy relationship? Why or why not? How does her obsession with Edward cause her to treat other people that she loves (consider Jacob and Charlie)? What are some potential dangers of letting one person be the center of your universe? What does a strong, God-honoring relationship look like in real life?
3. How does Bella see herself? Why does she lie about her feelings so often? What are some of the dangerous or unwise choices she makes, and why does she do these things? How does her opinion of herself impact her behavior? If she were your friend, what would you say to her?

## Nick of Time



This time travel, adventure by Ted Bell is the first book in the "Nick McIver Adventures Through Time" series and is published by Square

Fish, a division of MacMillan Publishers. It was written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

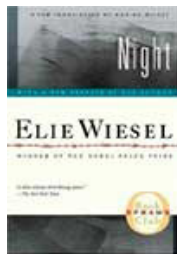
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Where is Nick free to travel? Why might his parents trust him to roam the island? Why might they trust him to travel between islands on his small boat? What are some things you have done to show that you are trustworthy? What freedoms have you gained

because you've shown yourself to be responsible?

2. How does Gunner look after Nick and Kate? Do you think he is right to cut the line from the submarine to Nick's boat? In what other ways does Gunner keep the children safe? In what ways is he unable to keep them safe? What might you need to be kept safe from? How should those in authority help keep you safe?
3. Why does it take Lord Hawkes five years to find his children? Where were they? What helps him not give up his search? What is something in your life that is worth working toward? Why do you want to pursue this goal? How will you keep from getting discouraged and giving up?
4. How does Commander Hobbes take care of Kate? What does he do well? What does he do poorly? Think about a time when you've watched a child younger than you. What did you do well as a baby sitter? What did you do poorly?

## Night



This memoir by Elie Wiesel was written for adults but is on reading lists for kids ages 12 to 18.

Search for a review of this

book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

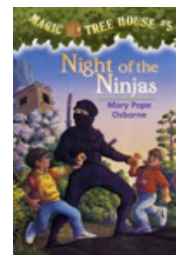
1. Why were the Jews sent to concentration camps? Were other

groups of people sent to these camps as well? What is prejudice? Why is it wrong?

2. What is a Kapo? Give an example from the book of one who acted humanely. Give an example of one who abused his position.
3. Have you ever known a bully? How does a person handle bullying? Is it OK to hate that person? If not, where do you get the courage and strength to act in a good way toward that person? Do you think God has any ideas about handling bullies? What does forgiveness look like in such a situation?
4. Many of the scenes described by the author show great cruelty, but there are also instances of goodness and kindness. Can you think of one of those moments?
5. Eliezer is devoted to his father. Name some of the sacrifices that he makes for his father. Eliezer chastises himself for being silent when the gypsy Kapo strikes his father. He berates himself for not going to his desperately ill father because he is afraid of being struck by the SS officer. If his father could speak to Eliezer, what would he say? Do you think Eliezer should forgive himself? Why or why not?
6. Can you give an example when Eliezer's father took care of Eliezer?
7. Eliezer wanted to know God. Can a person know about God without knowing Jesus? Can a person know God without knowing Jesus? See John 14:6.
8. What is a lost soul? Do you know someone who appears to be a lost soul, wandering aimlessly through life without a hope of redemption or release from torment? Is there something God

would have you do to help that person?

## Night of the Ninjas



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the fifth in "Magic Tree House" series and is published by Random House. *Night of the Ninjas*

is written for kids ages 5 to 8.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. When Annie talks to the ninjas, they don't answer her. How does she know what they want her to do? What are some ways that you have told people what you want without using your words?
2. How are the ninjas able to climb tree trunks like cats? How do real people climb trees? How do they get down from trees? What laws of nature have been put in place by God? (Suggest laws such as the law of gravity.) Are the laws of nature above God's Law or is God's Law above the laws of nature? Explain.
3. What does it mean to "be nature" and to follow nature? Can pretending to be an animal or a rock demonstrate this? Can following a mouse demonstrate this? Why does God want you to be a good steward of nature? Why should you follow God instead of following nature in all areas of your life?
4. Why does the ninja master give Jack a moonstone? Is it possible

for a stone to have special powers? Think about the Bible story of Creation. How were rocks made? How were people made? Could someone mistake a magnetic rock as having special powers? What other kinds of rocks could be mistaken in this way?

## Nikki & Deja: 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

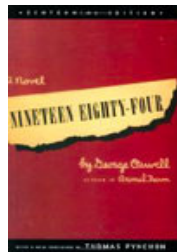
Harcourt Publishing Company. *Election Madness* is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://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?

## Nineteen Eighty-four



This science fiction book by George Orwell is written for adults, but is studied in some high school classes.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What role does language play in the lives of Party members? Do you think it is possible to control people by adding or subtracting certain words from a language? Explain your answer.
2. How does the Party use fear to manipulate its members? How do people feel knowing Big Brother is always watching them? How do you feel knowing God is watching you? Is it a fearful feeling or a comforting one? Explain your answer. How do God’s methods of working in your life differ from Big Brother’s influence in the lives of Party members?
3. Why does the Party try to wipe out or reprogram people’s memories? Why are memories important and valuable?

## No Safe Haven



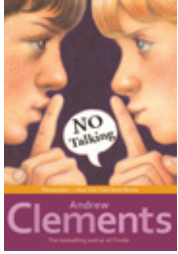
This adventure romance by Kimberley and Kayla Woodhouse is published by the B&H Publishing Group (formerly Broadman & Holman) and written for adults.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why is Cole so skeptical about God? What are some of the situations or conversations that lead him to open up to the girls and their faith? What role does Andie’s faith play in changing Cole’s perspective on God?
2. Why do Jenna and Andie have a hard time trusting Cole? When have you had difficulty trusting someone else? Why were you cautious about that person? How do you know when to open up to someone and when it’s better to guard your heart?
3. What kind of man was Marc? What might have led him to make ungodly choices? How did he feel about his actions?
4. How does Andie respond to the men who killed her father? Could you have been as forgiving? Explain. How do you feel about her conviction that God can forgive them? What does the Bible say about forgiveness?

## No Talking



This humor, contemporary book by Andrew Clements is published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children's Publishing Division, a trademark of Simon & Schuster Inc. *No Talking* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What new insights do Dave, Lynsey and their classmates gain from practicing silence for two days? How would you feel if you were part of a contest like that? What would be the hardest times *\*not\** to talk? How would you communicate with others?
2. What does the word “stereotype” mean? What are some ways the kids and teachers stereotype or misjudge people of the opposite gender in this story? What are some comments you’ve heard people make about others based on their gender, race or religion?
3. How do teachers and parents respond to the kids’ no talking contest? How does Mr. Burton use the contest for the research paper he’s writing? How would you feel if your teachers or parents refused to answer you when you spoke?
4. What do you think of Kyle’s statement that using fewer words is a form of conservation? What

might be some good reasons to conserve your words? How might it help you in life if you spoke less and listened more?

5. Who is the winner of the contest? What are some ways the boys and girls learn to work together during the competition? When have you been part of a project where you were forced to work with someone you didn’t like? How did you work together to complete your task?

## Not-So-Simple Life



This first teen-life book in the “Diary of a Teenage Girl: Maya” series by Melody Carlson is published by Multnomah Books. *Not-So-Simple Life* is written for kids

ages 16 to 18.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

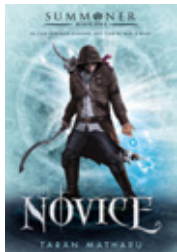
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Maya often lies to her mom and even engages in some illegal activities, such as driving without a license. Do you think her behavior is justified under the circumstances?
2. Maya’s dad didn’t seem as volatile a parent as her mom. What do you think about the decisions he made to pursue his career?
3. What do you think about Campbell and Em living with their boyfriends? Some couples think that’s the best way to get to know their partner before

marriage. Do you agree? What does the Bible say?

4. Maya feels as though she’s “sold her soul” by working for the fashion industry. Have you ever done anything that went against your core beliefs? Why did you do it? How did it feel?
5. Maya says she thinks she gave her life to God when she was younger, then she sort of took it back. Have you ever felt like that?
6. Does God ever give up on you or forbid you from returning to Him?
7. Do you think Maya should carry on with her emancipation plan? What other options might she pursue?
8. Maya accepted Christ toward the end of the book. She still needs guidance on how to live. Whom should she see to continue the healing process?
9. Maya home schools herself. Is this possible without parental support? Explain.
10. What kinds of government policies are in place to keep kids from home schooling themselves?
11. How do you picture home schooling?
12. Many home-schooled kids win top academic awards and scholarships. Do you think they do it all on their own?
13. What kind of support do most home-schoolers receive from parents and others?

## The Novice



This fantasy book by Taran Matharu is the first book in the “Summoner” series published by Feiwel and Friends, a division of Macmillan. *The*

*Novice* is written for kids 15 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why is Didric so manipulative and unkind to Fletcher? How does Fletcher react to the bullying? Have you or anyone you know ever been bullied? What was the situation and is it still ongoing? Is there someone you feel comfortable and safe talking to if you were or are being bullied? Would you like to talk to me?
2. Why is Sylva rude to everyone except the wealthy students when she first arrives at Vocans? Are her reasons justified? Explain. Why does her behavior change? How does the Bible say we are to treat others? If you were Sylvia, how would you have treated each of the students?
3. Why is Othello treated so poorly by the Pinkerton police officers? Have you or anyone you know been treated poorly because of their appearance? What was the situation? Read 1 Samuel 16:7. How does God see people? How should you see people? How might this help you treat people better?

4. How does Othello’s opinion differ from Atilla’s? How do some of your ideas differ from the opinions of your friends? Have those differences ever caused you problems? What was the situation, and how was it resolved? How should we treat each other, despite our differences of opinion?
  5. Why is it important for Fletcher and his friends to perform well in the tournament? Have you ever felt that you must succeed to prove yourself worthy? Explain. Do you feel that you must prove yourself to me? How do you think I measure your worth? How does God measure your worth?
2. The Johansens are Lutheran, but Ellen is Jewish. How does Annemarie show respect for the Rosens’ traditions? How should you respond to people who believe differently from you? How does showing others God’s love also show them what you believe?
  3. Because she is an ordinary person, Annemarie doesn’t think she will need to be courageous. How are her assumptions proved wrong? How can you show courage in your life?
  4. What lies do Mr. and Mrs. Johansen tell their children? Why do they do this? Was this the best way to protect Annemarie and Kirsti? If not, what would have been a better choice? How would you feel if you learned your parents lied to you? Explain.
  5. The Johansens take care of the Rosens’ apartment while they are gone. Did they know the Rosens were still alive? Did they know when or if the Rosens would return? Why did they continue taking care of the Rosens’ apartment? What can you do today to help others, even if you never get credit for your service?

## Number the Stars



This historical fiction book by Lois Lowry is published by Dell Publishing, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, which has become

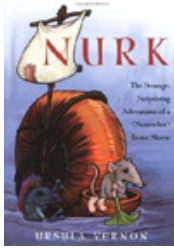
an imprint of Random House. It is also published by Sandpiper, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. *Number the Stars* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Annemarie and her parents say they would die to protect King Christian. Several Resistance leaders die fighting the Germans. Would you have risked your life to protect the Rosens? Who or

## Nurk: The strange, surprising adventures of a (somewhat) brave shrew



This animal fantasy/adventure book by Ursula Vernon is published by Harcourt Children's Books and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Nurk wanted to be like his grandmother. Whom in your extended family would you like to be like? What would you like to do the same as this person? What would you like to do differently?
2. How was Nurk an accidental adventurer, and how was he a real adventurer? Do you like adventures, or do you like to stay home and read about adventures? Explain.
3. What was Nurk's most heroic action? What made it so heroic? What is your most heroic action?
4. Where do you think Nurk's grandmother is? How might Nurk help her someday?

## Nutty Study Buddies



This humor, Christian fiction by Mike Nawrocki, with illustrations by Luke Séguin-Magee is the third book in the "Dead Sea Squirrels"

series. It is published by Tyndale Kids, a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers Inc. and written for kids ages 7 to 10.

Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why does Michael get so distracted while trying to study for his math test? When have you put off studying, room cleaning or some other chore because it seemed hard or boring?
2. Why does Pearl tell the kids about the Thessalonians and their laziness? What does the Bible say about work and idleness? When have you seen people prosper because of their hard work?
3. What did you think about Michael promising to pay Justin back with money he had not yet earned? What would have happened if Michael was unable to earn the money? What is debt? What problems can result when someone owes a lot of money to someone else?
4. Why does Michael have a harder time with math than his friends? What are some things you do well? What are some school subjects or activities you find difficult? How might God want you

to handle the areas where you struggle?

5. What is mercy? In what ways does Michael's teacher show him mercy after he flunks the test? In what ways does God show mercy to you?