

# 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).

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# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## Sabotaged



This science fiction novel by Margaret Peterson Haddix is the third in “The Missing” series published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers,

an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division, a trademark of Simon & Schuster Inc. *Sabotaged* 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. Where and when do Jonah, Andrea and Katherine land in this story? How does their knowledge of history help them? Why might it be important for you to learn history?
2. Second, JB and Jonah all have different ideas about what is most important concerning time travel and history. What is each character’s priority? What do you think should be the priority: making history happier, keeping kids safe or making sure history remains accurate? Explain your priority.
3. What do you think about JB’s suggestion that even bad things in history can lead to good? What are some stories in the Bible that prove this theory? When have you had a situation in your life where something bad ended up

working out for the good? What happened?

## Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes



This inspirational historical drama is written by Eleanor Coerr and published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons, a division of Penguin Putnam Books for Young

Readers. It 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).

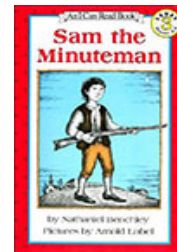
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Sadako believe folding paper cranes will make her well? How do the cranes help her pass the time? What part does hope have in her fight against leukemia? What helped to make you well the last time you were sick?
2. How do Sadako’s friends and family comfort and support her? If a friend or family member were ill, what would you do to comfort and support this person?
3. How do Sadako’s friends and classmates honor and remember her after her death? When have you said goodbye to someone you loved because of a death, move or other type of separation?

How do you remember this person?

4. Why do you think Sadako’s story inspired people around the world? What remarkable characteristics did she demonstrate? How can you remain hopeful and courageous like Sadako when you face difficulties in your life?

## Sam the Minuteman



This historical book in the “I Can Read Book” series by Nathaniel Benchley is published by HarperCollins Publishers and is 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. Was it necessary for the Americans and British to fight?
2. What might have happened to our country if they hadn’t?
3. Parents may want to delve deeper into topics such as war and personal freedoms, even discussing the war in Iraq, if they feel their children can handle the intensity of such a conversation.

## The San Francisco Splash



This mystery story by David A. Kelly is the seventh in the “Ballpark Mysteries” series published by Stepping Stone Books, a trademark of Random House

Inc. *The San Francisco Splash* 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 interesting facts you learned about San Francisco, Alcatraz or the Giants from this book?
2. When the kids don't initially find what they are looking for, how do they keep their attitudes right? When you're disappointed, how do you keep from taking on a bad attitude?

## Sapphique



This fantasy book by Catherine Fisher is the second book in the “Incarceron” series and is published by Dial Books, a division of Penguin Group.

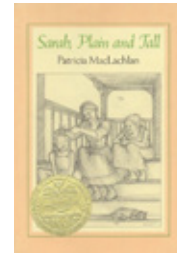
*Sapphique* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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. In the first book, Finn longed to make it out of Incarceron. In this book, how does he feel about the Realm and Incarceron? Describe a time when your idea of something was better than the real thing. If someone expects things to be perfect all the time, how happy will that person be? How can you have a hopeful attitude even if things aren't perfect?
2. Why does Jared have a hard time believing Finn? Talk about a time when you lied to someone and the person found out. How did that affect your relationship? If someone lied to you several times, how would you treat that person? Why do you think Jesus is called the Way, the Truth, and the Life?
3. When the power goes out in the Realm, what happens to Queen Sia? How was her technologically enhanced appearance different from her true self? Describe a time when you saw an attractive person act in an ugly way. Did you view that person in a different way because of his or her behavior? What is more important to you: appearance or behavior? Explain.
4. What is Incarceron's job? What happens to the prisoners when Incarceron forgets its job? If you quit doing your jobs and chores or stopped using the talents God has given you, how might it affect others?

## Sarah, Plain and Tall



This first historical book in the “Sarah, Plain and Tall” series by Patricia MacLachlan is published by

Charlotte Zolotow, an imprint of

HarperCollins Publishers. *Sarah, Plain and Tall* is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

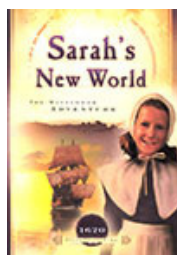
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why is singing so important to Anna and Caleb? What does it represent to them? What are some things that remind you of the happiest times in your life?
2. What does Sarah miss about her life in Maine? What does the neighbor remind her about missing things? When have you learned to find joy in a new situation (like a new home or school), even though you missed the old one?
3. What are some ways in which Sarah shows her brave, independent personality? Why would these be important qualities for a pioneer woman? What are some ways you show bravery in your life?
4. Why are Anna and Caleb so afraid of Sarah learning to drive? When have you spent time worry about things that turned out just fine? What does the Bible say about worrying?
5. Why does Anna regret not saying goodnight to her mother the day Caleb was born? When have you

said something, or failed to say something, and later regretted it? What types of words and actions will help you avoid future regrets?

## Sarah's New World: The Mayflower Adventure (1620)



This first historical book in the "Sisters in Time" series by Colleen L. Reece is published by Barbour Publishing, Inc. *Sarah's New World* 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 are some difficult times in your life where God has helped you through?
2. Why do you think God allows bad things, such as the deaths of some of the other Pilgrims in the story?
3. What were some of the lessons John and Sarah learned from their Mayflower experience?
4. How can we set a good example for people like Klaus, who don't believe in God?

## Saving Sailor



This contemporary Christian book is the first of two by Renee Riva and is published by David C. Cook. *Saving Sailor* 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. What does A.J. raise money for? What does she do with the money she raised? How does she find forgiveness for spending a charity's money? When you have done something wrong, what do you do to make things right with others and before God?
2. What are some spiritual disciplines that you practice as part of your faith? What spiritual disciplines do you see others doing that you don't feel are necessary? Which of these are mentioned in the Bible?
3. What do A.J.'s relatives have? Where do they stay? How can A.J.'s dad be happy with a simpler boat and a less expensive place to stay? What does he feel is more important than money? Do you agree with A.J.'s dad or his relatives? Explain.
4. What did a nun tell A.J. about sins never being a secret? Do your sins hurt other people? Give one example. What were the consequences of your sin to you and to others?
5. What was your impression of A.J.'s mom acting like Sophia

Loren? What have you done for fun that you thought was harmless but ended up hurting someone?

## Saving the Liberty Bell



This historical book by Megan McDonald, with illustrations by Marsha Gray Carrington, is a Richard Jackson Book published by Atheneum Books for

Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. *Saving the Liberty Bell* 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. What danger do John Jacob and his father face by taking the Liberty Bell to their hometown? What is so important about this bell? Why is it protected so carefully?
2. Why isn't the Liberty Bell safe in Philadelphia? What might happen if it stays there?
3. Which famous historical figure does John Jacob meet along the way? How does George Washington treat John Jacob and his father? How does he help with their mission?

## Savvy



This coming-of-age fantasy book by Ingrid Law is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, Penguin and is written for kids ages 9 to 11.

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. Mibs questions whether God is with her, and she later wonders if He can understand her reasons for stowing away and lying. How would you answer those questions for her? Have you ever tried to bargain with God, like Mibs does when she wants to make the voices in her head stop? How does God want us to seek His help?
2. What does Mibs mean when she says Samson has a sort of “human magic” in the way he demonstrates genuine concern for others? What words would you use to describe a person like that? How else did you see such behavior demonstrated in this book? Name people in your own life who display those characteristics and describe how they show them.
3. Why was Mibs so concerned for the homeless man she saw while she was on the run? Why couldn't she wake him up—even though she tried to seek power from deep inside herself? Where do you look for power when you're in a tough situation?
4. What would it feel like to have lots of voices in your head, in the same way as Mibs? How did Lester's tattoos of his mother and former girlfriend talk to and treat Lester? How did their cruel words make you feel about Lester? Do you ever hear voices in your head telling you what you should do and who you should be?
5. How is Mibs punished? Is the punishment appropriate for all she did and the problems she caused? How did she suffer for her actions? How did her lies and behaviors endanger others?
6. Do you agree with Mibs that it's sometimes difficult to predict what will happen when you make a particular choice? What are some specific guidelines you can use to make wise decisions? Can bad things ever lead to good things, as Lill suggests? What can you do when a choice you've made has left you in a bad situation?
7. What are your unique skills or talents? Are you pleased with the skills you have, or do you wish you had different talents? What special ability or savvy would you choose for yourself if you could do or be anything? How did this story's “ordinary” characters, including Lill, Poppa and Will, demonstrate their uniqueness?
8. How were the overtly Christian characters, such as Pastor Meeks and Miss Rosemary, portrayed in this story? In what ways did they show—or fail to show—God's love through their actions? Which characters most exemplified Christ's compassion? How did they do this?
9. What does Mibs realize about the events (big and small, good and bad) that happen in life? Are

there changes in your life that are hard for you to accept? What are some events or situations that have changed who you are? How did you respond to them? Where can you find the strength to move forward when life is hard?

## Scarlet



This science fiction book by Marissa Meyer is the second book in the “Lunar Chronicles” series and is published by Feiwel and Friends, a division of Macmillan Publishers. *Scarlet* 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. Scarlet tells Wolf that as a child, she would throw tantrums, break things and tell lies to get her father's attention. Have you ever felt that we don't pay enough attention to you? If the answer is yes, give us an example. What can we do as a family to give each other the attention we each need?
2. Scarlet is shocked and hurt when she finds out that Michelle kept many important secrets from her. Has a friend or loved one ever kept a secret from you? Have you ever kept secrets from them? What was the situation? What affect do secrets have on friendships?
3. Cinder uses her ability to manipulate people when necessary, but she hates doing it. Are Cinder's actions acceptable? How is she doing the same thing as others

on the Luna side? Is it OK to do what is right in your own eyes, or are we held to a higher standard? Why might some of our good intentions be faulty? How is God's standard a better measure of how we should act or behave around others?

4. When Cinder sees the picture of herself as an injured toddler, she thinks of all the people who sacrificed to save her. Who are some of the people in your life who have sacrificed something, even if it's a small thing, for you? How does their sacrifice make you feel? Who made the ultimate sacrifice for all of humankind? What did Jesus do?
5. In the end, Scarlet grieves her grandmother's death, but she decides to forgive Wolf for his involvement in Michelle's kidnapping. Tell about a time when someone you trusted betrayed you. Tell about a time when you betrayed someone. Why is it important to forgive those who wrong us? How did you reach a point of reconciliation with the person you wronged?

## The Scarlet Letter



This historical drama is written by Nathaniel Hawthorne and was originally published in 1850 by Ticknor & Fields, 2014 by Penguin Random

House. Currently a public domain novel. *The Scarlet Letter* is written for kids ages 15 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. To the Boston colonists, what is the connection between their religion and the law? How does the two being inseparable lead people toward or away from righteous behavior? Should all moral laws be made into the laws of a country? What role should mercy play in the execution of justice?
2. Why does one woman in town suggest that Hester should be executed instead of publicly shamed? Why does she think other women will follow Hester's example? Do you only do what is good because you fear punishment? Have you ever reconsidered a decision because you thought a punishment might be waiting? Explain. How does knowledge of your consequences help you do what is right?
3. Why is Hester made to wear the letter "A" on her clothing? Do you think that is a fair punishment for her wrongdoing? When someone does something wrong, should they always be continually reminded of it? Why shouldn't a sin become a permanent part of someone's identity if they are sorry for it? How does God treat sinners who say they're sorry? How should you treat people who have sinned against you, even if they don't ask for forgiveness?
4. Is it easier to move past a sin if it becomes public knowledge, as in Hester's case? Or is it easier to move past a sin if it's a secret, as in Dimmesdale's case? How can hidden sin be destructive? Have you ever had to keep a secret that was eating away at you? Explain. What did you end up doing?
5. How do Hester and Dimmesdale wrong Chillingworth? How does he choose to deal with

the situation? Is it still revenge if he doesn't intend to end Dimmesdale's life or ruin his reputation? What effect does revenge seeking have on Chillingworth's outward appearance and inner thoughts? What does God say about taking revenge for how you are wronged? Who does vengeance belong to? How are you able to let go of the wrongs of others?

## The Scarlet Pimpernel



This historical drama is written by Baroness Orczy and was originally published by G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers. Lightyear

Press, University of London Press, New Dawn Press and others have since published versions of the book. *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is written for adults but is sometimes used in high school classrooms.

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 is the state of Marguerite's marriage to Sir Percy when we first meet them? Why is this? What qualities made Marguerite marry Sir Percy? What qualities do you hope to find in your future spouse?
2. Lord Blakeney was in disguise even when he wasn't wearing one. Do you ever pretend to be someone you're not? Why? How is your pretending different from or similar to his?

3. The Comtesse de Tournay holds a grudge against Marguerite. Has someone ever treated you or your family poorly? Did you hold a grudge against the person? How did it make you feel? How does God want us to deal with our anger? See Ephesians 4:25-27
4. Sir Andrew and Lord Anthony were willing to take great risks for the Scarlet Pimpernel because of his courage and for the excitement. Is there someone you admire for his/her bravery or the cause for which the person works? Is there a cause for which you would risk your life?
5. An author's viewpoint is often apparent in the words they write. Do you think the author of the Scarlet Pimpernel had any sympathy for those involved in the French Revolution? Whom do you think she favored?

## The School for Good and Evil



This fairy tale, adventure book by Soman Chainani is the first book in "The School for Good and Evil" series and is published by Harper and HarperCollins

Children's Books, imprints of HarperCollins Publishers. This book 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 kind of a friend is Sophie? What is her primary focus? When have you known someone

like this, who only seemed concerned about his or her own interests? What might be problematic about hanging out with someone like this on a regular basis? What does the Bible say about what friendship should look like?

2. Why does Agatha continue to rescue and support Sophie? Why does she repeatedly help her cheat? If you were Agatha, would you continue to be Sophie's friend? Explain. How do you treat your friends like Sophie? How do you treat your friends like Agatha?
3. Why does Sophie start wearing short dresses and dark makeup? What's wrong with dressing this way to get attention? What does the Bible say about beauty and modesty?
4. Is anyone able to always behave well? Does anyone always behave poorly? In what state are all humans born? How is sin removed from a human's life? Can those who aren't Christians behave morally? Can those who are Christians do evil? What makes a person good or evil? What part do your choices play in whether you behave well or poorly?

## School. Hasn't This Gone on Long Enough?



This pre-teen humor book by Jim Benton is the first book in the "Dear Dumb Diary, Year Two" series and is published by Scholastic Inc. This book is written for kids ages 8 to 10.

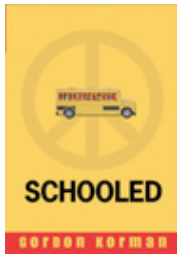
ten for kids ages 8 to 10.

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. What does Isabella do to help Jamie improve her grades? How would you feel if one of your friends did something like that to you? Would you feel grateful for her concern or upset because she'd tricked you? Explain. How does Jamie feel?
2. Why is Jamie so disturbed when she thinks Angeline and Emmily may be smarter than she is? What happens when you start comparing yourself to others? How does it make you feel? What's the difference between having healthy competition with someone and trying to beat someone just to make you look better? How can you feel good about who you are without comparing yourself to other people?
3. Why shouldn't Jamie refer to her friends and teachers as stupid or idiots? What is she really trying to say? How can you feel good about yourself without putting someone else down?
4. How does Jamie feel about lying? Do you agree that lying is a great idea if you're sure you won't get caught? Explain. What does the Bible say about lying? (Proverbs 12:22; Ephesians 4:25)

## Schooled



This coming-of-age, contemporary, humor book by Gordon Korman and is published by Hyperion Books, an imprint of Disney Book Group. *Schooled* 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).

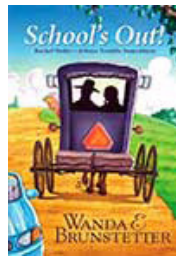
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How is Cap different from other kids? How do those differences affect him at school? How are you different from your friends? Do you like the things that set you apart? Explain why or why not. Read Psalm 139:13-14. How do you think God feels about you?
1. Why is Cap elected class president? How does Cap feel about being president? How does Cap handle being bullied? How would you react if you were being bullied like Cap was? What would you do different than Cap?
1. Why does Darryl try to punch Zach? How does Cap stop the fight? How should Darryl have handled his anger? What should you do if you get angry? What should you do if you see kids at school fighting?
1. Which characters bully Cap? Why do some of the kids have a change of heart about bullying Cap? What should Hugh have done? Discuss a time when you found it hard to do the right

thing. What will help you make good choices, even when it's easier to do the wrong thing?

1. How does Cap break the law? Why doesn't he listen to the authorities and pull the bus over? Do you think Cap's choice was right or wrong? Explain. How could Cap have helped the bus driver without breaking the law?

## School's Out



This Amish-life book is the first in the "Rachel Yoder" series by Wanda E. Brunstetter and is published by Barbour Publishing. *School's Out* is

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 Rachel's brother Jacob constantly tease her? How does his teasing make Rachel feel? Do any of your siblings tease you? Do you tease any of your siblings? If you tease someone, does it mean you don't love the person? What is a better way to treat someone?
2. Does Rachel mean to be mischievous? What are some ways she gets into trouble? How could she avoid this kind of trouble?
3. What does Rachel's mother make her do to the hall after Rachel skateboards on it? How does this help Rachel learn from her mistake? Do you think she will ever skateboard there again?

4. What other ways do her parents discipline her? How do we, your parents, help you learn to make good choices?

## School's Out—Forever



This science-fiction adventure is the second book in the "Maximum Ride" series by James Patterson and is published by Little, Brown and Company, in

conjunction with the Time Warner Book Group. *School's Out—Forever* is written for 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. Angel tells Max that Ari loves Max. If this were true, why would he want to hurt her?
2. How might Fang know if Max turned bad? Did he know when her twin replaced her? How well do you know your best friend? What makes that person your friend? How might you tell if your friend was "replaced"?
3. What speaks to Max? Is the Voice trustworthy? Who did Jesus send to help believers? How does the Holy Spirit guide you? How does the Holy Spirit speak to you?
4. What do Iggy's parents want to do with his story? What makes people crave attention and fame? How would our society view someone who looked like Iggy and could fly? Why might he be accepted or ostracized?

- The scientists created another Maximum Ride who had no empathy for others. Which Max was stronger? Why was the real Max able to defeat her evil twin? How do her emotions make her stronger?

## The Scorch Trials



This futuristic science fiction novel by James Dashner is the second in the “Maze Runner Trilogy,” which consists of three books and a prequel, and is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House Inc. *The Scorch Trials* is written for kids ages 12 and older.

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. Minho’s tattoo labels him as the leader of Group A. How does he demonstrate his leadership? Do you think he’s the true leader? What qualities make a good leader?

- Who is betrayed in this book? How does this character respond? Have you ever been betrayed by someone close to you? How did it make you feel? Talk about why you could, or couldn’t, forgive that person? What does Jesus teach about forgiveness?
- Throughout the book, Thomas and the others are told that WICKED is working for their good. In what ways do you think this is true? How might the statement be false?

- As Thomas regains his memories of life before the Maze, how does he feel about his choice to help WICKED? What would you be willing to sacrifice in order to save humanity?
- The representative of WICKED warns the boys not to trust what they see, because their perceptions can be manipulated. How do today’s media manipulate a person’s perception of the world? Discuss how the media’s view of strength and beauty differs from that of the Bible. How does Ephesians 6:10-18 help you to defend yourself from the world’s distortions?

## The Scorpio Races



This fantasy novel by Maggie Stiefvater is published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., and is written for kids ages 14 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:

- How does Ben react to his mother? What do Puck and Sean believe about God and religion? What is the real “religion” of the people on the island? When have you seen something other than God become a religion for you or those close to you?
- Why are the races so important and popular, despite the danger? In what kinds of dangerous activities do people you know participate? How do you

personally decide what activities are wise or foolish to pursue?

- Puck remembers her mother saying obstacles often appear in our lives to stop us from doing stupid things. Her dad argued that obstacles should push us to try harder. Which philosophy do you agree with? When has an obstacle been a warning for you to stop? When has it been a hurdle for you to overcome?
- How do the blood and violence portrayed in this book add to or detract from the story? How would you have written this book differently?

## Scream for Ice Cream



This mystery book by Carolyn Keene is the second in the “Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew” series, the 2006 edition, and is published by Aladdin

Paperback, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division. *Scream for Ice Cream* 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:

- Kevin’s parents don’t allow him to eat sweets. That is one of their family’s rules. What is one of our family’s rules? Why do we have this rule? Why might Kevin’s parents have their rule? What are some of the rules we have as a family that are hard for you to follow? How do you obey them, even when you’re tempted not to? What are some of our

family's rules that are easy to follow? What makes them easier to follow?

2. Henderson finds something that isn't his (the recipe), and that doesn't have an owner or person's name on it, and keeps it. What would you do in that situation? Have you ever found something and had to choose between finding the owner to return it and keeping it? Explain.
3. What excuse did Nancy and George make for Bess at the Fan Club? Do any of your school clubs or peer groups have "tests" or initiations to become members? What excuses have you made for a friend or to get yourself out of an awkward situation? What would you have done in their situation?
4. Henderson pickets and heckles at the ice cream factory contest sign-up and kick-off event because he is worried the new factory will take business away from his father. Have you been worried about losing something? What are some ways to handle fear and worry? What could Henderson have done differently?

## The Screaming Staircase



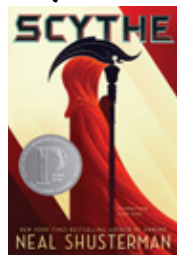
This paranormal, suspense/thriller book is first in the "Lockwood & Co." series by Jonathan Stroud and is published by Disney Hyperion Books, an imprint of Disney Book Group and is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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. Although Lucy, Lockwood and George seem perfectly content to live without their parents, what would you miss about living apart from us? How would it feel to have to make your own money and meals, and buy your own clothes? What would you miss about having siblings or close relatives? How are the lives of these teens realistic? How are they unrealistic?
2. How are ghosts described in this book? What does the Bible say about ghosts and spirits? Instead of iron chains, whose name protects us from all evil?
3. What does Lockwood forget to bring when he and Lucy investigate their first haunted house? How does Lockwood convince Lucy to proceed? What happens because of their decision? How does not being prepared hurt them? How does not being prepared for school or other activities hurt you?
4. Who is Lockwood's former adversary? How does Quill provoke Lockwood? How does George try to help his friend? What is most successful in their dealing with this bully? In the real world, how should you deal with a bully?

## Scythe



ages 16 and up.

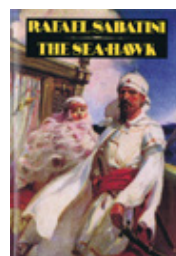
This dystopian, drama by Neal Shusterman was published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. *Scythe* is written for kids

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 Rowan refer to himself as "lettuce?" Do you know anyone in your own life who might feel insignificant? What can you do to help someone feel better about himself or herself?
2. Why do you think stagnation seems to be the greatest problem for the people of this novel? What would you do in this world to keep from growing bored? What things can you do now to improve your life or learn new things?
3. Why do you think people in the novel turned to the Thunderhead or to the Tonist Cult for their religion? How does the God of the Bible differ from them? What is the most important aspect of your own faith? What can you do to develop a deeper understanding of God?

## SeaHawk



This drama, adventure by Rafael Sabatini was originally published in England; recent versions have been published by many, such as Wildside Press (2005) and

Start Publishing LLC (2013). This book 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. Why doesn't Oliver tell Rosamund and Sir John the truth about Peter's death? What does that decision cost him? Do you agree or disagree with his decision, and why? What would you have done in his place?
2. Why is Oliver so grieved over Lionel's treachery? Have you ever felt betrayed by a friend or a loved one? What happened? Does growing bitter about the treachery help or hurt Oliver? Why might God tell us to forgive those who have hurt us? How does forgiveness help the person forgiving? How might forgiveness have helped Oliver with his brother?
3. Why is Oliver angry with Rosamund for believing that he killed Peter? Why does he choose to forgive her? Think about a time when it was easier to forgive someone. What made forgiving easier? When is forgiving someone more difficult?
4. Why does Oliver regret taking revenge by kidnapping Rosamund? Why does Rosamund choose to forgive Oliver for kidnapping her? Why does Oliver think he doesn't deserve forgiveness? Do you agree or disagree? Have you ever felt like you didn't deserve to be forgiven? Tell what made you feel this way. Read Romans 3:21-24. Is anyone perfect? What is forgiveness? Have you accepted this gift?
5. Why does Oliver initially renounce Christianity? What did he base his decision on — humans or God? Explain how this is faulty logic. What are some doubts or questions you have about your faith? (If you

don't know what Scripture says about this doubt or question, say: Let's do some research together and find out more about this area of our faith.)

## The Sea of Monsters



This fantasy adventure is the second book in "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" by Rick Riordan and is published by Miramax Books, a division of

Hyperion Books for Children. This book is written 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. What makes Percy wonder if his father cares for him or Tyson? Which of Poseidon's actions and behaviors make him appear unconcerned about his sons? Which make Percy believe he does care about them? How is Percy's relationship with his unseen father like and/or unlike your relationship with God?
2. What other father-child relationships are explored in this book? How do half-bloods like Annabeth and Luke feel about their fathers? Why is the father-child relationship so important? What are some aspects of your relationship with your father that you appreciate? What are some ways you would like to see your relationship with your father improve?
3. What is a fatal flaw? What does Annabeth say her fatal flaw is?

4. What does hubris mean? What are some temptations she faces in this book that test her? What is your fatal flaw (or flaws)? Why is it important to know your own weaknesses? What can you do to keep your flaws from destroying you?
5. Why does Annabeth call kids like Tyson "mistakes"? Do kids like those she describes, ones that "don't come out right" and get "tossed aside," exist in our world? Who are they? What kind of people are "mistakes" in the eyes of God?
6. What are Percy's initial feelings when he learns Tyson is his brother? What makes him begin to care for Tyson? Have you ever initially misjudged someone who turned out to be a good friend? What happened?
7. What kind of person is Clarisse? Why does Percy let her take credit for bringing back the Fleece? What does this tell you about Percy's character and priorities?

## The Search for Delicious



This fantasy, fairy tale was first published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1969; the edition reviewed was published by Square Fish, an

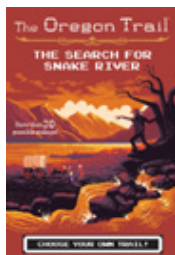
imprint of Holtzbrinck Publishers LLC, in 2007. This book is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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 starts the conflict in Gaylen's kingdom? Why does everyone become so angry or afraid when others disagree with their definition of \*delicious\*? When have you seen silly little things start big arguments?
2. Why does Gaylen almost decide not to interfere with Hemlock and his dam? What makes him realize he needs to act? When have you felt like an issue didn't have anything to do with you, and then realized you could make a difference for others if you helped?
3. Why do the dwarves, woldwellers and mermaids disappear when the people start moving in? What do they think of human beings? Do you agree with them, that people often waste precious time and like to fight?
4. Why does Hemlock attempt to make trouble in the kingdom? Why do the people seem more and more agitated about Gaylen's poll as time goes by? When have you known someone who stirred up trouble to get something he or she wanted? What happened?
5. What ultimately brings the people back together and makes them agree on the definition of *delicious*? If you were writing a dictionary, how would you define *delicious*?

## The Search for Snake River



This adventure book is part of the "Oregon Trail" series by Jesse Wiley and is published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt IP

Unlimited Company. It 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. Which of the challenges on this trip would have been most scary to you if you were really following the Oregon Trail in the 1800s? What do you do when you feel afraid? Read Philippians 4:6-7 and 2 Timothy 1:7. How should Christ followers respond to fear?
2. What kind of experiences do you and your wagon train members have with the Native Americans you meet in this story? Why do you think some real-life pioneers recalled positive interactions with Native Americans while others reported negative experiences? What are some ways you can be respectful and kind when you meet new people?
3. How do you end up accidentally poisoning yourself in one of the stories? Why should you always check with trusted adults before ingesting medicine or other unfamiliar items?
4. When has your life felt a little like this book, filled with one tough choice after another? Where can

you turn when you need direction? Read James 1:5. How will God respond when you ask for wisdom?

5. Why does your character lie to your little sister, Hannah, so she won't see a tombstone nearby? Why are people sometimes afraid to think and talk about death? Why don't you like to talk about it?
6. According to the Bible, in what ways is death a beginning rather than an end for Christ followers? What are some of the promises God has made to believers about the life after this one? How do you feel when you hear what God has planned for you?

## The Secret Garden



This coming-of-age novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett is a Tor Book published by Tom Doherty Associates, LLC, and 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 is Mary like when she arrives at Misselthwaite Manor? How does she feel about herself? What are some of the things and people that change her while she's there? When has a person, place or idea changed you in a powerful way?
2. What is wrong with Colin when Mary meets him? In what way does his attitude play into his

healing? When have you been able to make a situation better for yourself by changing your attitude?

3. What is the Magic that the children refer to? Do you believe that Magic makes the garden grow and causes Colin's healing? How is their version of a Higher Power different than what you believe?

## The Secret Life of Bees



This coming-of-age, historical book by Sue Monk Kidd is published by Viking, a member of the Penguin Group and is written for for kids

ages 15 to 19.

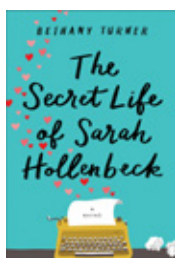
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What do the Boatwrights believe about Mary? How are their beliefs different from what the Catholic Church teaches? How is Mary treated differently in Protestant and Catholic churches? What does our church believe about the role of Mary?
2. In this novel, what do bees symbolize? Is it possible to have an almost spiritual experience in nature? Have you ever felt a special connection to God while exploring a part of His creation? Why shouldn't nature become the object of adoration, instead of the Creator who made it? Where do you see this happening in your world?

3. Why might Lily's church be so unwelcoming to black people? Does your church welcome people who look or act differently than you? Do you have any friends who are from a different culture or ethnicity? What have you learned from them? How does the Bible say we should treat others? What did Lily's church do wrong, according to the Bible?
4. Why did Lily laugh at the jokes that made fun of black people? Have your friends ever told jokes about a different group of people? How did you respond? How can you stand up for people who are being mocked?
5. What are some incidents of racism in this novel? Do you think this is a realistic picture of South Carolina during the 1960s? Explain. What racist beliefs did Lily discover she held without realizing it? What changed her mind about those beliefs? How would you feel if someone judged you based on your skin color or how you looked? How have you judged others based on how they look and not who they are?

## The Secret Life of Sarah Hollenbeck



This Christian fiction, humor, romance book by Bethany Turner is published by Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group and is written for

ages 18 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. What are some of the rules Ben and Sarah put in place to keep themselves sexually pure? What do you think of their guidelines? Why does their list of purity rules include honesty? What kinds of guidelines do you have in place as a single?
2. How does Piper share her faith with Sarah? What changes does Sarah make in her life after becoming a Christ follower? How can you help new believers learn about God's plan for their lives?
3. Why does Sarah's mother think Sarah shouldn't marry someone with whom she's never had sex? How does God's Word shed light on this issue?
4. What aspects of Sarah's past make her feel lasting guilt? What does God say about guilt for those who have accepted new life in Him? What are some areas in which you need to let go of your past sins and move ahead?
5. How does God use Ben's and Sarah's experiences to bring them together and to glorify His kingdom? What have you experienced, good or bad, that God may want to use for His glory? What are some practical steps you can take to share your story with others?

## The Secret Life of Walter Mitty



This American short story by James Thurber found in *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty and Other Pieces* is published by Penguin Books and is written

for adults, but it is sometimes studied in book format by 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 type of person does Walter Mitty become in his daydreams? How do people treat him in his fantasies? How would you describe him in real life? How do his wife and others treat him there?
2. What do you daydream about? How are daydreams useful? How do they keep us from living in the moment? When is a good time for daydreams? When is a good time to live in the moment?
3. Compare the Mittys' relationship to another marriage relationship you know. How is it better than that relationship? How is it worse? If you were a marriage counselor, what would you recommend to the Mittys?

## The Secret of the Caves



This mystery book by Franklin W. Dixon is book number seven in "The Hardy

Boys Mystery Stories" series and is published by Grosset and Dunlap, Inc. The original 1929 and the reissued 1992 editions are compared in this review. In 1992, Grosset & Dunlap is a member of The Putnam and Grosset Group. This book 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. Frank and Joe receive homemade medals from their friends for rescuing Evengline Todd, however they also take that moment to acknowledge the presence of Biff and Tony during the rescue. How do you think Biff and Tony felt with that acknowledgment? How might Biff and Tony have felt if Frank and Joe had not acknowledged them? Did Frank and Joe need to acknowledge Biff and Tony? Have you ever been part of a group that does something good, but only a few people get credit for it? How did that make you feel? Have you ever been part of a group that does something good and everyone is given credit? How did that make you feel? When and how should the efforts of individuals in a group or a team be acknowledged? How do you personally acknowledge people's efforts
2. Telling versus asking: How did the Hardy boys interact with their parents? When you want to do something, do you tell us what you are doing or ask us? What should the interaction with us look like—during topical discussions? When given instructions? When asking to do something? How do you respond if we say "no" to something? How do you handle disappointment, anger or frustration? Is there ever a time to appeal a decision? What would a respectful appeal look like?
3. After Frank and Joe Hardy discover Carl Schaum drunk on the beach, they tie him up and then splash water on him to wake him up. The dialogue in the story indicates they were also a little bit glad to pour the cold water on him for stealing their motorcycle and food. Do you think Frank and Joe wanted to do more than pour cold water on Carl Schaum? What might have kept them from doing that? Has anyone ever taken something that belonged to you? What did you do about it? How did you feel? What did you do or can you do to forgive the person, even if you never get back what was taken?
4. Captain Royal is aggressive toward the boys, yet they still care for him when he is in danger and reach out to help him. Taking a risk, they rescue him from the surf among the rocks. How do you respond to others who are unkind to you? What attitudes do you have toward someone who is not acting kindly toward you? How have you helped someone in a difficult situation? How do you decide to help someone?

when the contributions are not the same?

## The Secret of the Old Clock



This mystery book by Carolyn Keene is the first in the “Nancy Drew Mystery Stories” series published by Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, a member of the

Putnam & Grosset Group. This book 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 are the Tophams like? How do they treat others, and how do others feel about them? How does Nancy treat others, and how do people respond to her?
2. What are some practical ways Nancy aids Josiah’s friends and family, even before she finds the new will? What does the Bible urge us to do when we see others in need?
3. Would you like to do detective work? What kinds of cases would most interest you? Explain.

## The Secret of the Old Mill



This mystery novel by Franklin W. Dixon is the third in the “Hardy Boys Adventures” series. The 1990 edition was published by Grosset & Dunlap Inc., a member of

The Putman & Grosset Group. *The*

*Secret of the Old Mill* is written for kids ages 8 to 12 years.

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 does the police chief treat the Hardy boys? Why might he treat them so well? How would the police in our town treat you? How do you know the shopkeeper trusts Chet? Tell about a time when an adult trusted you. What did you do to earn that trust? Why should you always try to behave in a way that is trustworthy, whether people are watching or not?
2. What is the reputation of the Hardys in Bayport? How did they get that reputation? How is it helpful to them? What kind of reputation do you and your friends have in the community? At school? At church?
3. Name a few things the Hardy boys do that exhibit resourcefulness. Describe a time you have been creative in solving a problem. What did you learn from that situation? How did going through that situation make you more resourceful as a person?

## The Secret of the Prince’s Tomb



This Christian fiction, adventure book by Marianne Hering and Marshal Younger is the seventh book in “The Imagination Station” series, a

Focus on the Family book published

in association with Tyndale House Publishers Inc.. *The Secret of the Prince’s Tomb* is written for kids ages 7 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. Who does Tabitha flee from in the marketplace? Who saves her? Could her father save her from all Egyptian soldiers? Do the bad things that are happening to the Habiru make them believe God isn’t real? What are some bad things that have happened to you? How do you know that God is still real?
2. Does it sound like God will free the Habiru soon? Does being a follower of the one true God mean you won’t ever have bad things happen to you? In Hebrews 13:5, God says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” How might that comfort you when you have to go through hard times?
3. What does Lateef want to do for Tabitha? What does his father forbid him to do? What is Lateef’s struggle? Who does he choose to obey? What would you have done in his place?
4. Who tells Beth and Patrick not to help the Habiru? Why do they try to help the Habiru anyway? What do they risk by doing what is right? What would you have done in their place?
5. Who was the Habiru prince? What do you know about the story of Joseph? What kinds of hardships did he have to go through to become a prince? What kind of hardships might the Habiru have to go through?

What kinds of hardships do you face today? How might God help you go through them?

6. Who will God use to one day save the Habiru? What do you know about the story of Moses? How has God saved you from a bad situation? Who did He use to help you?

## Secret of the Red

### Arrow



This mystery novel by Franklin W. Dixon is the first in the “Hardy Boys Adventures” series published by Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children’s Publishing Division. *Secret of the Red Arrow* is written for kids ages 8 to 12 years.

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 relationship do the boys have with their father? What are some good qualities about their relationship? How do the boys deceive and lie to him? How do they break “the Deal”? Do you believe they will keep their word when they say they will at the end of the book?
2. Why do people purposely shock and disturb others, like Seth did with his video of the fake bank robbery? According to Joe, why do people want to see increasingly shocking images? How are his comments true today? How does the escalating amount of startling behavior in the media impact your world?

3. *The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson*
4. This historical biography by Ann McGovern, illustrated by Harold Goodwin, is published by Scholastic Inc. and is written for kids ages 8 to 12.
5. If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:
6. Why weren’t women allowed in the military in Deborah’s day? (Have your child consider the living conditions, food, etc., in her answer.) What were women supposed to do while men fought?
7. Why does Deborah want to become a Continental soldier? Why isn’t she happy being a schoolteacher? What kind of adventures do you hope to experience someday?
8. What are some historical facts you learned about the Revolutionary War and the time period? How was Deborah’s day similar to your world? How was it different?

## The Secret of the Swamp King



This fantasy, allegory book by Jonathan Rogers was originally published by B&H Publishers; currently the publisher is Rabbit Room Press. *The*

*Secret of the Swamp King* is written for kids ages 9 to 14 years.

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 King Darrow ask Aidan to go on an impossible quest? What makes him jealous of Aidan? What does he want for Prince Steren? Is the king’s anger more for Prince Steren or for himself? How do you know? What makes his jealousy look so ugly to others? How might your being jealous look just as ugly?
2. What is a rudeswap? What is the point of being willing to back up your words by fighting? How might a rudeswap keep people from insulting each other? Think about a time when you said something mean to someone, but didn’t really mean it. What can you do to curb your words in the future?
3. Read 1 Samuel 18:5-15. How does this book cover some of the issues presented in this Scripture, but in a different way? What in the book helped you understand a little more about the evil of jealousy or the integrity of doing what is right, even when around evil people?
4. What does Bayard the Truthspeaker mean when he says that people must live in the grace they’re given? What is the grace that Maynard is given? How doesn’t he live in it, in being the second son? What is the grace that King Darrow is given? How doesn’t he live in it, being the king? What is the grace that Aidan is given? How does he embrace the good and the bad about his life? What is the grace you’ve been given? How can you better embrace it?

## The Secret School



This drama, historical book by Avi is published by AHoughton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. *The Secret School* is written for kids

ages 8 to 13 years.

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 Ida afraid of being the schoolteacher? What would have happened if she had let fear keep her from taking the job? When have you done something difficult, even though you were afraid? What happened?
2. Why does Mr. Jordan say he doesn't think girls need a high school education? How might this story have been different if Ida's parents had agreed with Mr. Jordan? Why is it important for boys and girls to get a good education? Why is it important for you to get a good education?
3. What is Herbert like in the beginning of the story? How does his behavior change, especially toward Ida? When has someone been kind and patient with you, helping you grow into a better person?
4. In what ways does Miss Sedgewick make it possible for Ida to get the education she desires? When have you had a teacher, administrator, pastor or coach support you?

5. What are some things Ida learns as a teacher that she wouldn't have learned as a student? When have you been in a leadership position where you had to teach or manage other people? What did you learn from this experience?

## Secrets Can Kill



This mystery book by Carolyn Keene is the first in "The Nancy Drew Files" series, the 1986 edition, and is an Archway Paperback published by Pocket

Books, a division of Simon and Schuster Inc. *Secrets Can Kill* 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. Jake bullies and blackmails other students at the high school. How do you see kids at school treat each other? What would be some ways you could respond to a bullying situation? How are you treated at school? What could you do if someone tried to bully you?
2. Nancy and Daryl flirt with each other, kiss, snuggle and slow dance. How do you see other couples express affection around you? What standards do you see at school and in other groups you're a part of? What boundaries do you think should be in place for physical behavior in relationships?
3. Nancy tells Ned about the relationship she had with Daryl.

Would you have done what Nancy did? Why or why not? How did Ned respond? Would you have responded in the same way? Explain.

4. Bess gets increasingly frustrated with the way Carla is treating Nancy. She eventually trips Carla in the bathroom. What would you do if someone was acting rudely toward or picking on one of your friends? Did Bess handle the situation well or poorly? Explain. What are some situations where you have had to stick up for your friends? How did you express your support for them? What are your options for handling your frustration over the way someone is being treated?

## The Secrets of Tree Taylor



This coming-of-age novel by Dandi Daley Mackall is published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of

Random House, and is written for kids ages 10 years and older.

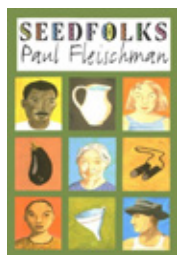
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What are some of the secrets Tree learns in the summer of 1963? Which secrets does she keep? Which does she tell? How did she know which to keep and which to tell? How can you know whether or not you should keep a secret?

2. What is Jack's mother, Donna, best known for around town? How does her gossiping cause trouble? According to Dad, why do people spread rumors? When have gossip or rumors been damaging to you or someone you know? What does the Bible say about gossip and the type of words God's people should speak?
3. What does Tree mean when she says words in print can easily become truth for readers? Why do writers and people in the media have a special responsibility to get their facts right? Why does it bother Dad so much when reporters use words like conflict in reference to Vietnam? How can you determine the validity of what you see on the Internet, on TV or in the paper?
4. What are some ways people in the community try to make life better for Gary Lynch, the bed-ridden boy with leukemia? How does helping Gary inspire and bring people together? When have you witnessed or joined a group of people uniting to help someone in need? Talk about what you saw and how you felt.

## Seedfolks



This contemporary, drama by Paul Fleischman is published by HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

*Seedfolks* is written for ages 9 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. Galloran explains that after many What are some ways the garden helps people restore their dignity? Which characters mention feeling proud of their accomplishments? When have you tried something new that made you feel proud?
2. How does the garden help people regain their faith in their fellow human beings? What were some ways people help each other? When have you worked with other people on a project or mission and felt a strong sense of unity with others?
3. What are some of the struggles various characters experience before they discover the garden? How do their attitudes change after they've become part of the garden community? When have you been part of something that positively transformed your outlook on life and the future?
4. What are some ways the characters reach out to others? What are some practical ways you can make life better for the people around you?
5. Why do some characters initially demonstrate prejudice and suspicion toward people of other nationalities? What causes them to see the truth about their neighbors? When have you made assumptions about someone else and learned you were wrong? What happened?
6. What are some ways people support this community effort \*besides\* actually growing things in the lot? What are some organizations or causes that you believe are important? How can you be a strong helper and supporter, even

if you don't have the same skills as others in that group?

## Seeds of Rebellion



This fantasy novel is the second in the "Beyonders" series written by Brandon Mull and is published by Aladdin, a division of Simon & Schuster

Publishing. *Seeds of Rebellion* is written for 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. Galloran explains that after many lifetimes lived, the Aram Kabal have learned to value simplicity. Why do think they value simplicity? What might simplicity have that money, power and fame don't have?
2. The company journeys to the oracle in order to learn about the future. What does the Bible say about people who practice fortune-telling? (See Deuteronomy 18:10-11.)
3. Jason had the opportunity to live a "normal" life in our world. Why does he choose to go back to Lyrian? What would you have done in that situation?
4. Rachel enjoys learning Edomic. What physical dangers come with her gift? What do you think are the emotional dangers that come with her ability? If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why?
5. Tark has many regrets. Are there any decisions you've made that

you've regretted? If so, what are they? Is there anything you can do to change the situation?

## Seekers: Great Bear Lake



This animal fantasy book by Erin Hunter is the second in the “Seekers” series and is published by HarperCollins. This book 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. Many of the book's characters are only comfortable associating with bears who are similar to themselves—polar bears associate with polar bears, black bears associate with black bears, etc. How does this affect the way the animals interact with those who are different? Just like the bears in the story, people sometimes view those who are different from themselves with hostility, fear or prejudice. Have you ever felt this way? What can be done to overcome these feelings? What does the Bible tell us about how we should treat one another, regardless of our differences?
2. Why does Toklo tell Lusa that he does not want to hear anything about his mother, Oka? How does Toklo get over his resentment toward his mother? Have you ever been so sad or angry that you've said something you didn't mean? What should you do when you say something

that hurts someone's feelings? If someone hurts your feelings and later asks for forgiveness, how should you respond?

3. Why does Toklo say that Lusa is not a proper bear for scavenging through garbage instead of hunting? Why does Lusa feel guilty about eating part of the sheep that Toklo kills, even though Toklo invites her to eat with him? Describe a time when you let someone down or failed to meet another person's expectations. Sometimes, like Lusa, we feel that we must do something to “earn” the blessings in our lives. However, God freely gives people the greatest blessings of all—grace and salvation. When did you first learn about these gifts? Have you accepted these gifts from God? How does it make you feel to know that you do not need to do anything to earn these gifts?

## Seekers: The Quest Begins



This animal fantasy book by Erin Hunter is the first in the “Seekers” series and is published by HarperCollins. This book 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. Why does Toklo's mother say she wishes Toklo were more like his brother? What do you value in your siblings or a close friend? What can you learn from him/

her? Why does Toklo feel that he is superior to his brother? Is he really superior? Describe a time when you felt inferior because you did not have the same abilities—physical, mental, athletic, etc.—as someone else. How do we know that each of us is valuable, no matter what our abilities are? If every person is valuable, how should you treat someone with abilities that are different than your own?

2. Why does Toklo help rescue the wounded cub Ujurak in the forest? Why does he bring Ujurak meat, even though the other cub is weak and Toklo has previously looked down on weak cubs? Which incident makes Toklo decide to abandon Ujurak, and why does he change his mind and stay with the shape-shifting cub? Name someone at your school who is in need of a friend. How might you help that person or be a friend to that person? Talk about a time when you saw someone else who needed help. What did you do? How should you respond when you see someone injured or in need of help?
3. How do older male bears threaten cubs? Why must bears in the wild protect their territories? Human beings are different from animals. How might these same actions in our world be considered bullying?

## The Selection



This dystopian romance novel by Kiera Cass is the first in “The Selection” series and is published by HarperTeen, a division of

HarperCollins. *The Selection* is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

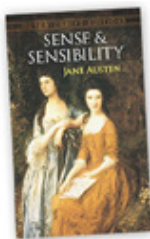
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Before America is selected, her whole future rests on being with Aspen. How does her hope for happiness rest in one person? How does that person let her down? To whom does the Bible tell us to give our hope and dreams? How might putting your hope in God help you pursue your dreams?
2. How does America's mother pressure her to register for the Selection? How would America's success in the Selection be an opportunity for the entire family? When have you felt our family putting unfair pressure on you? Explain. How did you respond to that pressure?
3. How does America feel on her first night in the palace? When have you felt overwhelmed? How did God help you get through it?
4. How does America feel toward Maxon when he believes Celeste's deception? What does America do after she decides that if Celeste can find a way around the rules, so can she? How does America handle her anger toward Celeste and Maxon? How do you feel when you see others breaking the rules with no repercussions? Explain.
5. Why does Celeste treat America poorly? How have you treated others poorly because they were different or unimportant to you? What value does God put on each human being? How does your

worth stem from what Jesus did for you and not what you can do?

6. How are the girls in the Selection competitive? What do some do to intimidate other girls so they feel poorly about themselves? How have you been intimidated or bullied by your peers? How have you intimidated or bullied your peers?
7. Why does America's older brother, Kota, distance himself from his family? How do his actions wound America? Tell about a time when someone ignored you. How did being ignored make you feel? Who is the One the Bible says will never leave you or forsake you?

## Sense & Sensibility



This historical romance by Jane Austen was originally published by Thomas Egerton and is now published by a variety of companies, including HarperCollins Publishers, Belknap Press and Dover Publications. *Sense and Sensibility* 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](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What influences Marianne's romantic ideals about love? How do our media and society influence your ideals about love? Where else do your ideas of love come from? How does Elinor's behavior reflect the biblical

ideals of love described in 1 Corinthians 13?

2. Money and social status play an important role in the choosing of a spouse during Austen's day. Do you think it plays as important a role in our society? What influences a person's choice in a marriage partner?
3. What role does gossip play in the story? What are the dangers of gossiping?
4. Both Edward and Marianne profess their love for people who they did not end up marrying. What are the dangers of allowing your emotions to influence your relationships? What are our family's rules about dating? What are their benefits?

## Sent



This science fiction book by Margaret Peterson Haddix is the second in "The Missing" series published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, a division of Simon & Schuster Inc. *Sent* is written for ages 8-12.

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. The children are angry with JB because they think he wants to hurt Alex and Chip. Have you ever been angry with us because you thought we were being unfair? How long did it take before you realized that we were trying to do what was best for you?

- If you could travel back in time, where would you like to go and why? Do you think these children would have chosen to go to the 15th century? How do they make the best out of a bad situation? Why might Katherine and Jonah want to go back in time, again? What is appealing about it?
- The children initially think Richard of Gloucester is evil. What makes them change their minds about him? The Bible tells us that people judge the way people look on the outside. What does 1 Samuel 16:7 say about how God judges us?
- JB says that whether King Richard went to heaven is between God and the king. Do you think the king went to heaven? Why or why not?
- The Bible tells us in John 15:13 that it takes a great love to give up your life for a friend. How do Jonah and Katherine demonstrate this? How might this have been hard for them to do? How hard would it be for you to do?

## A Separate Peace



**This coming-of-age novel by John Knowles is published by Scribner, an imprint of Simon and Schuster. This book is written for kids ages 14 to 17.**

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:

- What role does fear, hate and jealousy play in Gene's outlook

on life? How does Gene's view-point on life hurt Finny? Why is Gene blind at first to Finny's true friendship? Describe your outlook on life.

- How do your beliefs hurt or help those around you?
- Why does Gene assume that Finny hates him because he earned all A's? When have you assumed something about a friend that wasn't true? Why can that be dangerous? How can you avoid making false assumptions?
- At the end of the book, the adult Gene says he fought his war at Devon. What kind of war is he talking about? What thoughts and sins did Gene battle in his mind? What thoughts do you battle in your mind? Why do you think Paul writes in the Bible that we must renew our minds and take our thoughts captive to Christ?
- What pictures are taped to the walls in Gene's room? Why does Gene let others believe that the expensive southern plantation is his home? Have you ever let others believe something about you that was false? Why?
- At the end of the book, the adult Gene says that Finny was never afraid and never hated. What do you think about this statement? How perfect can anyone be? How perfect do you expect yourself to be? How perfect does God expect you to be? Who is the only one who has never been afraid or hated?
- At the start of the book, the adult Gene says love does not endure. Why do you agree or disagree with this statement? How has love affected your life? How has your love affected others?

## Sepron the Sea Serpent



**This fantasy by Adam Blade is the second in the "Beast Quest" series and is published by Scholastic Inc. This book is written for ages 8 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:

- Calum's father wants to give up on their village after Sepron destroys their boats. Was there ever a time you felt you were in a hopeless situation? Who did you turn to for help? How did your actions change the situation or your attitude?
- Calum's father refuses to let Tom and Elenna borrow the town's last boat, but they take it out in the morning. Is it stealing if they planned to bring it back? Why is it important to respect other people's property? What would have happened to the village if the boat had been destroyed?
- Tom and Elenna work well together. Describe how each one contributes to the capture of Sepron. Could either have succeeded by him- or herself?
- Calum says Tom reminds him of a man he met years ago. Do you think this man was Tom's father? Why or why not?

## Seraphina



This fantasy, mystery, drama novel by Rachel Hartman is first in the “Seraphina” series and is published by Random House Children’s Books,

a division of Random House Inc. *Seraphina* is written for kids ages 14 and up.

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

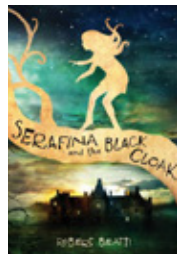
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What do humans dislike about dragons? What do dragons dislike about humans? Where do they find common ground? Think about our world today, what do you think causes prejudice? Have you ever met anyone from a foreign country? How was this person different from you? How was this person similar to you? How does God see both of you?
2. Why didn’t Seraphina know her mother? Why might the men who raised her, Papa and Orma, struggle to accept her? How does that make her feel? How does her father show her affection? How is Orma able to show his affection for her, without using outward human actions of hugging or words? How do we show you that we care for you? How do you show you love us?
3. In the beginning of the book, do you think Seraphina enjoys being a half dragon? What things does she say or do to give you that opinion? How do you know that

she likes who she is by the end of the book? What advantages can she see to being half dragon? What is something about yourself that you wish you could change? Think about ways this disadvantage could eventually be turned into an advantage.

4. Why does Seraphina have to hide her mother’s identity? What bad choices does Prince Lucian’s mother make. How are Seraphina’s and Lucian’s problems similar? Do you think it would be easier to live with a scandalous truth known by everyone or to live with a scandalous truth in secret? Explain your answer.

## Seraphina and the Black Cloak



This horror, mystery, paranormal book by Robert Beatty is first in the “Seraphina” series and is published by Disney Hyperion,

an imprint of Disney Book Group. *Seraphina and the Black Cloak* 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. What do the people at Biltmore say about creatures of the night? Why do these comments make Seraphina doubt herself? What does she realize about herself in the end? When have you worried that your family, history or other factors meant you were stuck

with a certain destiny? What kind of changes can you make and what can you become with God’s help?

2. What does the cloak say to Seraphina to entice her? Can you think of a story in the Bible in which people were tempted with similar promises? What would you do if you were offered the power to know everything and do whatever you wanted? When might too much knowledge and power be dangerous?
3. What do the nuns say and do when Pa brings baby Seraphina to them? When have you seen people in our society attempt to “throw people away” just because they looked or acted different? What does God think of people who don’t look or act quite like everyone else?
4. What are some ways Seraphina demonstrates bravery? When have you found yourself in a situation that scared or intimidated you? What did you do? To whom can you turn when you need help handling a scary situation?
5. Why does Seraphina make so much effort to help the missing children, even though she doesn’t know them or their families? When have you felt a strong desire to help a person you hardly knew? What happened

## Serafina and the Splintered Heart



This horror, paranormal book by Robert Beatty is first in the “Seraphina” series and is published by Disney Hyperion, an imprint of Disney

**Book Group.** *Serafina and the Splintered Heart* 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. Why does Serafina struggle with knowing whether to trust Rowena? How do you know when you can trust someone?
2. Where do Serafina and her friends find goodness and hope in their world? Why isn't it enough to simply trust in \*yourself\*, as Serafina tries to do? Who or what is the source of goodness in your world?
3. What does Serafina learn about the definition of courage? What are some of the messages Serafina tells herself when she feels scared and alone? When have you been afraid to try something but did it anyway?
4. Why does Uriah want to harm the forest and the people of Biltmore? When have you wanted to get revenge against someone who hurt you? What does the Bible say about revenge?
5. How do you feel about all of the evil magic and sorcery in this

book? What does the Bible say about these things?

6. What do Serafina and her friends mean when they say they are becoming more of themselves? What does it take for \*you\* to become a stronger, better person? Why isn't this something you can accomplish on your own, with only your own power?

## Serafina and the Twisted Staff



This horror, mystery, paranormal book by Robert Beatty is first in the “Seraphina” series and is published by Disney Hyperion, an imprint of Disney

**Book Group.** *Serafina and the Twisted Staff* 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. Why does Serafina struggle to determine whether she belongs in the human or animal world? What does she decide in the end? Why is family so important to her? Why is family important to you?
2. What is written on the statue in the Angel's Glade? How does this apply to Serafina's struggle throughout the book? How do you define bravery? When have you been brave and fought a battle, even if you weren't sure you could win it?

3. What aspects of Rowena's character made you suspicious of her, even before she reveals her true nature? When you meet a new person, what are some of your clues about whether or not you can trust him or her?
4. How did you feel about all of the evil, black magic and sorcery in the book? What does the Bible say about magic and conjuring spirits?
5. Why is Serafina finally able to turn into a catamount? Do you agree with Waysa's comment, that once you envision something you want, you will find a way to get there? Does everyone around you get what he or she wants? When have you prayed for, dreamed about and worked hard for something you really wanted? Did you get it? What did you learn from the experience?

## Seven Stories Up



This historical, time-travel novel by Laurel Snyder is published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, and 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. Annie's mother tells her that her grandmother seemed to have a big black hole inside her. When she goes back in time, how does Annie help fill that emptiness? Have you ever felt empty inside? Who has helped fill that

emptiness? How does God help fill that emptiness?

2. What does Molly want to do about the broken lampshades and stolen skates? What does Annie want to do? What would you do if this had happened to you?
3. What could have happened to the girls as they were sneaking out? Since no one knew where they were, would it have been difficult to find help if they needed it? What else could they have done to have adventures that weren't so dangerous?
4. How does Annie influence her grandmother's future? How does she influence her own future? Give an example of how something you do today might affect your future.
5. How can having only material things make a person feel unloved? What might have made the original Molly an angry old woman? How does anger hurt Molly? How might it hurt you? How can forgiveness help you not become an angry adult?

## The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs



This historical, drama book by Betty G. Birney is published by Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division, a trademark of Simon & Schuster, and is written for kids ages 7 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. According to Eben's book, what is the definition of a wonder? When have you seen a wonder? What was it, and what made it seem so amazing to you?
2. Why does Eben's dad encourage him to find wonders in Sassafras Springs? What might be some wonders in your own city or neighborhood? Which friends or neighbors might have interesting stories to share?
3. What are some of the wonders Eben finds in Sassafras Springs? Which story was your favorite, and why?
4. What does Eben mean when he says he's glad Aunt Pretty doesn't mind her own business like a lot of people in Sassafras Springs? What are some ways Aunt Pretty helps others? What are some ways you can show kindness to your neighbors or others?
5. What does Eben's hunt for the seven wonders of Sassafras Springs teach him? How does he change because of them? Why might it be important to appreciate the everyday wonders around you? If you can't see the wonders around you, how might you miss the wonders when you go somewhere else? Why is looking for wonders a good practice?
6. Read Psalm 139:13-14. How do you feel when you read that \*you\* are a wonder? What kinds of interesting and exciting things might God do in your life?

## Shadow and Bone



This fantasy novel by Leigh Bardugo is the first in the "Grisha Trilogy" series published by Henry Holt and Company, LLC, a division of Macmillan Publishing. *Shadow and Bone* is written for Grade 6 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 many view Alina's gift as a Sun Summoner? Why might some build altars to her? How does she see her power? How might her powers be used for good? At the end of the book, how does she view her powers? Why does she view her powers in this way?
2. Who is Alina's closest friend? How do Alina and Genya become friends? How trustworthy are each of Alina's friends? Think about your friends. Are they more like Mal or Alina? How can you guard yourself from a person who only wants to use you rather than be your friend?
3. What does the apparat tell Alina? Do you agree that faith is more powerful than armies? What does he mean by that? Do you agree? Explain why or why not?
4. Baghra tells Alina, "There's nothing wrong with being a lizard either. Unless you were born to be a hawk." What does she mean by this? How is Alina behaving in a way that doesn't reflect who she is? When have you tried to be

something or someone you were not? What helped you return to who you really were?

## Shadow Chaser



This fantasy novel by Jerel Law is the third in the “Sons of Angels, Jonah Stone” series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of Thomas

Nelson Inc. *Shadow Chaser* is for kids ages 11 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. What Bible character does Jonah remind you of in this story? What are some of the similarities between what Jonah endures and what Job went through?
2. Why does Abaddon single Jonah out for his torture? Why do you think Elohim allows Jonah to suffer and eventually lose his mom?
3. What weapons do the quarterlings use to defeat the fallen ones? Where does the Bible talk about these weapons? How can you use the full armor of God in your life today?

## Shadow Wolf



This fantasy, adventure, mystery book written by Kathryn Lasky is the second book in the “Wolves of the Beyond” series and is published by Scholastic Press,

an imprint of Scholastic Inc. *Shadow Wolf* is written for ages 8 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. What do the wolves believe about death and life after death? Who do they worship? Who do you believe created the world? What do you believe about life after death?
2. What does it mean to be humble? Why does Heep pretend to be humble? When have you known someone who pretended to be a certain way to get attention?
3. Why are the wolves so upset about the *malcadh* pup's murder, when *malcadh* are supposed to die anyway? How does God want us to treat those who are weaker or more helpless than ourselves? What can you do if you see someone bullying or hurting a weaker person?
4. How do Faolan and other *malcadh* turn their weaknesses into strengths? What are some ways in which you don't feel strong or confident? What could you do to grow in those areas? Who will help you when you feel weak?
5. How does Duncan MacDuncan encourage Faolan? When have

you had someone believe in you and your abilities? How did it feel? How can you encourage others when they don't feel confident in themselves?

6. Why does Faolan want revenge? What does he do when he has the chance to take it? What does the Bible say about revenge? What should you do if someone hurts you?

## The Shadows



This fantasy book written by Jacqueline West is the first in “The Books of Elsewhere” series and is published by Dial Books for Young Readers,

a division of Penguin. *The Shadows* is written for ages 10 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. Which characters gossip? What do they talk about? Tell about a time when you heard someone gossiping or you gossiped. How might those words hurt someone? What does Ephesians 4:29 suggest to do instead of gossiping about others? What can you do if you hear someone gossiping?
2. When Aldous leaves the painting, what form does he take? What does Olive use to banish the evil Aldous and the darkness? What does it take to banish real evil and darkness in the world? How powerful is a lantern compared to the power of Jesus, the Light of the World (John 12:46)? How does Olive find the courage

to face evil? Talk about a time when you needed courage. What helped you find that courage?

3. How does Horatio warn Olive? How does Olive respond to the warning? What is one thing that you've been warned against? How have you been tempted to ignore the warning? What might help you keep from acting on that temptation?

## Shatter Me



This dystopian, science fiction, romance book is written by Tahereh Mafi and is published by HarperCollins Publishers. This book is written for

kids ages 14 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 do you think the Reestablishment worked to stamp out religion? What is it about faith that would make it dangerous to such a totalitarian regime? How does our society view religion, especially Christianity? What would you do if someone threatened you for your beliefs?
2. Why do you think the Reestablishment got rid of all the books and art? How do you prefer to express yourself, through words or pictures? How could you promote a cause or charity, or tell others about your faith, through writing or art?

3. What does Adam remember about how Juliette treated people in school? How would you have acted if you had been Juliette? What would you have done if you had been her classmate? How can you help someone in your school or neighborhood who is being bullied?
4. How does learning about the others in Omega Point help Juliette? How do you think she can use her powers to help people instead of hurting them? If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why? Even without a special ability, what is something you could do to help someone in your family, school or community?

## She Walks in Beauty



This Christian historical romance book is written by Siri Mitchell and is published by Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group. This book is

written for kids ages 16 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. Clara likes to eavesdrop. How does what she hears affect the way Clara treats others? How might knowing a half-truth about someone affect your view of the person? Did Clara see eavesdropping as wrong? Do you? Explain.
2. Clara spreads damaging gossip. Is it OK for her to do this? Explain. Does the end result justify her

actions? What does the Bible say about gossip? What harm can come from gossip?

3. How does the author show that a corset can damage a woman's body? Is the sacrifice worth the fashion statement that an 18-inch waist can make? What are some items in your closet today that are not good for your body? How should you treat your body?
4. How was Harry different from Franklin? Why do you think he was so different?
5. Clara's aunt said, "Some races are simply inferior to our own. The Irish, for instance. And the Italians. If they're poor and they live in tenements, then it's their own fault. If God wanted the poor to prosper, then they would. If they're not, then they deserve what they get." What is wrong with her reasoning? What is your view of the poor? How can you serve them as a brother or sister in Christ?
6. What do those around you think about you? What does God think about you? What do you feel you have to do to be accepted by those around you? How does God accept you just the way you are? Do you know anyone who suffers from a poor self-image? How can you help someone struggling with his or her self-image?

## Shiloh



This coming of age novel by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor is the first in the "Shiloh" series published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint

of Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division, a registered trademark of Simon & Schuster Inc. *Shiloh* 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. Why do you think Judd is so cruel and violent? Why should you be particularly cautious around people who are cruel to animals? What lessons can you learn from Marty about how to understand and deal with mean people?
2. How does Marty feel about lying to keep Shiloh safe? What happens to Dad's trust in Marty when he learns about the lies? What might be some of the consequences you'd face if you lied to your friends or relatives?
3. What do you think about Marty's belief that Jesus would want him to keep Shiloh safe at any cost? What would you have done if you'd been in Marty's shoes? When, if ever, is it OK to break the law like Marty did by hiding Shiloh? Name some trusted adults you could talk to, other than us, about tough situations like this one.

## Shine



This contemporary, mystery book by Lauren Myracle is published by Amulet Books, an imprint of Abrams. *Shine* is written for kids ages 13 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. Do Christians have a duty to counteract bullying? What prevents people from speaking up and helping others who are being picked on? What does Christ model when it comes to defending others and showing compassion? How does Cat treat others with dignity and respect? What can you do to act respectful toward your classmates?
2. As Christians, we adhere to biblical principles. The Bible says sex should be reserved for a man-woman marital relationship. Find other references to sexuality in the Bible.
3. Toward the end, Cat says that hiding in the shadows has the power to hurt. How so? Why didn't Christian rescue his sister from Tommy?
4. What is Jason's father's addiction? How can a whole family be sick when one person is sick? If you had a friend who you knew was using alcohol or drugs, what would you do? What is the best way to help him?

## Ship of the Dead



This fantasy, adventure, paranormal book by Rick Riordan is published by Hyperion Books, a division of Disney Book Group. *Ship of the Dead* 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. Do Christians have a duty to counteract bullying? What prevents people from speaking up and helping others who are being picked on? What does Christ model when it comes to defending others and showing compassion? How does Cat treat others with dignity and respect? What can you do to act respectful toward your classmates?

## Shoot-Out



This sports story by Mike Lupica is part of the "Comeback Kids" series published by Philomel Books, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group

in association with Walden Media, L.L.C. *Shoot-Out* is written for kids ages 8 to 12 years.

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 does the soccer season teach Jake? How can you sometimes learn more from losing than winning?
2. Why does the coach urge Jake not to go too easy on Kevin? How are Jake and Kevin finally able to connect and become friends? What are some things you can do to help a friend who has lost a loved one? What kinds of

things should you avoid saying or doing?

3. What are Jake's parents like? How do they encourage him as a soccer player and in other aspects of his life?
4. How important is winning to you? Have you ever found yourself disliking an activity you once loved because you are no longer successful at it? What is the value of participating in something you enjoy even if you're not the star?

## Showdown with the Shepherd



This historical, adventure, Christian fiction is the fifth book in "The Imagination Station" series by Marianne Hering and Brock Eastman. It is a

Focus on the Family book published in association with Tyndale House Publishers Inc. and is written for kids ages 7 and up.

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

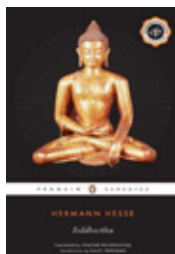
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How do David, Patrick and Beth first meet? What does David do for them? When have you gone out of your way to help someone you didn't know very well? How can we all be more aware of the needs of those around us?
2. What is David's immediate reaction when he hears Goliath's challenge? Where does his courage come from? Can you think

of a time when you needed to be brave? What did you do?

3. What does Hugh want to change about history? Why does he want to change it? Is there anything in your life that you wish you could go back and change? Can you think of anything you learned from that experience or anything good that came out of it?
4. What question does Beth ask Hugh about knowing the Bible? Why isn't knowing the Bible enough? What are some ways you can apply what you learn from God's Word to your life?
5. What skills does David learn from guarding his father's sheep? How does God use those skills when David battles Goliath? What are some skills that you have? What are some ways God could use them?

## Siddhartha



This historical, allegory book by Hermann Hesse was first published in Germany in 1922; the version reviewed was from Penguin Books, a division of the

Penguin Group, published in 1999 and is written for kids ages 14 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 does Siddhartha achieve nirvana? How does Siddhartha explain what is required to find perfection, and what does he do

to help Govinda experience it? How does Siddhartha's belief system differ from Christianity? How would Jesus tell humans they can find perfection and experience ultimate peace?

2. With which of Siddhartha's beliefs, values and realizations might a devoted Christian agree? Based on the Bible, what would Jesus say about the importance of things like loving our fellowman, listening well to others, surrendering personal control and allowing foolishness to lead to wisdom? What is missing from Siddhartha's beliefs? Why is this missing element the most important?
3. Why does Siddhartha think that even the teachings of the Buddha, whom he believes has reached nirvana, are not enough to get \*him\* to a state of enlightenment? How is Jesus different from and superior to an enlightened earthly guide? What does He offer and promise that other spiritual guides and "deities" do not? What has He done that no others have?
4. Siddhartha suggests the only way to find enlightenment is to be free and open, without having a specific goal or agenda in mind. How does this idea of random searching differ from the Bible's teaching? (See 1 Chronicles 16:11, Proverbs 8:17, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7-8 and Hebrews 11:6.)
5. What do you think of Siddhartha's view, that learning and the written word are always inferior to personal experience? In what way is he right? In what way is he wrong? How has God made himself known to us in both writing and experientially?

6. What questions about nirvana, Eastern religion and Buddha do you have after reading this book? (Write down these questions. Then start your search with your child through the Bible, friends, prayer and Bible experts to find answers to these questions.)

## Sidney & Norman



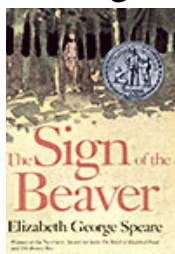
This Christian book by Phil Vischer is published by Thomas Nelson Publishers and is written for kids ages 4 to 10.

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. Does God love you? Why do you think He loves you?
2. Who are other people you know that God loves? Why do you think He loves them? (Emphasize that God loves your child and others because He chooses to, not because of what they do or how good they are.)
3. Why do you think I love you?

## The Sign of the Beaver



This adventure book by Elizabeth George Speare is published by Houghton Mifflin and 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. Do you think you could survive on your own as long as Matt did?
2. What would you do?

## Siege of Macindaw



This middle grade, fantasy, action book is the sixth book in the "Ranger's Apprentice" series by John Flanagan. It is published by Philomel Books,

a division of Penguin Group and is written for kids ages 10 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. Before Will tries to shoot his hollow arrow toward Alyss' window in the tower, what is he thinking about? Why did his mentor teach him to imagine successful shots in his mind? How have you had to prepare for a physically difficult task, such as a sports competition (workouts, repetition training, etc.)? How did you prepare your mind? According to the Bible, why is the condition of your heart and mind important?
2. Why does John Buttle start calling himself "Sir John" when he's among the soldiers and villagers? How does Buttle's behavior toward the innkeeper Gelderris contrast to Horace's behavior? Regardless of official title or rank, how can a person show his or her inner nobility to others? How does a truly noble person treat people who are poorer, weaker or lower ranking than themselves? Are there any situations in your life now where you could demonstrate nobility of character by showing kindness?
3. What makes Alyss tell Keren that no one, including his new Scotti allies, will ever trust him again? How does Keren feel when he realizes that in his quest for power he has become an oath-breaker? Has anyone ever broken a significant promise they've made to you? How did you feel about the person after he or she broke his or her promise? Why wasn't it easy to trust them again? How can you choose your commitments carefully so you always follow through on your promises?
4. How does Will react to Horace coming to save him when Will nearly loses his fight with MacHaddish? How does Horace initially feel when he sees Will's negative reaction? Have you ever gotten angry with a friend for reasons unrelated to that friend's actions? If you're hungry or frightened or under stress, how can that affect your interactions with the people who are close to you? The next time you feel strong negative emotions, how can you communicate with your

friends to let them know how you're feeling and also make it clear that they aren't at fault?

5. After Alyss is free from her trance, what does Will hope she remembers? Why does Alyss hesitate to ask Will if he really confessed his love to her? How can hidden feelings cause turmoil in relationships? How can you let your friends know that they can also be open with you and share their feelings on important subjects?

## The Silent Songbird



This Christian fiction, historical, romance by Melanie Dickerson is published by Thomas Nelson, a registered trademark of HarperCollins

Christian Publishing Inc. *The Silent Songbird* is written for kids ages 16 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. What are some aspects of Lord Shiveley's behavior toward Evangeline that make her uncomfortable? How would you respond if someone threatened you or touched you in an unwanted manner? Why is it important to know one's character before pursuing a deeper relationship with him or her?
2. Why does Evangeline tell so many lies? How do you feel about these lies? Is there ever a time when it's OK to tell a lie? What

does the Bible say about lying, not just bearing false witness?

3. What does Evangeline do to gain God's forgiveness? What does she do correctly? What does she do incorrectly? What should you do when \*you\* need God's forgiveness?
4. Why does Evangeline think finding someone to love and marry her will make her more of a person? What does she realize she needs most in her life? Why are God's love and approval so much more valuable than human opinions?
5. What are some ways women are treated differently in Evangeline's time than they are now? What are some things Evangeline does that challenge the norm and stereotypes of women in her day? What would have been hardest for you about being a woman in that time period?

## The Silver Chair



This fantasy adventure is the sixth book in "The Chronicles of Narnia" series by C.S. Lewis. HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of

HarperCollins, is the publisher. *The Silver Chair* is written for kids ages 8 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. Jill is bullied at school, and Eustace used to be a bully. Why

can't they ask the school's authorities for help? From whom can you ask for help if you are being bullied? How can you help others who are being bullied?

2. Why can't Eustace and Jill draw magic symbols or recite spells to get into Narnia? How do they get into Narnia? Why does Aslan tell Jill that he called for them?
3. What important instructions, called Signs, does Aslan give Jill? Does Jill remember them after hearing them only once? Are they easy for her to remember on her journey? Do she and Eustace misunderstand any of the Signs? How are the Signs similar to reading Scripture or learning memory verses?
4. In her first encounter with him, Aslan cautions Jill not to pay attention to appearances. What are some examples of when Jill and Eustace are deceived by appearances? Tell about a time when you were deceived by appearances.
5. Why do Jill and Eustace want to get to the giant city of Harfang? Who tells them it is a good place to visit? Who tells them they should not go to Harfang? In whom should they have trusted? In whom did they trust? Why didn't they choose to trust Puddleglum's advice? What problems do they have when they stay in Harfang?
6. The Knight asks the children to free him in Aslan's name. Why do Jill and Eustace still not want to free him? Why does Puddleglum say they must? In whom did Jill and Eustace choose to trust? What happens when they untie him? Has God ever asked you to do something that didn't seem to make sense to you? How can you trust God's direction, especially

when doing the right thing means taking a risk?

## A Single Shard



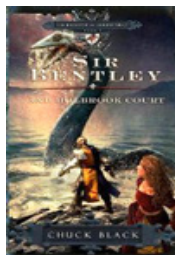
This historical fiction by Linda Sue Park is published by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin and is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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. What would have happened if Tree-ear had given up and gone home when the robbers broke the vases? When have you been tempted to give up? What has helped you go forward instead of going backward?
2. Can you imagine what your life would be like if you didn't have a family? Why is it so important to have a place where you feel as though you belong? What often happens to people who feel they don't belong anywhere?
3. Many children around the world today live without homes or families. What are some ways you could help children who are in need—maybe in your own school or community?
4. What happened in the story about the “Rock of the Falling Flowers”? Should the women have jumped to their deaths? Why do you think the story ended in this way? What would have been a better ending?

## Sir Bentley and Holbrook Court



This medieval fantasy is second in the “The Knights of Arrethtrae” series by Chuck Black and is published by Multnomah Books, a division

of Random House, Inc., New York. This book is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

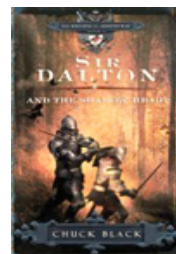
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Who does the King from the Kingdom Across the Sea represent? Who does the Prince represent? Why are the followers persecuted for believing in the Prince?
2. Bentley spends time among the poor and needy. How does this change his perspective? Why is it important for Christians to be compassionate toward the poor and needy?
3. What choice must Bentley make when he realizes the truth about the King's words? What sacrifices must he make to follow the Prince? Why must he give up his life as a knight? How is this like following Jesus Christ? Do Christians have to give up anything to follow Christ?
4. Bentley is mentored by Sir Demus. Why is it important for believers to be mentored by wise and mature Christians? What have you learned about God and the Christian life from older, more mature Christians?

5. In this fantasy book, the characters face many battles. How are these struggles similar to ones that Christians face living in this world? How does God equip you to face these struggles? How does knowing the Bible help you deal with obstacles you face?

## Sir Dalton and the Shadow Heart



This medieval fantasy book is third in “The Knights of Arrethtrae” series by Chuck Black and is published by Multnomah Books, a division

of Random House, Inc. 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. The Knights of the Prince are trained in swordsmanship. As believers, we grow in maturity by learning the Word of God. What are the similarities between a sword and the Bible? How does being familiar with the Bible help you become more effective as a Christian?
2. The book shows how important it is for believers to grow in their faith and become more mature after they first become Christians. What are some things Christians can do to grow in their faith? What kinds of things have you done to grow in your faith since you became a Christian?
3. Master Sejus asks Dalton what's most important to him. At

that point in the story, Dalton answers that Lady Bryn is most important to him. Why is it necessary for believers to know what the most important things in their lives are? What's the most important thing in your life?

4. At first, Dalton thinks Master Sejus is an old man, but after spending an extended period of time with him, Dalton's perception of him changes. What is your perception of Jesus? Has your perception changed since you first met Jesus?
5. Christians all have a calling in this world. Do you know what God is calling you to do as a Christian? How might God equip you to carry out that calling? If you don't know your calling, how might you find out what your calling is?

## Sir Kendrick and the Castle of Bel Lion



This medieval adventure is the first book in "The Knights of Arrethtrae" series by Chuck Black and is published by Multnomah Books. This book

is written for kids 9 and up.

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

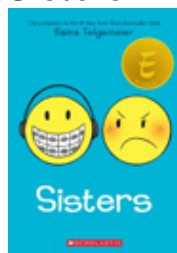
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why doesn't Kendrick care about winning events in the tournament?
2. In Chapter 15, Landor talks about three different ways people

are often taken in by Lord Ra's enticements. What are they? How can one who serves the King take another route and avoid these entanglements?

3. When Duncan chooses to return to Lord Ra's castle, he begins to feel anxious as he remembers the torture he experienced there. Why does he go anyway? What would you have done?
4. At Lord Ra's parties, young people drink and flirt with one another and behave wildly. What is dangerous about Lord Ra's parties?
5. If you were Kendrick, could you have forgiven Landor when you learned he'd killed your family? Have you ever had to forgive someone for something they did to hurt you? How difficult was it?

## Sisters



This graphic novel, memoir, humor by Raina Telgemeier is published by Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic Inc. *Sisters* is written

for kids 8 to 13.

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 does Raina imagine it will be like to have a sister? What causes her and Amara to fight so much? What makes it hard for you to get along with your siblings?
2. How do the girls compromise and show kindness by the end of

their road trip? What are some ways you can reach out in kindness to your siblings?

3. Why doesn't the whole family go to Colorado together? What concerns do the girls have when they find out their parents purposely took some time apart? When has someone you know dealt with worries about divorce or parents fighting? With whom can you share these fears?
4. What events or circumstances contribute to the tension in Raina's family? What can you do when your family life feels stressful? What can you do to set a godly example for the others in our household and make life easier on them? What are some specific things you can ask God to help with concerning our current family struggles?
5. How does Raina tune out her family on the road trip? What happens when she puts down her music and spends time talking to the family? Do you or other family members ever spend too much time on electronic devices and end up ignoring the rest of us? What are some ways you can make changes and spend more time communicating with real people in person?

## The Sixth Grade Nickname Game



This adventure, coming-of-age, humor book by Gordon Korman is published by Hyperion Books for Children. *The Sixth Grade Nickname Game* 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. How are Jeff and Wiley known by their classmates? What guides their nicknaming? If you were to choose your own nickname, what would it be? What do you like or dislike about nicknames?
2. How might Cassandra feel as the new student in the school? What are some feelings you have experienced when being new to place? What are some ways in which you can help welcome a person when they are new to a place that you are familiar with?
3. In what way is Snoopy's theory about nicknames true? When have you seen a nickname have a positive or negative impact? In what way might a nickname influence a person's success or struggle?
4. How do Jeff and Wiley compete against each other? What are some dangers of competition between friends? What are some examples of healthy competition between friends? How competitive are you? Where does your competitive nature come out the most?

## Skeleton Creek



This mystery suspense book by Patrick Carman is the first in the "Skeleton Creek" series published by Scholastic Press, an imprint

of Scholastic Inc. *Skeleton Creek* is written for kids ages 10 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 do Ryan and Sarah become interested in the dredge and the history of Skeleton Creek? Why does Ryan continue to pursue the investigation, even though it frightens him? If you were Ryan or Sarah, would you have taken your investigation as far as they did? Why or why not?
2. Why might some people like scary stories or movies? What do you think of them? What is the difference between a story that is innocently thrilling and exciting and one that draws readers into dark, terrifying thoughts? On what kind of thoughts should God's people dwell, according to the Bible?
3. What kind of relationships did Ryan and Sarah have with their parents? What were some ways Ryan and Sarah could have been more obedient and respectful? What are some things their parents could have done to improve the parent/child relationships? What are some ways that you and I can improve our parent/child relationship? What would this require from you? What would it require from me?

## Skeleton Key



This action/thriller book is the third in the "Alex Rider" series by Anthony Horowitz and is published by the Penguin Group. *Skeleton Key* is written for kids

ages 12 to 16.

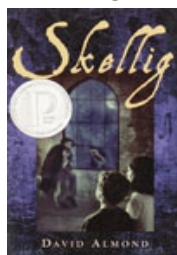
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. As a spy, Alex often lies in order to outwit his enemies. Are there times in life when it's all right to lie? If so, in what kind of situations would it be OK? If not, why not? What does the Bible say about lying? How does the biblical perspective line up with what you believe?
2. Being an orphan, Alex would like nothing more than to be a part of a real family. However, when Sarov offers to adopt him, Alex declines. What does Alex realize about family? Why wouldn't Sarov be a good parent for Alex? What do you like best about your family? Is there anything you would like to change about your family? What does it mean to have God as your heavenly Father and to be a member of His family?
3. Does Sarov believe in God? Does Alex? What is different about Sarov's beliefs and Alex's? Where do you think Alex gets his sense of right and wrong? Do humans have more of a natural desire to do what is right or what is wrong?

- Why does Alex hate working for M16? What would be the major differences between being an M16 agent and living the life of an average teenager? Why does he decide that the so-called glamorous life of a spy is not what he wants? What would Alex like about your life? What do you like about his?
- Does Alex want to go on the mission to Skeleton Key? Why does he go? What does he do to help his partners and prevent Sarov from carrying out his evil plans? How can someone not want to do something, but still do it to the best of his ability? Read Colossians 3:23. Whatever you do, how are you supposed to work at it? Why is it hard to do everything as if you're doing it for Christ?

## Skellig



This fantasy by David Almond is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House.

Inc., and is written for kids ages 10 and older.

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:

- What is Skellig? How does he describe himself to the children? How does he change throughout the story? How does Michael change because of Skellig? How do Michael's friendship with Mina and his concern for the

baby change him? What things in your world have changed you?

- What do Michael's teacher and Mina believe about evolution? What does the Bible say about it?
- How does love aid in the healing process? How is this idea shown in this book? How has love helped to heal something in your own life or in the lives of those close to you?

## Skin Hunger



This fantasy book is the first in the "A Resurrection of Magic" series by Kathleen Duey and is published by Simon Pulse, an imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children's Publishing Division. *Skin Hunger* is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

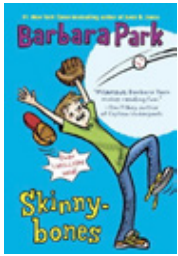
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- How does Sadima lie to cover her communication with the wolf? Why doesn't she want to tell her family about her abilities? Is there an area of your life that you don't feel you can tell your family about? How does having to hide those thoughts and feelings make you feel?
- What does Hahp consider doing before reaching the academy of wizards? In what ways does he contemplate killing himself? What does he think of himself for not being able to kill himself? Is this also your definition of a

coward? Does it take more courage to live or die? Explain.

- Why does Sadima wish people would be able to truly understand animals? What does she say that animals are and people are not? What does she mean when she says animals are honest? Through their thoughts, how are animals seen as higher, lower or equal to humans?
- Why did Micah have to steal milk money to buy Sadima paints? Why couldn't he let his father know what he was doing?
- How did Hahp feel about having to get undressed in front of the other boys? How did the burning of his clothing end his connection to life outside the academy? How did finding new clothes begin his life at the academy?
- Why were the boys at the academy forbidden to help each other?
- Who does Hahp hate? Why does he hate his father? Why does he hate Gerrard at one point? Why does he hate the wizards? Why does he hate himself? What kind of life has Hahp led that has made him hate so many so quickly? Do you hate anything? How can God help you with this area?
- Why does Sadima lie to Franklin about the extra copy she makes? What does Somiss do with the songs that she copies? How does Sadima feel about lying? Why do you think she does it anyway?

## Skinnybones



This humor book is the first in the “Skinnybones” series by Barbara Park and is published by Yearling, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books,

a division of Penguin Random House LLC. *Skinnybones* 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).

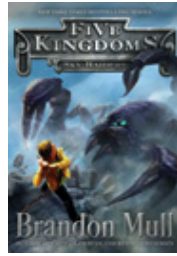
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What does it mean to be a good sport? What are some ways Alex demonstrates unsportsmanlike behavior? What are some ways you can be a good sport, whether you’re in a school activity or just playing a game with friends?
2. What does it mean to “ask for trouble”? What are some ways Alex gets himself into trouble he could have avoided? When have you spoken without thinking and had your words get you into trouble?
3. How does Alex feel about his abilities in baseball? When have you been involved in a sport or activity where you didn’t feel very confident about your skills? What did you do?
4. Describe Alex’s conversations with God. Will Alex really make better decisions as he promises or does he simply want God to make things go his way? Explain. How does God want you to talk to Him? What might He want

your relationship with Him to look like?

5. What kind of a friend is Alex? How would you feel about having a friend like him? What tips would you give him for being a better friend?

## Sky Raiders



This first book in the “Five Kingdoms” series by Brandon Mull is published by Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children’s

Publishing Division. This book 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. Why does the Wayminder say that harvesting slaves from other worlds isn’t wrong? How does his viewpoint differ from Cole’s ideas about slavery? Do you think that right and wrong is relative, depending on what the king or president of a country supports? Explain. If a country’s leader supports practices that conflict with God’s Word as revealed in the Bible, or even practices that are in conflict with common human decency, should you follow that leader’s direction? Explain.
  2. How does Jace feel about Mira? How does Jace treat Cole based on his assumptions about Cole’s feelings for Mira? How can romantic feelings make a person act in unfair ways toward people they view as competition?
3. Why does Cole use his Jumping Sword to save Mira from the cyclops? Why is she surprised that he would risk his own safety to save her life? When is it your duty to help others? Why should you be available to help others whether you’re where you want to be or in a circumstance that you didn’t choose? How can you maintain a sense of bravery and compassion toward others, even when you are stuck in a situation that doesn’t seem fair?
  4. What does Jace buy when he gets the first money he’s ever possessed? What does he say to the server at the inn when the server insults him? Tell about a time when your status suddenly changed for the better, such as changing from being a second-string ball player to a starting player? How did the improvement in your status affect your behavior toward others? Why might it be hard to be humble when you get older, gain power or experience a significant achievement? Who can you talk with to help you resist becoming prideful?
  5. Why does Mira keep offering Cole and the other boys opportunities to leave her? Why does Cole choose to stay with her at the end of the novel? Why is loyalty an important trait for a person to have? Can you remember a time when a friend chose to stick with you during a difficult time? Is there anyone you know right now who could really use

Has someone ever treated you unkindly because the person thought you liked the same person he or she liked? Tell what happened. How can you respond with patience and compassion when someone else’s jealousy causes that person to act badly toward you?

a friend? What might you do to help this person?

8. As a child of God, why don't you have to be afraid?

## Sky the Blue Fairy



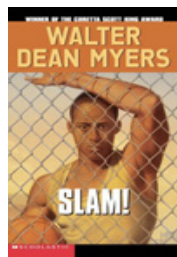
This fifth fantasy book in the “Rainbow Magic” series by Daisy Meadows is published by Scholastic, Inc. This book is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

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. Kristy and Rachel promise they will find all the fairies, but they realize they may not be able to before their vacation ends. Why is it important to keep the promises we make? Is it sometimes better not to make promises if we're not sure we can keep them?
2. The girls run into the forest to return Sky to her sisters when they're supposed to be waiting on the beach for their moms. What should the girls have done when what their moms' said conflicted with what they knew they had to do?
3. How could their actions have been dangerous?
4. Why do parents tell children to do things?
5. What made Kristy no longer afraid?
6. How does belief affect a person's actions?
7. Why is it wrong to believe in the power of magic spells?

## Slam!



This sports drama by Walter Dean Myers is published by Scholastic and is written for kids ages 13 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. Slam isn't honest with Mtisha when she asks him about his fling with another girl. Why is honesty important in a relationship? If you saw one of your friends starting to travel a dangerous path in life, how would you try to help that person?
2. Slam felt that grades weren't important as long as he could play ball well enough to get a scholarship. How much do you think your grades now will shape your future?
3. How important are male role models in a boy's life? Who were the men in Slam's life, and what kind of examples did they set for him?

## Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade



This historical, drama book by Kurt Vonnegut is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House and is written for

kids 14 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 is Billy Pilgrim described? How do Billy's fellow soldiers treat him because he is weak? Tell about a time when you or someone you know was bullied for not doing something well.
2. Why does Billy check himself into a mental hospital? What things does Billy say or do that make you question his sanity? How do Billy's friends and family treat him when he starts talking about the Tralfamadorians? How should people with mental health problems be treated? What things can you do to make sure any people you meet with mental health issues are shown the love of Christ?
3. How does Billy feel about his wife, Valencia? How does Valencia feel about Billy? How does each of them react on their wedding night? Do you think Billy and Valencia's relationship is a good example of what God intended for marriage? Why or why not?

4. What type of bookstore does Billy unknowingly visit in New York City? What picture does Billy see in the store? Where has he seen it before? Colossians 3:5 (NIV) says, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” According to this verse, what’s wrong with viewing? How should you approach sexual temptation? In what ways can you avoid falling into the sin of sexual immorality?
5. How does Billy feel about faith at the beginning of the book? What makes Billy change his mind about his faith? How does Kilgore Trout describe Jesus? Discuss books, movies or people who have made you question your faith or your view of Jesus. Let’s talk about your doubts and find what the Bible says about these areas.
2. What does Robot do while Rabbit yells and runs around the house? Tell about a situation in your life that was difficult or that you were disappointed. What are some good ways you can respond in a difficult or disappointing situation?
3. What fun things happened when Rabbit’s plans fell through? Tell about a time with friends or family that was especially memorable because something happened that was unexpected or unplanned.
2. Why doesn’t Deirdre think Trina’s doll is a part of the City Girls line? How does Deirdre finally realize the doll is in the City Girls line? Does she admit this to Trina? What would you do if you were in Deirdre’s place and realized you were wrong?
3. What frustrates Marcy about her little sister? How does she stand up for her little sister at the pizza place? Think about your siblings, friends or relatives. What are some things that are hard for you to talk about with them? What do you appreciate about them? Describe a time when you were publically supportive of them. Was that easy or hard for you to do? Explain. What are some other ways you could be more supportive of them?
4. Why doesn’t Deirdre want to ask her parents to help her look for her doll? Describe a time when you wanted to do something on your own and didn’t want to ask for help. Why didn’t you want to ask for help? What did you decide to do? How did the situation turn out?
5. How does Nancy play the role of peacemaker at the party? Have you ever had to play the role of peacemaker? How did you help others work through a disagreement? Who do you know acts as a peacemaker?
6. Why doesn’t Madison tell Deirdre that she has her doll? How does she feel threatened by Trina? Have you ever felt like you were losing a friend? Like you were being replaced by a new friend? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? What is that friendship like now?

## Sleepover Sleuths



This mystery book by Carolyn Keene is the first in the “Nancy Drew and the Clue Crew” series and is published by Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of the Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing Division. *Sleepover Sleuths* 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. How did Nancy use her skills to find the hidden present? How is she able to guess the school lunch menu? How do you think she felt her friends recognized her talent? When was the last time you encouraged one of your friends in what she was good at? Who around you could use an encouragement about her character, skills or talents? When will you let this person know that you think well of her?

## The Sleepover



This beginning reader book by Cece Bell is published by Candlewick Press and is written for kids ages 5 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 parts of the sleepover that don’t go the way Rabbit plans? What are some ways the sleepover doesn’t go the way Robot may have wanted? How does each behave when his plans don’t work out and he doesn’t get his way?

## Snap Decision



This sports novel by Nathan Whitaker is published by Zonderkidz, a trademark of Zondervan, and is written for kids ages 8 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. What decision does Chase make that strains his friendship with Tripp? What might have happened if he had lied about Tripp's unconsciousness and strange behavior? Why is Tripp so angry about Chase's decision? What would you have done in Chase's place?
2. Why was it a little surprising that the kids all found Mo Isom so beautiful? What did her 6-foot, 195-pound frame make them realize about beauty? Why is the beauty you see in magazines often deceiving and dangerous? What inner qualities make people truly beautiful?
3. What kind of person is JB? How does he treat Chase, who is younger and less experienced in football? What are some ways JB influences Chase for the better? Why is Tripp's dad important to Chase as well? If you don't already have a good role model, how can you find someone to encourage and teach you? How can you set a good example for someone who is younger or less experienced at something than yourself?

## Sneak



This science fiction book by Evan Angler is the second in the "Swipe" series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of Thomas Nelson Inc.

*Sneak* is written for kids ages 7 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 kind of a leader is Chancellor Cylis? Why does his strategy of offering people an easy life, rather than taking away their freedoms, work so well? Why do people in real life sometimes prefer fewer, simpler choices over the freedom of having many choices? How does the Devil employ a similar strategy?
2. What advantage does the Dust have over Marked (consider their sense of community, ideals, etc.)? What happens when people are forced to come together based on their similar, but unpopular, beliefs? How are the Unmarked in this book similar to the early Christians of the New Testament?
3. What are some difficult circumstances Logan and his friends choose to endure in order to effect change? What are some sacrifices or difficult decisions you may face if you choose to help make the world a better place?

## Snow Falling On Cedars



This historical mystery book by David Guterson is published by Harcourt Brace, a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing and is

written for kids ages 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. Ishmael lost an arm while fighting in WWII. Why does he feel that his missing arm makes other people uncomfortable? Have you ever been tempted to stare at someone with a physical disability? How can you and I react to amputees or differently-abled people to help them feel more accepted?
2. What is the reason behind Carl's silence? What does Kabuo's guilt from the war cause him to expect? How do Ishmael's memories of the harshness of war alter his attitudes toward ordinary social interactions? Do you know any veterans? How could you show sympathy and respect for the difficulties they might have experienced? How might you extend them grace if they seem harsher than necessary in a situation?
3. Why do the Japanese citizens of San Piedro sit in the back of the courtroom? Why does Carl not want to sell Kabuo the strawberry fields? Can you think of any instances in your life, at school or

elsewhere, where people of different ancestry are made to feel less worthy because of their heritage? How could you reach out to include someone who has been labeled unimportant?

4. Why does Kabuo not immediately tell the sheriff the full details of the night Carl died? What does Kabuo fear will happen if he were transparent about his agreement with Carl? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt that no one would believe the truth even if you told it? Explain.
5. As a teenager, Ishmael loved Hatsue. What is the difference between love and attraction? Is it possible to mistake familiarity and closeness with someone for true love? Tell about a time when you or someone you know made this mistake.

## Snow Spider



This fantasy is the first book in the “Magician Trilogy” series by Jenny Nimmo. It is published by Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc. and is written for

kids ages 8 to 13.

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 does Nain mean when she tells Gwyn his magic will cause him to be alone? When have you had something in your life you couldn't or didn't want to mention to others? Why did you think they wouldn't understand?

What did it feel like to keep your secret?

2. How do Gwyn's friends respond when he tells them about his magic? When have you or someone you know been teased or bullied by other kids? What did you do about it?
3. How do Gwyn and his parents respond when Eirlys leaves? How do you think you would have felt if someone you had lost came back and then left again?
4. When has someone close to you died, moved away or otherwise left your life? How have you dealt with your sadness? What gave you comfort and peace in the middle of your loneliness?

## Snow Treasure



This historical book by Marie McSwigan is published by Dutton Children's Books, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group and 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. How did the children initially feel about helping the adults keep the gold from the Nazis? How did Peter feel about it when he made his first sled run and a company of soldiers were in his way? How did he feel about it as he passed the sentries? How did he feel about it when he threw the snowball at the Commandant? How

would you feel if you were asked to hide something from an invading army?

2. Why did the adults ask the children not to say anything to any of the soldiers? What might have happened if they had become friends with a nice soldier? What did the soldiers think of them when they refused to talk to the soldiers? How did not talking to the Nazis help the children keep their secret? How can you apply not talking to others about a secret to your life?
3. What bad things happened to Jan in his life? What was he willing to risk to save Peter? What did he get in return?
4. Why did the people of Riswyk want to hide their gold bullion from the Nazis? What were they afraid the Nazis would do with it?
5. What did the people of Riswyk do well? What did they do poorly? What happened because of their hard work?

## So Not Happening



This contemporary Christian mystery in the “Charmed Life” series by Jenny B. Jones is published by Thomas Nelson Publishers and is written for teens

ages 13 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. How does Bella feel about her parents' divorce and her mother's

remarriage to Jake? How does their marriage change Bella's life? How does she react to those changes? Have you ever experienced a tough situation like Bella's? How did you react? According to the Bible, what kind of attitude should you have when life changes?

2. What consequences does Bella face after she writes mean things about Truman High School on her blog? How does that decision affect her relationship with her new classmates? Who shows her forgiveness? How does God show you forgiveness when you mess up?
3. How does Bella try to help Lindy attract the attention of Matt? How does this affect the relationship between Lindy and Matt? Do you think Bella is right in trying to improve Lindy's image? Why or why not? Have you ever wanted to change yourself or a friend to impress someone else? What does God's Word say about being who you are?
4. What does The Brotherhood require of those wanting to join their group? What has happened as a result of these activities? Have you ever wanted to become a member of a club? What did you have to do? How did you feel? How does God show you that He doesn't require you to prove yourself to Him? What does this say about His love? What does this say about how we are to love others?
5. How does Bella show selflessness when she sees her house on fire? What does she do for Robbie? How do her actions change her family's attitude toward her? How has God saved you from trouble?
6. What does Budge do for Bella after Zachary's funeral? How

does this change their relationship? How does Bella finally accept her new family? What does Bella say about God and His plans? What does the Bible have to say about God's plan for your life?

## So Not Okay



This slice-of-life novel by Nancy Rue is the first in the "Mean Girl Makeover" series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of

Thomas Nelson. *So Not Okay* 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 are some of the ways members of the Pack bully Tori, Ginger and their friends? Why does Tori stand up for Ginger, even though she knows she will get in more trouble with the Pack? Why does Ophelia refuse to defend Ginger? Why is it important for you to stand up for others who are in trouble?
2. What are some of Lydia's suggestions for how to handle bullies? When have you had to deal with a bully, and how did you handle it? Which of Lydia's tips might work for you in the future, when you have to face someone mean?
3. Why are Tori and the girls afraid to get adults involved in their bullying problems? If you're dealing with a bully, when should you seek help from parents, teachers or administrators? Which adults

would you feel most comfortable talking to in a situation like this?

## Sober Faith



This second Christian-school-life book in the "Payton Skky" series by Stephanie Perry Moore is published by Moody Publishers.

*Sober Faith* is written for kids ages 10 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. After Payton witnesses her friends drinking she is more concerned about her parents' reaction than about the condition and safety of her friends. What is the legal age for drinking alcohol? How would you have responded?
2. Alcohol advertising campaigns sometimes refer to responsible drinking. What does that mean?
3. During spring break, Payton's friends call her Miss High-and-Mighty. Payton is upset when she observes her friends' behaviors, which includes one of them drinking and smoking marijuana with her boyfriend, and one of them drinking and entering a wet T-shirt contest after being dumped by her boyfriend. How would you approach your friends if you observed them participating in dangerous or irresponsible activities? How would you try to stop them?

4. Payton's friend Lynzi seems to have lots of good things going for her, but she still tries to commit suicide. What makes a girl like Lynzi feel her only choice is to end her life?
5. Payton's boyfriend appears to be a mature, young, Christian man. After attending Tad's prom, Tad and Payton go to a secluded spot and begin kissing passionately. Payton eventually stops him. What circumstances led to Payton and Tad's passion getting out of hand? When and where should unmarried couples spend time alone?
6. What does the Bible say about physical intimacy?

## Soccer Hero



This social sports book written by Matt Christopher is published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. *Soccer*

*Hero* is written for ages 9 to 13.

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 does Rob save the coach's life? Why does the newspaper reporter think this will be an important story to share with other parents and kids? How might it benefit you to learn a skill like CPR?
2. Why does Dmitri become angry? Why doesn't he like the way players praise Rob as a hero? When

have you been jealous of someone who seemed to be getting more attention than you? What did you do?

3. Why does Rob think Benji should be captain? Which of Benji's characteristics and qualities make him a good candidate? Who do you know that has the ability to make peace and bring people together like Benji did? How can you be a peacemaker at school, on a team or in your family?
4. Why do the Pirates have so much trouble winning when they aren't getting along? When have you been on a team or in a group where there was a lot of fighting or disagreement? What happened?
5. What do you think makes Dmitri willing to side with Rob after Rob's phone call? When have you had to work with someone you didn't like to get something important done? What happened? What would you have done if you were Rob? What would you have done if you were Dmitri?

## Son



This social science/dystopian novel written by Lois Lowry is the fourth book in "The Quartet," published by Walter Lorraine Books, a division of

Houghton Mifflin Company. *Son* is written for 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. Describe the three communities Claire experiences. Which is your favorite? Why?
2. How do the people of the sea-side village first view Claire when she washes ashore? Why do some of their opinions change? Why shouldn't you judge others, as the village people did?
3. Which characters in this story demonstrate sacrificial love? What does each sacrifice cause to happen? Have you ever sacrificed for someone? What did your sacrifice cause to happen?
4. If you climbed the cliff, what might the Trademaster ask you for? What would you want in return? How could you still attain that without making a trade?
5. What embarrasses or shames Mentor about his dealings with Trademaster? Why does he tell what he did to Gabe? Think about something you're ashamed about and don't want to tell anyone. Why wouldn't you want to tell someone about what you did? How is that similar to what Mentor feels? If a friend needed to know about what you did, would you tell your friend? Explain.

## The Son of Neptune



This contemporary fantasy by Rick Riordan is the second in the "Heroes of Olympus" series and is published by Hyperion Books, an imprint of Disney

Publishing Worldwide. *The Son of Neptune* is written for 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. Frank briefly wishes he could forget the past, as Percy has. Is there something about your life you wish you could forget? Explain. How has that incident influenced your life? What did you learn from it?
2. Frank uses his spear for the last time to save strangers on a train. What does this demonstrate about his character? Why is this an admirable quality? Whom do you know who has this same quality?
3. Describe how greed led to Hazel's mother's death. Read Matthew 6:23-25. What does God say about money in this passage?
4. What differences do you see between the Greek Camp Half-blood and the Roman camp? If you were Percy, how would you try to bring the two camps together?

## A Song for Harlem



This historical fiction story by Patricia C. McKissack is the third book in the "Scraps of Time" series published by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin

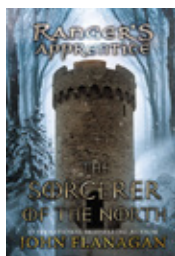
Young Readers Group. This book was written for kids ages 9 to 11.

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 were some ways Lilly Belle changed as a result of her time in Harlem? What did she learn about writing? What did she discover about herself?
2. Why is Alice so unkind to others? What secret difficulties is she experiencing in her life? Do you know anyone who is always mean, angry or unhappy? What might happen if you made a special effort to show that person kindness or respect?
3. What are some interesting facts you learned about the Harlem Renaissance?

## The Sorcerer of the North



This adventure, fantasy by John Flanagan is the fifth book in the "Ranger's Apprentice" series. It was published in 2006 by Random House, Australia;

published in 2008 by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin Group. The book is written for ages 10 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 Will careful to pay the ferry operator, even though the man says it's not necessary? Why is Will concerned about who pays his housekeeper Edwina's wages? Why is it important for him to pay for goods and services he receives? Why might this be important for you? What benefits are there in always paying your

way and not expecting free things from others?

2. When the Skandians attack, how does Battlemaster Norris feel about the battle-readiness of his knights and men-at-arms? How did the years of casual practice and slack discipline negatively impact the fighting force at Castle Seacliff? Why is it important for people with safety-related jobs — soldiers, policemen, security guards — to practice their skills diligently and remain on guard at all times? Are there any areas in your life where you could work harder to achieve excellence? How could your dedication to your goals — study, sports, hobbies, pursuit of God — benefit the people around you?
3. How does Will react when Alyss first comes to visit him? How does Delia, the innkeeper's daughter, react? Have you ever had to manage the social interaction between your old friends and your new ones? Why is it important to show all your friends that you value them? What little things can you do to show your appreciation for new friends in your life? How can you keep contact with old friends and show them they're valued?
4. When Alyss suggests killing John Buttle for attacking them and threatening to betray their secrets, how does Will feel about her idea? Do you think life as a slave for the Skandians would be a better fate than death for Buttle? Why do most countries today maintain judges, juries and courts to determine people's guilt? Do all people who commit crimes deserve a trial before they are punished, or do you think there are exceptions to that rule?

5. What about Orman's appearance and behavior causes people to dislike him? What elements of Keren's personality cause people to flock to him naturally? Have you ever misjudged someone's character because they lacked likeable outward characteristics, such as attractiveness or talkativeness? Why is it easy to believe rumors about people who are unpopular? How can you work to understand your own biases and make impartial judgments about people's character?

## Sorta Like a Rock Star



This coming-of-age, contemporary drama by Matthew Quick is published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. The

book is written for 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. What do you think of Amber's optimism? Are you more of an optimist or a pessimist? How might being grateful for the small things change a person's attitude? What things can you do to be more grateful for the good things in your life?
2. How does Amber help other people? How does this help her to feel better about her life? What things could you do in your school or community to help other people? What is one way you have helped another person?

How did helping that person make you feel?

3. What causes Amber to start going to church? Why does she stop going to that church? Do you agree or disagree with her view that Jesus and religion are not for impressing people. Explain. Have you ever disagreed with an adult's teaching about Jesus? If so, what did you do?
4. How does Amber think Jesus should be viewed? What do you think she means by that? How do you view Jesus?
5. Why does Amber end up going to church again? Why do you go to church? What is the point of going to church?
6. Amber sinks into depression after the death of her mother. Everyone experiences times of sadness. What things or experiences cause you to feel depressed? What things help you to feel better? How can you help friends feel better when they are depressed?

## Soup



This memoir, humor, historical book by Robert Newton Peck is the first book in the "Soup" series and is published by Random House Children's Books.

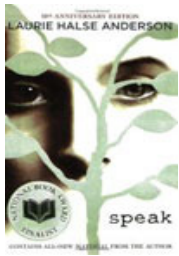
The book is written for ages 12 and up.

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. What kind of a friend is Soup to Rob? What would you like about having a friend like Soup? What would bother you?
2. What are some of the ways Rob and Soup get into trouble together? When have you followed a friend's lead, even though you knew it was a bad idea? What happened?
3. Why does Rob think it might be OK to cheat the man who bought tinfoil? What is prejudice? Why do some people demonstrate prejudice against those who are different from them? What does the Bible say about how Christ followers should treat \*all\* people?
4. What does the Bible say about cheating others? When has someone been dishonest with you or cheated you out of something that was yours? How did you feel?
5. Why do Soup and Rob make acorn pipes? What can smoking do to your body? What does the Bible say about the importance of caring for your body?
6. Besides Soup, which characters do mean things to Rob? What would you do if someone bullied you or one of your friends? Who would you tell?

## Speak



This coming-of-age drama by Laurie Halse Anderson is published by the Penguin Group. The book is written for ages 12 and up.

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

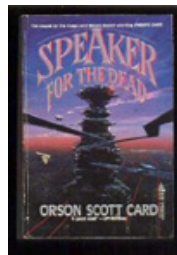
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why is Melinda treated as an outcast at school? Why is she treated as a celebrity by the end of the book? How does student perception change?
2. How does our society view celebrities? Why shouldn't we treat our friends as outcasts or celebrities? How can we learn to look inside of people instead of judging them for their appearance or actions?
3. How old was Melinda? Should she have been drinking? What were some of the poor choices she made leading up to the rape? Is it her fault that she was raped? Why do some victims feel that it is their fault, when it isn't?
4. Why do you think Melinda kept her emotions bottled inside? Why doesn't she tell anyone what has happened? Is there someone in your life that you can tell everything to? Tell me about this person.
5. How does Heather use her friendship with Melinda to her own advantage? How do her actions show that she isn't a true friend? How should Melinda have asked a friend for help? How do your friends ask you

for help? How do you ask your friends for help?

6. Melinda's former friends don't ask her why she called the police at the party. Why is it important to talk with your friends, even if you think they are to blame for something?
7. What would you do if you noticed a friend had changed—an A student was flunking or a joyful-hearted person was now depressed? Who should you tell about this person? How should you talk to this person?

## Speaker for the Dead



This science fiction book by Orson Scott Card is the second in the "Ender Quintet" series and is published by Tor Books, a division of Macmillan

Publishers. *Speaker for the Dead* is written for readers age 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. Describe how the colonists deal with the Piggies. How is this similar to or different from the ways that people today view other cultures? How would you have acted in their place?
2. What does Ender believe redeems a person's existence? Can moments of good in an evil person's life redeem him? What does the Bible say about redemption? Why might Jesus be willing to redeem all people, even those

who have been evil, if they confess their sin and believe on His name?

## Spider Boy



This contemporary book by Ralph Fletcher is published by Sandpiper, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing

Company. *Spider Boy* is written for kids ages 9 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. Why does Bobby tell so many lies when he first moves to New York? How does he right these wrongs? Whewn have you found yourself telling lies? Why did you do it? What does the Bible say about lying?
2. What does Bobby miss most when he moves from Illinois? When have you been the new kid at school, on a team or somewhere else? How did it feel? How can you help a new kid feel more at home?
3. What interesting facts did you learn about spiders from this book? In what ways does Bobby relate to spiders? With what type of animal do you most identify? How are you like that kind of animal?
4. How does Bobby initially react to Chick's apology for killing Monk? How do you feel about Dad's suggestion that you can accept

someone's apology without forgiving him? Why does Bobby finally decide to stop hating Chick? How is doing that good for Bobby?

5. How did you feel about Bobby reporting Chick for cheating? What would you have done in his place, and why? When have you done something you knew was right even though it was hard or scary?

## Spirit Fighter



This fantasy novel by Jerel Law is the first in the “Sons of Angels, Jonah Stone” series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of Thomas Nelson

Inc. *Spirit Fighter* is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

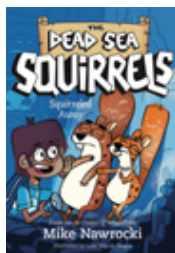
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Of whom are the kids frightened when they ride the train? Who do they try to help on that same part of the trip, believing she is safe? What do they learn about judging people based on their looks? What does the Bible say about a man's outward appearance?
2. What does Henry tell the kids about the man they see walking around with a fallen angel clinging to his back? What kind of lies does the Devil tell you to keep you trapped and afraid?
3. How are Jonah and Eliza ultimately able to overcome

Abaddon? What is required of them in order to succeed? What kinds of armor are they reminded to use for battle? How can you use this armor in the battles you face in your life?

## Squirreled Away



This humor, Christian fiction book is first in the “Dead Sea Squirrels” series. *Squirreled Away* is published by Tyndale Kids, a trademark of

Tyndale House Publishers Inc., and written for kids ages 8 to 11.

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 disobey his dad and return to the cave alone? When has your curiosity caused you to do something you shouldn't have done? What happened?
2. How does the Bible say kids are supposed to treat their parents? What does it mean to \*honor\* someone? Why does God command children to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1)? Besides obeying them, what are some ways you can honor us?
3. How do Pearl and Merle get trapped at the Dead Sea? When have you failed to think things through, like Merle did? What kind of trouble did it cause?
4. What is Michael's nickname? How does he feel when his parents call him by his nickname?

When have you been embarrassed by us? When has someone you know been embarrassed by their parents? What can we do to help you not be embarrassed?

5. Why does Dr. Gomez like to dig up things from the past? How do archaeologists help people understand history and the Bible better? Which Bible characters lived near the Dead Sea?

## Squirrelnapped!



This humor, Christian fiction book is fourth in the “Dead Sea Squirrels” series. Written by Mike Nawrocki, *Squirrelnapped!* 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. What might have happened if Michael had been honest with his mom right after he breaks the elephant table? How does his failure to tell the truth cause even more trouble? When have you been blamed for something you didn't do? How did that feel?
2. Why did the apostle Paul urge the Ephesians to tell the truth? How did he say their honesty would benefit them and the world around them? How can you set a good example for others through your honesty?
3. What do you think of Pearl's statement that \*not\* telling the whole story is the same as lying?

When have you been dishonest by \*not\* saying something? What happened?

4. What does Sadie mean when she says you don't know where you're going unless you know where you've been? Why is it important for you to learn about history? How does learning about the past help you understand the present and the future?
5. Why is the man in the suit and sunglasses trying to steal the squirrels? What's wrong with people keeping ancient artifacts for themselves? Why are items from history, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, valuable to scientists and researchers? What do they show the world about history and the Bible?

## Stargirl



This romantic, slice-of-life book is not in a series but it does have a sequel. Written by Jerry Spinelli, *Stargirl* is published by Knopf Books, a division

of Random House, Inc., and written for kids ages 10 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. What aspects of this story seem realistic? What parts seem more like a fairy tale? What is the difference between the two?
2. How much of your identity should be based on what others think of you? How much of it

is? How did Jesus handle people's negative opinions of Him? Did their mean words make Him a different person on the inside?

3. To what degree is conformity necessary—and maybe even good? Give examples. To what degree is conformity unnecessary—and perhaps not good? Give examples. Where is the balance between these two elements?
4. What did you think of the way Stargirl said the Pledge of Allegiance? Was she being herself or being disrespectful?
5. How did you feel about Stargirl giving up her true identity for a while just to make Leo happy? Was that an act of love? Did Leo love Stargirl? Would a person who really loves you ask you to change your core personality for the sake of popularity (or some other purpose)?
6. Was Archie a good role model for Leo? Why or why not?
7. What were some ways that Stargirl brought out the beauty in her world? Did you get any ideas about how you could be more aware of the beauty in everyday things and/or improve the lives of those around you?
8. What did you think about the way Stargirl meditated and tried to “erase” herself? Is meditation a good or a bad thing? What might be some ways to meditate on God? What is dangerous about meditating on things, such as nature or the universe?

## Starlighter



This fantasy adventure book is the first in the “Dragons of Starlight” series by Bryan Davis and is published by Zondervan. *Starlighter* is written for kids ages 14 to 18.

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

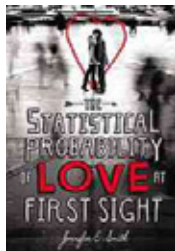
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What does it mean to show respect for authority? Does a person in authority have to earn respect? Why or why not? Do you know a person in authority whose ways or policies you disagree with? How can you show respect for that person?
2. What does self-sacrifice mean? Have you ever given up something important to help someone else in need? How hard was that to do? Was there a benefit? What did Jesus sacrifice for us?
3. How did the people of Jason's world treat Uriel Blackstone when he told them about the dragon planet? How is the way Uriel was treated similar to the way Christians are treated today? Are you willing to have people call you “crazy” when you tell them about Jesus?
4. Why does Drexel want to rescue the enslaved people of Starlight? How do you see that same response in our world today?
5. What do the snatchers try to take from Jason as he stands at the portal and keeps the river

flowing? How do they try to take it from him? Who in the Bible uses these same techniques? Have you ever made a promise and then had someone else try to convince you to break your promise? How did that person try to convince you? Did you begin to doubt yourself? What can you do in those circumstances to overcome such self-doubts?

6. Why did Jason slay the dragon? Have you ever rushed into a situation to help someone and found out your actions only made the situation worse? What did you do then? Will God help a person out of a difficulty even when that person has made a mistake?
7. What does Koren believe happens to a person enslaved to another? Do you agree with her that love must be a choice? Why does God give us the choice to love Him or not love Him?
8. Why do the dragons allow Arxad to ride away with Koren and Natalla? Was it true that Jason was revering the black egg? Should Koren have used her gift of storytelling to deceive the dragons?
9. Why do you think Elyssa doesn't tell Jason her plans? Is this a good way for a person to work with a team member? What can be the consequences of not communicating?

## The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight



This romance book by Jennifer E. Smith is published by Poppy, an imprint of Little, Brown and Company, trademarks of Hachette Book Group Inc. It

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. What unusual circumstances bring Hadley and Oliver together? Who or what do they believe is responsible for this wild chain of events? What's the difference between trusting in fate or coincidence and trusting in God's timing?
2. What kind of relationship does Hadley have with her father as the book begins? How does she feel about him? What makes her decide to rebuild their relationship rather than letting her pain and anger consume her? Whom do you have a difficult relationship with? What could you do to rebuild that relationship?
3. Does Oliver forgive his father? Does Hadley forgive her father? Which actions demonstrate whether they have forgiven or not forgiven their parents? How does unforgiveness cause Hadley and Oliver to act? What does forgiveness cause Hadley to do? Why is it important to forgive a person who has wronged you? If

you don't forgive, how will that unforgiveness limit your free will? What does the Bible say about forgiveness?

4. If two people "fall in love," like Hadley's dad and Charlotte, should they do whatever it takes to be together? Why or why not? How does Dad's decision impact the other people in his life? What does the Bible say about the commitment of marriage?

## Stealing Bradford



This teen chick-lit book is the second in the "Carter House Girls" series by Wendy Lawton and is published by Zondervan. *Stealing Bradford* is written for kids

ages 13 to 16.

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. In which of her actions is DJ conscientious about her decision to follow Christ? How has being a Christian changed her? If you have made the same decision, how did Christ change you?
2. The Bible says that "iron sharpens iron." Who is DJ's iron? Why is it important to have other Christian friends?
3. What does the Bible teach about homosexuality? What does the Bible teach about how you should treat others? Which girls in the book handled the situation with their PE teacher the best from a biblical perspective?

4. How does Taylor react to the online photos? How does she react to what kids at school are saying about her? Read 1 Timothy 6:20. How does this Scripture relate to what happened to Taylor? When something like this happens at your school, how will you choose to react?
5. Rhiannon points DJ to Matthew 5:43-44. What does this Scripture ask those who follow Christ to do? How does DJ do this? Is there anyone in your life you find difficult to love? What makes this person hard to get along with? What role can you take in reaching out to this person with God's love?
6. How does DJ feel about Conner? What messed up things in their relationship? How does going too far physically with a boyfriend or girlfriend change the relationship?
7. How does Rhiannon notice that God is changing DJ and working in her? Has anyone ever noticed that about you? Have you noticed that about other people? What is one thing that makes it clear that God is at work in a person's life?

## Steelheart



This science fiction novel by Brandon Sanderson is the first in "The Reckoners" series published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House

Children's Books, a division of Random House Inc. *Steelheart* 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. What is David's motivation throughout most the book? Why is it problematic to be driven by a desire for revenge? What are some possible consequences of harboring vengeful thoughts or plotting to get back at someone? What does the Bible say about revenge? Why might God want to be the one to avenge injustice?
2. In what circumstances, if any, should a person resort to violent behavior? When isn't violence the right response? In what situations might it be the right response? What are some healthy ways you can address injustice in our world without resorting to violence?
3. What emotion starts to make David see beyond his desire for revenge? What emotions dictate the decisions you make in your life? What decisions should never be made when you are emotional? What is the danger of making big life decisions when you are emotional? How can you keep yourself from doing this?

## Stella by Starlight



This historical, drama book by Sharon M. Draper is published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division, a registered trademark of Simon & Schuster. It is written for ages 9 to 13.

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 do the Ku Klux Klan members try to scare the black people of Bumblebee? Why do the members in the black community know they can't give in to fear? When have you been afraid of something or someone? What did you do?
2. What are some ways the members of the black community pull together and help each other in hard times? When have you seen friends or family members work together to help a person in need? How did it feel to watch or be part of this?
3. What helps Stella process the difficult things she sees and hears in Bumblebee? When have you written down your thoughts in a journal or as a story or poem? How did you feel afterward?
4. Why does Pastor Patton urge members of his congregation to register to vote? What difficult things do he and the other men go through to gain this right? What would have happened if black men in this time period hadn't exercised their right to vote? If you could vote, what important issues would you support?
5. Besides voting and facing the Ku Klux Klan, what are some of the ways Stella and other members of her community demonstrate bravery? What are some courageous acts you've seen your friends or parents do? When have you done something brave or bold?

- Why are so many white people in this book unkind to their black neighbors? When and where have you seen racism in our world today? How did Jesus respond to people of different nationalities? How can you demonstrate kindness like He did?

## Stone Cold



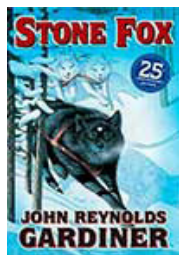
This mystery coming-of-age novel by Robert Swindells is published by Hamish Hamilton Ltd. and the Penguin Group. It is written for ages 13 and up.

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:

- What unexpected things does this story portray about homelessness? How did it change your view of homeless people, if at all?
- How do you think God wants His people to address the issues of homelessness and poverty? How can you and your family personally help someone in this situation?

## Stone Fox



This animal adventure by John Reynolds Gardiner is published by Harper Trophy, an imprint of Harper Publishers and is written for kids

ages 7 to 11.

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:

- Can you be a winner without being the first to cross the finish line?
- What happens when we “turn the other cheek” and are kind to our enemies?
- How can we sacrifice our time, talents and money to help others in need, just as Willy did?

## The Stories Julian Tells



This beginning reader, humor book by Ann Cameron is published by Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House Inc. and 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:

- What did you think of Julian's story about the cats coming from a catalog? Is this a lie or just a silly story? What's the difference between a lie and a silly story? How did you feel about Dad adding to the story rather than telling Huey the truth? When have you made up a story that ended up getting you in trouble?
- What do Julian and Huey think is going to happen after they eat the pudding? How does Dad

punish them? Why do you think he lets them off easy? When have you done something wrong and didn't get the punishment you really deserved?

- Why does Julian eat the leaves off of the fig tree? What makes him stop? When have you done something a little silly because you thought it would get you something you wanted? What happened?
- Why does Julian decide he doesn't want to lose his loose tooth? When have you tried to impress your friends with a unique hobby, skill or item from your home? Were they impressed? Explain.
- How does Gloria react when Julian tries to do a cartwheel and falls? Why does this make Julian like Gloria even more? How should you react, and what should you say, when your friends make mistakes?
- What is special about the kite Julian and Gloria made? If you made a wishing kite, what would you wish for?

## Stories of Danger and Courage



This Christian fiction, historical, adventure book by Jeanne Dennis and Sheila Seifert is the third book in the “Bible Kidventures” series and is a

Focus on the Family book in association with Tyndale House Publishers Inc. *Stories of Danger and Courage* is written for kids ages 7 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:

### *Deadly Expedition*

1. What does God tell Moses to do before He parts the Red Sea for the Israelites? Why might he have asked Moses to do this instead of just parting the sea without Moses' action? How has God used you with friends or relatives in the past? How might God want to use you in your world today? How have you shown God's love or compassion to others?
2. Why don't people gather enough manna to last the week? On what days can they do this? What might God be teaching His people through this directive? How has God taught you to trust Him for your daily bread? What might God have been teaching His people about the day of rest? How has God taught you to rest one day a week?

### *Trapped!*

1. How is the main character, you, related to Rahab? Why is that relationship important when Israel attacks? How might you be the "Rahab" to others in your family or with your friends? What do you do to show your relatives and neighbors God's love?
2. Why don't the parents of the main character believe you are telling the truth about there being spies in Jericho? What might have been different if you'd not told spy tales before actually telling about the spies in Jericho? In your life today, how have you exaggerated the truth to make a point? What should you have said instead? How will telling the

truth now allow others to believe you later?

### *Attack!*

1. What musical instrument do you, the main character, play? How is this musical instrument used in the story? What musical instrument do you play today or would you like to play someday? How might you use your musical or other talents to glorify God? How might you use them to serve others?
2. Who is the bully in this story? What actions make him a bully? Is there anyone like this in your life? How do you deal with this person? What would you like to happen in this situation? What might be your best course of action?

### *Escape!*

1. How have you, the main character, lived in Jerusalem? Who do you trust? How does this trust lead to trouble? Who are the people you trust in your life today? Are these people trustworthy? How do they help you? Is there anyone in your circle of trust who might lead you astray? Explain. Should this person be in your closest circle of trust? Explain.
2. Why do you, the main character, have to leave Jerusalem, in some scenarios, because of being a Christian? What do these attempts look like? How have you seen or heard about people who are Christians persecuted for their faith today? How can you pray for these people? What can you do to stand up for your faith, even when it's not a popular thing to do?

## The Storm



This mystery fantasy book by Cynthia Rylant is the first book in the "Lighthouse Family" series and is published by Simon & Schuster

Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division and a trademark of Simon & Schuster. *The Storm* is written for kids ages 6 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 Pandora decide to become a lighthouse keeper? How does her work inspire Seabold? When have you decided to do something difficult because you knew it would help others?
2. Why does Pandora keep watching the lighthouse, even though she often can't tell if she's helping anyone? When have you kept being kind or good even though it didn't seem to make any difference? Why is it hard to do the right thing when you don't see any results? What does the Bible say will happen if you keep doing good (Galatians 6:9)?
3. What are some of the difficulties Pandora faces being a lighthouse keeper? How does her life improve after Seabold arrives? When have you felt lonely and had a friend or relative cheer you up?
4. What kinds of things do Pandora and Seabold talk about when they're first getting to know each

other? What do they talk about once the mice have come and they feel like a family? What are some of your favorite memories of times you've spent with your family? Why are families so important?

5. What does Seabold love most before he lands at the lighthouse? What makes him start to change his mind about what matters in life? When have you met a person or had an experience that helped you to discover what was most important to you?

## Storm Warning



This mystery adventure book by Linda Sue Park is the ninth book in “The 39 Clues” series and is published by Scholastic Inc. *Storm Warning* 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. How does Amy treat Nellie? Is she respected as an adult in Amy's life? Is she wise about taking matters into her own hands and refusing to share information with Nellie? Do you believe Nellie has the children's best interest in mind? Explain your answer.
2. How would you describe “The Right Excellent Nanny's” mission? Do you consider her a hero? Why? What might Amy and Dan have felt when they visited one of her villages in the mountains? How important was

her work? Did they grasp how important it was?

3. What was Grace's relationship with Lester's grandmother? How did that friendship impact Lester's life? How did his life impact Amy and Dan?
4. Were you surprised when “The Man in Black” identified himself as Grace Cahill's brother? How did he behave throughout the series? Is he telling the truth? Do you feel that he can be trusted?
5. What do you like and dislike about the Madrigals being peacekeepers in the family? Was this information good news or bad news for Amy and Dan? Explain. How does this news affect their opinion of their parents? How does it change their family's legacy? How might Amy and Dan bring peace to their family?

## Stormbreaker



This action-adventure book is the first in the “Alex Rider” series by Anthony Horowitz and is published by Speak Books, an imprint of the Penguin Group.

*Stormbreaker* 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. What role does revenge play in *Stormbreaker*? Which characters feel the need to exact revenge, and why? What does the Bible say about seeking revenge?

2. How does Alex feel about his mission? Does he get the sense that he is respected for the dangerous work he's doing? What does he believe is the big difference between him and spies like James Bond? Why is it more difficult to complete a task you are forced to do than a job about which you feel passionate?
3. How does Alex feel when he learns Ian has told so many lies? How would you feel if you found out someone you trusted had kept his or her true identity from you?
4. Which characters show some concern for the value of human life? Which are more concerned about their work than about the lives that might be lost in the process? Why does Alex refuse to kill people in cold blood, despite the fact that Sayle and Gregorovich are doing it? Is it ever justifiable to take another life? Explain your answer. What does the Bible say about the value of human life?
5. Why does Alex protect and help Wolf, the man in his MI6 training, who tries to get Alex in trouble? Have you ever heard the phrase “killing someone with kindness”? What do you think that means? How does Alex's behavior eventually make an impression on Wolf? How might your decision to be kind to an enemy bring about positive results?

## The Storybook of Legends



This modern fairy tale by Shannon Hale is the first in the “Ever After High” series published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book

Group, Inc. This book 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. Why does Apple try so hard to convince Raven to sign the Storybook of Legends? Besides the possibility of going poof, what is Apple afraid might happen to her if Raven doesn't sign? How do the decisions of others affect you?
2. How does Apple feel about an uncertain future? How does Raven feel about an uncertain future? How will Raven's decision affect her future? When have you been nervous about the future because you didn't know what might lie ahead? What are some of your biggest concerns about the road before of you?
3. What does Maddie say are her favorite kind of stories? Why do some of us prefer the unexpected in life, while others prefer a story already written for us? As a child of God, into which of these categories does your story fall? Explain your answer.
4. Is Raven being selfish by refusing to sign the Storybook, or does she have the right to choose her

own path? When have you had to make a decision that impacted the health, safety or happiness of others? What did you do?

## Strangers on a Train



This mystery novel by Carolyn Keene is the second in the “Nancy Drew Diaries” series published by Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division. *Strangers on a Train* 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. If you had been on this trip with Nancy, would you have known she was a detective? Explain how or why not.
2. How does the availability of online information about Nancy put her in danger? What are the Internet rules in our family? When you use the Internet, how do you use it responsibly? How is the Internet both a good and a bad thing at the same time?

## Strawberry Girl



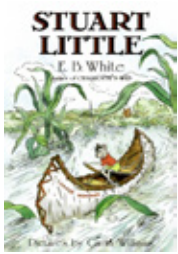
This historical fiction book by Lois Lenski is published by Harper-Collins Children's Books and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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. How do people respond to the Boyer family as they move to their new home? What kind of attitude does the Boyer family have toward their new home, town and neighbors? Have you ever moved to a new home? How have people responded to you? How did their response make you feel? Has anyone new ever moved into your neighborhood? How were you or could you be welcoming to them?
2. How are the Boyers and Slaters different? How do their beliefs influence them? What are their views on hard work? Which family is your family most like? How do your beliefs influence your family? What is your family's view on hard work?
3. What do Birdie and the other kids do when Gus and Joe are beating up the schoolteacher? How do the kids at your school treat their teachers? Who are the bullies at your school? What have you done when or would you do if you saw kids getting bullied at school?
4. How does the new schoolteacher react when Shoestring comes to school? How does Birdie stand up for him? What would you have done if you were in Birdie's shoes?

## Stuart Little



This adventure, humor book is written by E.B. White and is published by Harper and Row. *Stuart Little* 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).

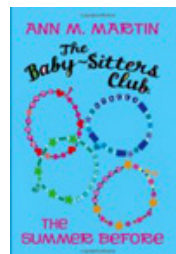
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What does George promise to make for Stuart? Why doesn't he make this special washbasin? Because of George's lack of follow-through, what hardships does Stuart face? Has anyone ever promised to do something for you that didn't get done? In what ways is your life more difficult because of another's actions?
2. Why is it important for Stuart to tell his father about not being able to turn on the faucet? Do you have a challenge that you need help with? How can we help you?
3. What happens to Stuart because he decides to show off his strong muscles to Snowbell? What might he have been thinking as he remained stuck in the blinds? How quickly does Stuart's pride return, once he is released from the blinds? What are some ways you can be confident in who you are without being prideful?
4. What does George do wrong in his haste to rescue Stuart? What happens as a result? What decisions should you make on your own? Which decisions should be

made with our help? Why should these decisions wait for our help to be made?

5. When Snowbell tells the Angora that he has too much self-control, what does this demonstrate about Snowbell? In what areas is self-control important in your life? How might having self-control help you now and in the future?
6. What does Stuart do to the curriculum when he teaches school? Why does he skip several subjects? Why is it important for you to learn about subjects that may not interest you? How might these subjects be important to you in the future?
7. Stuart makes rules as "King of the World." As Christians, who do we believe is the King? What are some rules that God has given us to help us follow his leadership? How are God's rules different from Stuart's rules?
8. Why does Stuart ask Harriet not to tell her parents about their outing on the river? What might her parents have said? Describe a time when you went somewhere without asking us if you could go. What would have been a better way to handle this situation?

## The Summer Before



This tween chick-lit book is a prequel to the first book in the original "The Baby-Sitters Club" series. It is written by Ann M. Martin and is published by Scholastic Press, a division of Scholastic Inc. *The Summer Before* 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. How do people respond to the Which one of the girls do you relate to the most and why?
2. What kinds of changes have you experienced in your friendships? How did you respond? Why were Claudia, Mary Anne and Kristy able to remain friends while Stacy and Laine were not?
3. How do Janine and Claudia resolve their conflict over Frankie? What could they have done differently to stop fighting earlier?
4. Do you feel Stacy's parents made the right decision in not telling other people about her diabetes? Why or why not? How do you think her experiences might have been different had her family been willing to talk about her medical condition with others?

## The Summer I Turned Pretty



This young adult, romance, contemporary novel by Jenny Han is the first book in the "Summer" series published by Simon & Schuster

Books for Young Readers and 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. How does Belly measure her life in summers? What elements of her life during each summer make that season more significant than the rest of the year? Is there a special location or time of year that holds significance for you? What makes it special? How can you bring some of that wonder and joy into your daily life?
2. How many years younger than Conrad, Steven and Jeremiah is Belly? How do they treat her because of the age gap, and how does it affect her interactions with them? Have you ever wanted to fit in with older siblings or acquaintances? What did you do to help earn their approval? How did they treat you? How could you make your younger siblings or acquaintances feel respected and valuable?
3. When Belly starts spending more time with Cam, how do her mother and Susannah react? Why is it easier for Belly to prioritize time with Cam over time with her family and friends? Has one of your friends or siblings ever stopped spending time with you because they began dating someone? Explain how you felt. What strategies could you put in place to make time for the people who have been in your life the longest, no matter the new people you may meet?
4. What is Susannah's health condition at the start of the novel? What signs are there that she's not her usual self? Why does she attempt to hide the truth from Belly, Conrad and Jeremiah? When you were a child, did you ever feel like we or other adults obscure the truth to make you

feel better? If someone close to you had a serious illness or traumatic event, would you want to know about it or remain peacefully unaware?

## Summer of the Swans



This coming-of-age novel by Betsy Byars is published by Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Books USA, and 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. Why might Sara be frustrated and irritable so much of the time? What are some new or unexpected emotions you've experienced as you've gotten older? What are some things you do to handle those feelings so they don't overwhelm you?
2. How does Sara feel about her father early in the story? Why doesn't he come immediately when he hears Charlie is gone? What does Sara eventually realize about her father that causes her to give him a little more grace than before?
3. What does Sara discover about herself by the end of the story? When have you felt yourself taking a big step toward maturity or a greater understanding of life? How did this new understanding change your feelings and behavior?

4. When have you interacted with someone who has physical or mental disabilities? How did it make you feel? How does God feel about people with disabilities? How does He want you to treat them?

## Summer Promise



This contemporary Christian book is first in the "Christy Miller" series by Robin Jones Gunn and is published by Bethany House Publishers, a division of Baker Book House Company.

*Summer Promise* 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).

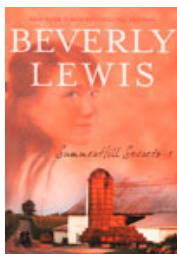
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How does Christy feel after her first day on the beach? What does Aunt Marti do to make her feel better? How does Christy feel after her makeover? Tell about a day when you felt bad. Who helped you feel better?
2. Why does Christy want to be like Alissa? Does Alissa want Christy to be like her? What does Alissa mean when she says that Christy doesn't know how good she has it? What does Christy find out about Alissa that makes her realize Alissa is right? Who are you more like, Christy or Alissa? Who do you want to be more like?
3. What does Todd give Christy when he drops her off after her day at Disneyland? Why does

this upset her? Would it upset you? When Christy wakes up the next day, she realizes she has to do something. What is it? How does she feel afterward? What have you done that you have regretted? Why does Christy apologize to her aunt?

4. Christy meets two radically different types of people during the summer. Shawn and Alissa drink alcohol and have casual sex. Todd's friends go to Christian concerts and worship God around bonfires. Which group of people is Christy most attracted to? Why was it important for Christy to be around Christian friends? How do these friends help her grow? Why is it important to surround yourself with Christian friends?
5. Does going to church make Christy a Christian? How could she know that she is going to heaven? What makes you a Christian? What does this commitment to God mean for your future?

## SummerHill Secrets Volume 1



This contemporary teen collection is the first of two volumes in the "SummerHill Secrets" series by Beverly Lewis and is published

by Bethany House Publishers, an imprint of Baker Publishing Group. This book is written for kids ages 13 to 16.

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. *Whispers Down the Lane:*

How does Merry deceive her family and friends? How does her deception help Lissa? How does it hurt Lissa? If you were in Merry's place, what would you have done? How does Lissa change in the story? How does she find the strength to forgive her father? Lissa says, "Remember your tears. They're precious to God." How does it make you feel to know that God understands your sadness?

### 2. *Secrets in the Willows:*

How does Elton's life change when Merry befriends him? How does her life change? What does the Bible say about how we are to treat people, even those who are not rich, popular or powerful? Have you ever encountered someone who was difficult to love? What did you do? What did you learn? How did Elton use His talents to worship God? What is your definition of worship? How can you use your own gifts to praise God?

### 3. *Catch a Falling Star:*

How is Merry caught in the middle of two cultures? In what way do you feel caught between two groups of people? How are Merry's experiences similar to your own? How does Merry feel when her best friend, Jon Klein, spends time with Lissa? What does God's Word say about jealousy? How does jealousy affect Merry's relationships? How has jealousy affected you? What could you have done differently? What does Merry think when Lissa tells her that her parents are experimenting with the occult? Why is it so dangerous? What does God say about dabbling in unhealthy practices?

### 4. *Night of the Fireflies:*

What are some of the life-and-death trials that Merry faces? Through these trials, what does Merry learn about God's love? What are some trials you have faced? What have you learned about God through them? How has He comforted you during these trials? Like Merry, have you ever had the opportunity to influence someone younger than you? What did you do? How did it impact the other person? What did you learn from the relationship? What is the Amish way of dealing with death? What does God's Word say about death? How are your thoughts about death similar or different from God's Word and/or Amish beliefs?

### 5. *A Cry in the Dark:*

How did the young mother in *A Cry in the Dark* sacrifice for her child? How did she feel when the Hansons didn't adopt her child? How did God work things out for good in this situation? Has God ever asked you to give up something you loved for the sake of someone else? How has that decision changed your life? What did God give up for you? What was Merry's opinion of Miss Spindler throughout the book? How did that opinion change after she placed Charity in Miss Spindler's care? Have you ever judged someone without knowing the whole story? What did it take to change your impression?

## Summerlost



This mystery, coming-of-age book by Ally Condie is published by Dutton Children's Books, Penguin Young Readers Group, an imprint of Penguin

Random House, LLC. *Summerlost* is written for kids ages 10 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. On the surface, Cedar lies to protect her mother from worry. Why do you think this is a good idea from Cedar's perspective? Why is it not a good idea from Cedar's mother's viewpoint? What would you have done in her situation?
2. When Cedar sneaks out of the house for the midnight exploration of the tunnels, what does she leave on her pillow? Why would she leave a note telling where she was? How might doing this help her? How might it hurt her? Should she have gone for this midnight exploration? Explain.
3. Why don't Cedar and Leo feel as if they fit in with other kids? How does having Ben as her brother, before he died, make her feel different? When do you feel like you don't fit in with school friends? What do you do to cope with that feeling? How do you treat others who seem to be different? What is the Golden Rule? How might it apply here?
4. Have you ever watched a soap opera? What are some of the negative things that happen when

Cedar and Miles continue to watch the soap opera, in spite of their mother's firm command not to? How did they get over being embarrassed in front of Leo and his brother during the kissing scene? Why is Cedar's mother justified in her attempt to keep her kids from watching a soap opera?

5. How does Cedar think about death and reminisce about her father and brother throughout the book? What about the suddenness of death bothers Cedar? Is there anything she says that you can relate to regarding the death of someone close to you? Do you think she is right in her reflections?
6. What emotions rise to the surface on the night that Cedar stays up to catch whoever comes to take Lisette's ring off the windowsill? How does she express the pain she feels from the loss of her dad and brother? Do you agree that the night, the wind, the trees and the stars know how lonely and pain-filled she is? Explain your answer. As Christians, how can we process our pain differently?
7. How does Cedar's grief cause her to act more unusual? Is Cedar's grief a legitimate reason for her to lie and steal? Why or why not? Why is it still important to follow the rules, no matter how you feel?

## The Sun Is Also a Star



This romance book by Nicola Yoon is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Penguin Random

House. *The Sun Is Also a Star* is written for kids ages 15 and up.

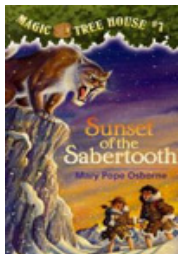
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Why does Daniel feel that the train taking him to get a haircut and ultimately to the interview is rushing him from the joy of childhood into the miserable predictability of adulthood? How do you feel about the transition from childhood to adulthood? Have you ever felt that you are being forced into adulthood? What was the situation?
2. Why does Daniel feel that he would give anything to really want the life his parents want for him? Do your dreams for your life differ from our dreams for you? If yes, how so? What life do you want for yourself? How can you prepare to achieve your dreams?
3. Why does Natasha feel ashamed that Rob cheated on her? Have you or anyone you know ever felt shame over other people's actions or mistreatment? What was the situation? How might you or they find closure?
4. Why does Daniel feel that he and his father are on opposite sides of soundproof glass, that they can see each other but they can't hear each other? Have you ever felt that we see you but don't truly hear you? How can we better work together to hear each other, to improve our communication?
5. How does Daniel's version of god differ from what the Bible says is the true nature of God? Which do you believe? Explain.

- Why doesn't Natasha believe in God? Is it possible to believe in both science and God? How does science reinforce God? Why do you think that some people can't see how science and God work together well?

## Sunset of the Sabertooth



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the seventh in “Magic Tree House” series and is published by Random House. *Sunset of the Sabertooth* 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).

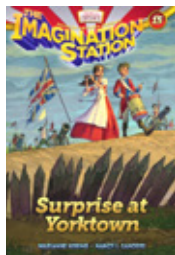
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Which animal is larger, the sabertooth tiger or the woolly mammoth?
- Which is more dangerous? Can you think of other examples of small animals that could be more dangerous than larger ones? According to the Bible, who created all animals? Are you surprised to learn that being bigger doesn't always mean being more fierce? Is the same thing true about people? According to the Bible, who created all human beings?
- How do Annie and Jack know that they are in a bear cave? How do they know when they are in the cave of a Cro-Magnon family? According to the Bible, how did God create animals, such as bears, and people differently?

If Jack and Annie came to your house, what would they see? What would they learn about your family from looking at your belongings?

- What does Annie name the woolly mammoth? How does she decide on that name? If you have a pet, how did you decide what it should be called? Do you know how your parents decided what to name you? Do you like your name? Why or why not? In the Bible, God calls us His children. Why is that name so valuable to Christians?

## Surprise at Yorktown



This historical, adventure Christian book is 15th in “The Imagination Station” series by Marianne Hering and Nancy I. Sanders and is a

Focus on the Family book published in association with Tyndale House Publishers Inc. *Surprise at Yorktown* 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:

- What do Patrick and Beth better understand by being on the British side of the American Revolution? What do you better understand about this war?
- What happens when Patrick and Beth pray for God to keep the British from escaping? How is this an answer to their prayer? What is something you have

prayed about? How did God answer your prayer?

- What do the cousins first think about Armistead? What do they later learn about his role in the American Revolution? Tell about a time when you misjudged someone.
- How does Armistead reconcile being a free black man and fighting for the Americans, some of whom keep slaves? Do you agree or disagree with how he thought? Explain.
- What does Washington take time to do? Why is it important to thank God for what He does for you? What can you thank Him for today?
- Why don't Patrick and Beth trust General Cornwallis or his soldiers? Was that smart to do? Explain. Why don't they trust Armistead? Whom do you trust? What helped you trust this person? How do you know you can trust God?

## Surprise Endings



This contemporary Christian book is the fourth in the “Christy Miller” series by Robin Jones Gunn and is published by Bethany House Publishers, a division of the Baker Publishing Group. *Surprise Endings* 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. What is Rick trying to do by encouraging Christy to try out for the cheerleading squad? Does she enjoy being controlled by Rick? After Christy becomes a cheerleader, Rick tells her that she is becoming more like his type of girl and that he can wait until she's got it all together. What does Christy say in response? What Scripture passage does she refer to?
2. Why does Christy get upset with Todd? As a result, what does she do with the bracelet Todd gave her? What does she realize later when Todd shows her a picture from the prom?
3. Why does Renee pick on Christy? Why does Teri stand up to Renee? Have you or a friend ever been picked on? How did you stand up for each other?
4. Why is Christy upset when her parents do not allow her to go to the prom? Why should Christy trust her parents' decision? Who are Christy's parents looking out for? Who is Christy looking out for? In the end, was Christy right, or did her parents make the right decision?

## Surprises According to Humphrey



This contemporary adventure book by Betty G. Birney is the fourth book in the "Humphrey" series and is published by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin Books. This book is written for kids ages 7 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 makes Mrs. Brisbane special to her class? What makes Mrs. Brisbane special to her school? What does the school do to show its appreciation to Mrs. Brisbane? Who is someone in your life who is special but overlooked? How can you show this person that you appreciate him or her?
2. What are some of the bad habits that children in Humphrey's classroom have? By what names does Humphrey know each of these children? If you were in his classroom, what would be your nickname? What could you do to working on overcoming a bad habit you have?
3. Which friends fight in this book? How does their fight end? Think about a time that you and a friend had a fight. What was your argument about? How was your argument resolved? What did you learn from it?

## The Sweetest Thing



This Southern, historical novel by Elizabeth Musser is published by Bethany House and written for ages 17 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. What two things does Dobbs' mother say form the crux of human relationships? Why must

love and forgiveness go hand in hand? What happens if they don't?

2. Why is the saying "the eye is the window to the soul" so special to Perri? Through what "eye" does she learn to see God's world more clearly? How is she changed as she learns more about photography? Where do you see God's work and power most clearly?

## The Sword in the Tree



This historical, adventure book by Robert Clyde Bulla is published by Harper Trophy, a registered trademark of HarperCollins Publishers,

HarperCollins Children's Books division; this edition was published in 2000. *The Sword in the Tree* is written for 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. Why does Lord Weldon trust Lionel? Which of Lionel's behaviors make Shan and his mother uncomfortable? How does Lord Weldon's blind trust put his family in danger? How do you know who to trust? What are some clues you look for in people, as you seek to determine their level of honesty?
2. Why can't Shan just walk back into his home with Sir Gareth and reclaim it? How does he prove he's the rightful heir of the property? When have you had to prove you were telling the

truth about something? What happened?

3. What does King Arthur see in Shan that makes him feel the boy has potential for knighthood? What kinds of manners and behaviors do we and your teachers urge you to adopt? Why is it important to do things like show courage, stand tall, respect others and look people in the eye when you speak to them?
4. Why is Shan's father's sword so important to him? Which items belonging to your parents or loved ones are especially meaningful to you, and why?
5. Which "minor characters" helps Shan achieve his goal of escaping from Lionel and reclaiming his home? Who are some people who have played small but important roles in your life, such as a teacher, coach or pastor? In what ways did these people help you grow as a person?

## The Sword of Shannara



This fantasy, adventure, coming of age novel by Terry Brooks is published by Dey Rey Books, a division of Random House

Publishing Group and written for ages 14 and up.

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

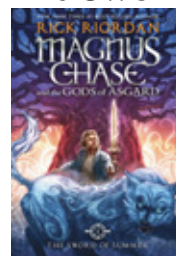
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. After the First War of the Races, why does humankind embrace isolationism? How do Shea's and

Allanon's opinions of isolationism differ? How do you discern the difference between isolationism, wise caution and fearfulness when making friends?

2. Why does Flick dislike Menion Leah even though Shea trusts him? How does Menion feel about Flick? Have you ever had an acquaintance or friend-of-a-friend who you disliked or who disliked you? What seemed to be the problem? In the future, how can you work to be more accepting and discerning of others?
3. What is Shea's first impression of the rock troll Keltset? How does Panamon react to Shea's ignorant questions about rock trolls? Have you even been the target of prejudice or stereotypes? What have other people assumed to be true about you? Was it? Explain.
4. What events cause Balinor to leave Callahorn to his brother, Palance? Why does Hendel feel that Balinor's soft heart toward his younger brother could lead to negative consequences? Tell about a time when you gave someone a second chance. Tell about a time when you didn't.
5. When Shea finally holds the Sword of Shannara, what affect does it have on him? What does he learn about himself? Why is it hard for people to examine themselves directly and confront their own flaws? How would you feel if you had to see a record of all the greed, jealousy, pride and other negative emotions you have indulged in? Even if a person can hide their own wrong actions and sinful thoughts from their own self, can those actions and thoughts ever be hidden from God? How is God's mercy demonstrated through the fact that He knows you completely but still loves you completely?

## The Sword of Summer



This fantasy, adventure, humor novel by Rick Riordan is published by Disney Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book

Group and written for 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. Why does Magnus feel a new sense of grief over his mother's death when he reaches Valhalla? Why does loss take so long to process? How can you help someone who is suffering a significant loss in his or her life? If you are personally grieving a loss, to whom can you go for help and support?
2. What is homelessness like, from Magnus' perspective? How do people treat him? How should Christians respond to the homeless in their communities? What can you personally do for someone who is homeless or struggling financially?
3. Why does Sam say someone can only die a hero if his sacrifice is unplanned? Is someone a hero if he commits suicide for a cause he believes in? Explain your answer. What are some recent real-life examples of people committing suicide to make a statement about their beliefs? What does the Bible say about the value of human life?
4. How does Frey lose his sword? When has your quest to fulfill

your personal desires caused you to lose something or someone precious to you? What does the Bible say about chasing after your own personal fulfillment on earth?

5. Why did Loki kill Balder? In what way does Loki compare his behavior to Magnus' treatment of the people he (Magnus) pick-pocketed in life? When have you mistreated individuals because you made judgments about their motives or envied what they had? How does God want you to treat people you don't necessarily like or respect? What does the Bible say about jealousy?
6. What do you think of Sam's comment about people like Odin and Hearth having to become empty cups so they can be filled with magic? Where do we see a similar idea in Christianity? How is the Christian idea of lordship and the filling of the Holy Spirit different from what happened in this story? Which characters in the Bible had the Holy Spirit fill them? What does it mean to have His Spirit guide you?
7. What are the gods in this story like? What kind of relationships do they have with their children? How are characters like Magnus and his friends impacted by the behavior of and decisions made by their parents? Why is it so important for Sam, Magnus, Blitz and Hearth to come together as friends and family? How is the God of the Bible different from the mythical rulers in this story?

## Swipe



This science fiction book by Evan Angler is the first in the "Swipe" series published by Tommy Nelson, a registered trademark of Thomas Nelson Inc.

*Swipe* is written for kids ages 7 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 does the Bible say about obeying the laws of the land? How do you feel about Logan's decision to rebel against the government? Was it the right decision? Explain your answer. Are there any circumstances in which you would oppose or break the law? If so, what would they be?
2. Where is a body marking—the Mark people receive in this story—mentioned in the Bible? Who had the mark in the Bible, and what did it mean?
3. In what ways might our future be like Logan's world? In what ways do you think it will be different?

## The Sword Thief



This mystery book by Peter Lerangis is the third book in "The 39 Clues" series and is published by Scholastic, Inc. *The Sword Thief* 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. How does Dan feel when he thinks Alistair has died? Why has Dan vowed never to get close to adults? Who did Alistair lose when he was a child, and why was the person killed? Have you ever lost anyone who was special to you? How did you feel? How did you express your grief?
2. Have you ever felt, as Dan and Amy did, that other people have a stronger support system than you? Did it seem like they had a bigger or closer family, or more friends than you? Whose family are you always a part of, even when you feel alone?
3. Why do you think Nellie has so many tattoos and piercings? Why does Natalie think Nellie will regret them once she gets older and gets a job? How do people today react when they see someone with a lot of tattoos and piercings?
4. How does Irina Spasky feel about teamwork? What does she believe will tear apart any teams that do form? Have you ever been part of a team or group where jealousy, greed or betrayal drove a wedge between the members? What happened? What are some of the benefits of teamwork?
5. What did you learn about Japanese history or culture from this story?
6. What does Alistair mean when he tells Dan and Amy that trust is difficult to build but easy to break? What does he say will break the chain of mistrust between two people? Who do

you have difficulty trusting? How can you know whom to trust? What does the Bible say about God's trustworthiness?

7. Why is winning the contest so important to Eisenhower Holt? How does he feel his family is viewed now? Have you ever felt like you had something to prove or accomplish? What happened?
8. How does Ian mistreat Amy? Have you ever liked someone who ended up being mean to you? How did it feel? How does Amy feel?
9. What does Ian steal from his parents, and how does he justify the theft? What does Dan steal from the hotel, and why does he think he needs it? What does the Bible say about stealing? Is it ever OK to steal? Explain your answer.
10. What are some things Dan and Amy lie about in their search for the 39 clues? Are their lies justified? Explain your answer. What does the Bible say about lying?
11. Are you familiar with the video games Dan likes to play? What do you know about them? Are they violent? Do you think violent video games, movies and TV shows are dangerous? Why or why not? On what sort of things does God want us to focus our thoughts?

Inc., a division of Lerner Publishing Group. *Sybil Ludington's Midnight Ride* is 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 is it so dangerous for Sybil to ride alone in the woods? If you were Sybil, what would be scariest to you? What difficulties does she encounter? How does she manage them?
2. Why does Sybil cry when her ride was finally over? How do you handle your emotions when you have to get a job done? When do you allow yourself to feel your emotions?
3. How did Sybil's bravery change the course of American history? What other young people do you know or have you read about that have changed their world for the better? What can you do to make your country a better place to live?

## Sybil Ludington's Midnight Ride



This historical fiction by Marsha Amstel, with illustrations by Ellen Beier, is part of the "On My Own History" series published by Carolrhoda Books