

Book Review Discussion Questions



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Provided by *Focus on the Family* magazine

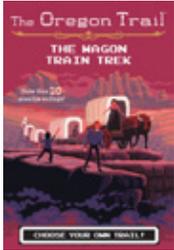
Table of Contents

The Wagon Train Trek	3	Winter	22
Waiting for Anya	3	The Winter Room	22
Waiting for Normal	4	Winter Sky	23
Walk the World's Rim	4	Wintergirls	23
Walk Two Moons	5	Wish	23
The Walled City	5	The Wishsong of Shannara	24
Wanderville	5	The Wishing Spell	24
War and Peace	6	The Witch of Blackbird Pond	25
War Horse	6	The Witches	25
The War that Saved my Life	7	The Witness for the Prosecution	26
The War With Grandpa.	7	The Wizard of Earthsea	26
Watch the Skies: "Daniel X" Series	8	The Wizard of Oz	27
Watch Wolf	8	Wolf Hollow	27
The Water Castle	8	The Wolves of Willoughby Chase	28
Water Walker	9	Woodsong	28
Watership Down	9	Wonder	28
The Watsons Go to Birmingham	10	Wonderstruck	29
We All Get a Clue	10	Words Unspoken	29
We Froze the First Man.	11	The World According to Humphrey	30
We Have Always Lived in the Castle	11	Worst Enemies/Best Friends	30
We Were Liars	11	A Wrinkle in Time	31
The Wednesday Wars	12		
The Wee Free Men	12		
The Well	12		
We'll Always Have Summer	13		
The Well of Ascension	13		
What Happened to Goodbye	14		
What Janie Found	14		
What Not to Do If You Turn Invisible	15		
What the Night Sings	15		
Whatever Happened to Janie?	15		
The Wheel on the School	16		
When I Was Joe	16		
When the Lights Go Out	16		
When the Sea Turned to Silver	17		
When You Reach Me	17		
When Zachary Beaver Came to Town	17		
Where'd You Go, Bernadette?	18		
Where the Mountain Meets the Moon	18		
Where the Red Fern Grows	19		
The Whipping Boy	19		
A Whisper and a Wish	20		
The White Zone	20		
"Who Could That Be at This Hour?"	20		
Wicked Lovely	21		
The Wild Robot	21		
The Willoughbys	21		

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

DISCUSSION TOPICS

The Wagon Train Trek



This adventure book by Jesse Wiley is part of the Oregon Trail series published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt IP Unlimited Company. *The*

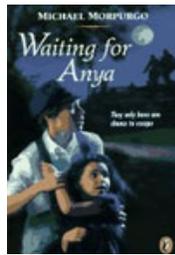
Wagon Train Trek is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. What usually happens in the story when your character takes advice from parents or wise adults? Talk about a time in real life when you consulted me or a trusted adult friend and got valuable input.
2. What usually happens in the story when your character makes rash choices? When have you made a thoughtless decision that caused you problems?
3. When has your life felt a little like this book, filled with one tough choice after another? Where can you turn when you need wisdom and advice? What does God promise to do for you during hard times?
4. How does the doctor respond when people need medical help along the trail? When have you known people who sacrificed safety, health or their own agenda to help someone in need?
5. How do you think you would have felt about making this journey as a real pioneer in the 1800s? What parts would have been scariest to you? What would have been most exciting? When have you felt God's protection during struggles and times of change?

Waiting for Anya



This historical coming-of-age book by Michael Morpurgo is published by Puffin Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers group, a division of

Penguin Books Inc. *Waiting for Anya* is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. Early in the story, Benjamin tries to comfort Jo, encouraging him not to take his (Jo's) role in the bear hunt to heart. What was Jo's part? Should he have warned the village? What was the mother bear's part? Should she have protected her cub? Who is to blame for what happened to her? How was Benjamin and Jo's meeting a good thing that came out of this hunt? How does the explanation help Jo?
2. Some of the villagers (including Jo's grandfather and father) use the word Boche pretty regularly to describe the Germans. It's not a kind word, and was meant to insult the Germans. Why do you think some of the villagers felt it was OK to use that word? Do you think God would agree with them?
3. Who enforced Nazi law? How do the German soldiers take Benjamin and the little girl away? What happens to Benjamin and the girl? In Nazi trials after the war, German soldiers often defended their actions by saying they were just doing their jobs — what they were ordered to do. How might Jo disagree with that defense? How does he not do what he's told to do so he can help others?
4. What biblical direction might apply to the decision that Jo makes to help Jewish refugees? What happens when godly people come to different conclusions about the same issue? What are some complex situations in the world (or your own life) today? What do you think is the best response and why? What is the best way to respond to people who see the situation differently?
5. At what point in the story are things at their absolute worst between Jo and his father? What specific things contribute to that event (e.g., secrets/lying, combat experience, drunkenness, not knowing all the facts)? What does Jo's grandfather do to help resolve the situation? What do Jo's father and Jo do?

- When Benjamin and the little girl are being led away, they both thank Jo — as if they appreciate his bringing the horse. Are they speaking to more people than just Jo? Are they speaking about more than the horse? If so, what are they really trying to say?

Waiting for Normal



This contemporary, legal, drama book by Leslie Connor is published by HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers.

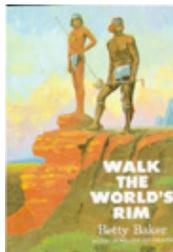
Waiting for Normal is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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

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

- Why doesn't Addie tell anyone that Mommers leaves her alone for long lengths of time? Is there anything you are challenged by at home or at school? Is there anything that you feel you have to keep to yourself? Do you know that you can ask me for help if things ever feel too difficult?
- Why does Dwight ask Addie to keep the bank card a secret from Mommers? Is Mommers careful with money? How have I taught you to use and care for the money you earn? How can money be a blessing? How can it be a curse?
- Why does Addie feel the flute she is using was stolen? Did she mean to steal it? Have you ever done something that you're not sure was right or wrong? Explain. When you feel that way, who can you talk to about the situation so you can figure out the truth?
- Can Soula change Mommers' behavior? Can Addie cure Soula's cancer? What keeps each from being able to solve these problems? What world problems do you feel helpless to solve? What are some areas of our family life that you wish you had the power to change or cure?
- How do Soula and Addie encourage and help each other? How do each show the other the same love that Christ says we should our neighbors? Do you know of anyone at school who could use your encouragement? Do you know anyone who might need your help? What might you do?
- What does Addie wish for when things are scary or uncomfortable? What would she like to change? What do you wish were different in our home?
- How is a wish different than a prayer? How might knowing that God was near have helped Addie through hard times? How might praying to Him have helped her? What kinds of things do you pray about? What would you like us to pray about right now?

Walk the World's Rim



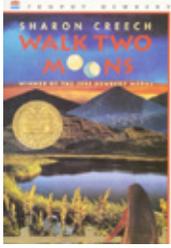
This historical adventure, drama book by Betty Baker is published by Harper and Row Publishers. *Walk the World's Rim* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

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

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

- Why does Chakoh initially have such strong negative views of slaves? How does he fail to recognize that Esteban *is* a slave? When have you failed to recognize the truth about something or someone because you didn't want to believe it?
- How do Chakoh's impressions of slaves change through the course of the story? Why does he begin to view Esteban differently? What sorts of things do brave and honorable people say and do? Who are some brave and honorable people in your life?
- Why does Chakoh almost decide to stay in Mexico? In what ways does Chakoh become a slave to his own desires? When have you made choices you knew were wrong because you were only thinking of your own personal happiness and satisfaction? What happened?
- What methods do the Spanish use to share their faith in this story? What happens to those who do not believe as the Spaniards do? What can you learn from them about how (or how *not*) to share your faith with others?
- Why does Esteban keep his word, even though it costs him his freedom and life? Why is it important for you to keep your word? What does the Bible say about keeping promises?

Walk Two Moons



This coming of age, contemporary drama book by Sharon Creech is published by HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins

Publishers. *Walk Two Moons* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

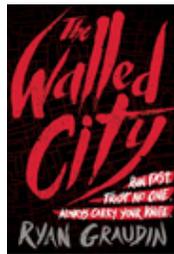
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What does the title of the book mean? How do you think walking "in someone else's shoes" could help you understand them better? Are there people you have argued with, or perhaps you feel they have hurt you? What might be their point of view? Have you forgiven them? How will forgiving them help you?
2. Throughout the book, Sal prays to trees because it is easier than praying to God. Why do you think she feels that way? Can trees answer prayers? Do you find it easy to pray to God? If not, talk about why you feel that way. Let's pray right now. What would you like us to pray about?
3. What does Phoebe think Mrs. Cadaver is? How is being thought of as a murderer hurtful to Mrs. Cadaver? Why does this information pain Mr. Birkway? Instead of making up stories about her, how could Phoebe have learned more about Mrs. Cadaver? Why is it important not to gossip about other people, even if you think, like Phoebe did, that she is right?

What things could you do to help you find the truth? What could you do to keep from gossiping about what you suspect is true?

4. Early on in the story, what does Sal's father describe her as? How is Sal like someone who leans on broken reeds? Can broken reeds support you when you fall? What do you think he means by this? Who helps you when you are sad or angry? Look for a Bible verse to memorize that will help you remember to call out to God for help.
5. What did Sal think happened to her mother in the beginning of the story? Why did she believe this? What does the reader learn about Sal's mother by the end of the story? What helps Sal admit that her mother had died and didn't just leave the family? Are there any truths that you've tried to ignore? What is sometimes hard about admitting the truth?

The Walled City



This historical drama book by Ryan Graudin is published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. *The*

Walled City is written for kids ages 15 and up.

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

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

1. How does Jin disguise herself? Why is this a smart choice? How is her sister, Mei Yee, treated?

How does our modern society similarly treat men and women? In what ways does our society treat men and women differently than they are treated in this book? Which society would you rather live in? Explain.

2. Why does Dai refuse to help a younger boy from getting beat by Kuen? What reasons does he give for his choice? What would you have done in his place? Explain why.
3. Why does Dai believe he is a bad person? What evidence can you see that disputes or demonstrates this? Think about something you've done that you were not proud of doing. How did you make amends for your behavior? When did you ask Jesus for forgiveness?
4. If you have not already done so, make sure to read the author's note at the end of the book. How did learning that a *Walled City* really existed affect your view of the book? After looking at the pictures, do you think you could have lived there? Did it help you to understand why the characters make the choices they do?

Wanderville



This historical fiction novel by Wendy McClure is the first in the "Wanderville" series published by Razorbill, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group, an

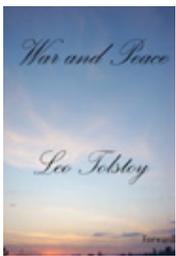
imprint of Penguin Group LLC (a Penguin Random House Company). *Wanderville* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. How do the kids in this story view adults? What kinds of experiences have they had with grown-ups that make them feel this way? What are some things that frustrate you about the grown-ups in your life? What are the good things about having adults, such as parents, relatives and teachers, in your life?
2. How do the main characters get food and supplies? How do you feel about the kids' lying and stealing? What would you have done in their place?
3. Would you want to be a citizen of Wanderville? Why or why not?

War and Peace



This historical drama by Leo Tolstoy was originally published by M.N. Katkov; now available in various forms by many different publishers

including—Oxford University Press; Signet; and Barnes & Noble. The first part of the novel was originally written in serial form and published between 1865 and 1867. *War and Peace* is written for adults, but is required reading for some high school curricula.

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

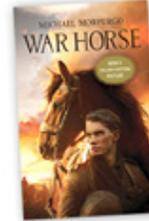
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How would you characterize Princess Mary's faith? Early in

the novel, she tells her brother Andrew that to understand someone is to forgive them. What do you think she means by that? What does the Bible teach about forgiveness? How do you think God could help you to forgive someone who hurt you? How would doing this help you know the person better?

2. After his first battle, how does Nicholas describe it? Why do you think he elaborates on the event? The book's narrator says that young people are rarely capable of telling the truth. What makes him say this? How is this true of Nicholas? When might you be tempted to embellish a story? How can you keep from being dishonest?
3. Throughout the book, how do various characters look up to Tsar Alexander and Napoleon? Are they gods or savior figures? What is the difference between admiring a person as a role model and treating the person as an idol? Is there someone you see as a role model in your life? What qualities does this person have that you would like to emulate? How can you keep from crossing the line into idolatry?
4. After Andrew's death, Natasha sinks into depression. How does her brother's death actually help to bring her out of it? Have you ever been depressed? Why might helping someone else with his or her problem also help you feel better?
5. Pierre undergoes a massive change of character and philosophy throughout the novel. Does he initially believe in God? What happens to change him into a man of faith? Think about the trials you have had in your own life. How has God used them to help you to grow in faith?

War Horse



This historical fiction/animal story by Michael Morpurgo is published by Scholastic, Inc., and written for kids ages 8 to 12. Although this book is not

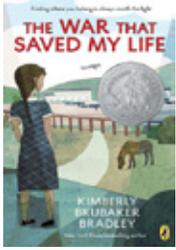
part of a series, the author wrote a prequel to *War Horse* (published in 1982) called *Farm Boy* (published 1997).

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

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

1. Gideon Cahill and Damien Describe Albert's relationship with his parents. In what ways is it unhealthy? What role does Father's alcoholism play in the family? How does life change after Albert's father stops drinking?
2. How does Joey inadvertently cause a moment of peace between German and English forces? What point is the author making in this scene about how people should handle their differences? Is war always wrong, or can it be a necessary evil? Explain your answer.
3. Why does Emilie's grandfather sell Joey to Albert after paying a large sum for the horse? How can we honor friends or loved ones we've lost so that their memory will live on?

The War that Saved my Life



This historical, adventure story by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, The Penguin

Group and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Describe Ada and Jamie's walk to join the other children who are leaving the city. How does Ada motivate herself to continue walking? What is one big task or challenge that you would like to overcome or complete? How can you take Ada's advice to accomplish it?
2. How do host families choose the evacuated children? Why aren't Jamie and Ada chosen? Tell about a time when you weren't chosen for something. How did it make you feel? How can you help others to feel chosen or included?
3. What does Susan tell Ada and Jamie about herself? Is she mean to the children? Explain. How is their mother mean to them? What is the difference between the two women (how are their words and actions different)? How can you show others that you care about them?
4. How would Ada's life have been different if she had never gone to the country with Susan? What does she learn about herself?

What are some activities that have changed your life? What have these activities taught you about your life?

5. What do Ada's mother and neighbors say about her? Are their words true? What are some of Ada's positive character traits? Why is it important to not let other people define you? Where should your sense of worth and value come from?
6. Why does Mam return for the children? Why does Susan tell Ada that she doesn't have to go with her mom? Why does Ada leave? Have you ever felt the need to take care of or protect someone else? Explain. Was that person your responsibility? How did the situation turn out?
7. How do you know that Ada and Jamie are starting to heal while living with Susan? How does Susan change? Have you ever helped someone else and found that in doing so, you were happier, or your life was better? Explain.?

The War With Grandpa

•Robert Kimmel Smith•



Penguin Random House. *The War With Grandpa* is written for kids ages 9 to 13.

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

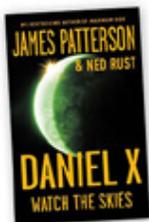
This humor, day-in-the-life book by Robert Kimmel Smith is published by Dell, Yearling and Delacorte, which are imprints of

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

1. What is the change that takes place in Peter's home? What must he sacrifice for his grandpa to be able to stay with the family? Why doesn't Peter want his grandpa to stay in his room? Have you ever felt outraged by something, but no one seemed to notice? What did you do?
2. Did the war change Peter's feelings toward his grandpa? Did the war change his grandpa's feelings toward Peter? How could they be at war but still care deeply for each other? Have you ever had a misunderstanding with someone you still liked or loved? How confusing were your feelings during that time?
3. What does the war help Peter do? How might he have been able to vent without having a war? What would you have done in his place?
4. What does the war help Grandpa Jack do? In what way does it help him re-engage with life? How does the war give Peter and Grandpa Jack an honest relationship? How does honesty, spoken in love, help people grow in their relationships? How can we be more honest with each other?
5. How is Peter's family like our family? How is it different from our family? What would be the advantages of being in Peter's family? What are the advantages of being in our family?
6. How does Peter feel about Grandpa Jack? How do the other members in Peter's family feel about Grandpa Jack? How do you feel about your grandparents? How do you see our relationship with your grandparents? What can we do to help you

get to know your grandparents even better?

Watch the Skies: “Daniel X” Series



This science fiction book by James Patterson and Ned Rust is the second book in the “Daniel X” series and is published by Little, Brown and

Company, a division of the Hachette Book Group. *Daniel X: Watch the Skies* is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. The landlord of the house Daniel rents assumes he can't afford to pay the rent because he looks poor. When has someone unfairly assumed something about you? What was the judgment based on? How did it make you feel? Discuss a time when you or someone you know judged someone else's worth based on appearance.
2. Daniel believes that people are too obsessed with television, phones, video games and computers. Do you know someone who is too plugged into their electronic devices? If you had no access to electronics, what would you spend more of your time doing?
3. Daniel's imagination is his greatest weapon. What happens when he is rattled or angry? What kind of decisions do you make when you are angry? How do those

decisions compare with decisions you make when you are calm? When you are angry, what is the best way for you to calm down before making a decision?

4. Daniel is annoyed when his mother gives him some repetitive advice. He considers dematerializing her or saying something sarcastic to her, but chooses to be respectful instead. Have you ever felt annoyed by our advice? What was the situation? How did the advice prove to be useful to you?
5. No. 5 bullies his henchmen. What experiences have you had with bullying? What was the situation? How was it resolved?

Watch Wolf



This adventure, fantasy book by Kathryn Lasky is the third book in the “Wolves of the Beyond” series and is published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of

Scholastic Inc. *Watch Wolf* is written for kids 8 to 14.

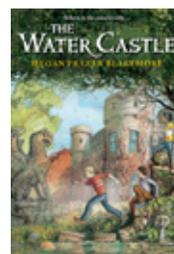
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. How does the MacHeath clan treat she-wolves? When have you heard about women being mistreated because of their gender, either in history or in our world today? How did Jesus treat women? Where do you find this in the Bible? From His example, how should women be treated?

2. Why does Arthur fly into the restricted area around the Sacred Volcanoes? When have you done something forbidden because you wanted to prove yourself to others? Did you get caught? What lesson did you learn?
3. Though the MacHeaths never give birth to *malcadh* pups, from what “defect” does the clan suffer? How does this defect affect the MacHeath clan? How does it affect other clans?
4. What does the MacNamara chief mean when she says it is better to fight for something than live for nothing? In your life, what people or ideas are worth fighting for? Explain.
5. Which character would you consider the bravest? How did this character become brave? How is this similar to how people show bravery? Is anyone born brave, or is courage always a choice? Explain. What do you fear? What are some ways you can develop bravery to fight against these fears? How does God help us when we're afraid?

The Water Castle



This science fiction, fantasy by Megan Frazer Blakemore is published by Walker Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Inc.

The Water Castle is written for kids 10 to 14.

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

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

1. How does Dad's condition affect each of the children? When have you or someone you know had a loved one with a serious injury or illness? What was it like for you or your friend? In what ways did you find yourself or your friend acting different than before?
2. Why do you think Ephriam, his dad and Will get well? Does the water have some kind of power? If so, is it scientific or magical? Explain your answer.
3. Why is it unexpected for Will, Ephriam and Mallory to become friends? What might have happened if their ancestors had all worked together? When have you seen people refuse to work together because of dislikes or grudges?
4. Why is Mallory upset when her teacher makes her do a report on Matthew Henson? Have you ever had someone make wrong assumptions about you because of your color, age or religion? What happened, and how did it make you feel? How can you show respect to others who are different from you?
5. Orlando and other characters say that nothing is impossible. Why do they believe that? For what reason do many Christians believe nothing is impossible? Is anything impossible for God?
6. What is perseverance? Which characters demonstrate this quality in the story? What is the result of their willingness to keep working, even though things are hard or frustrating? What do the apostle Paul and others in the Bible mean when they urge Christians to persevere? When is it difficult to be strong in your faith or

decisions? How can you push through that difficulty?

Water Walker



This suspense/thriller by Ted Dekker is the second book written as part of the "Outlaw Chronicles" series published by Worthy Publishing,

a division of Worthy Media Inc. *Water Walker* is written for adults but is also read by many teens.

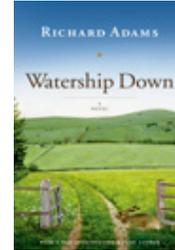
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. How is Eden finally able to overcome the pain of her circumstances and find freedom? When have you felt overwhelmed with anger or fear because someone hurt you, emotionally or physically? Were you able to forgive that person? If so, how did it feel, and how did it change you? If not, what is holding you back from forgiving?
2. How does Kathryn's belief that a person reaps what he sows impact her behavior and emotions? What does she do to try and wipe out her own sins and the sins of generations before her? What does the Bible say about how we can gain forgiveness from sin? How does the Bible's views differ from Kathryn's views? What is required of you if you want to be pure before God?
3. Who do Kathryn and Olivia most need to forgive? When have you struggled to forgive yourself?

Why is it important for you to let go of guilt and self-hatred? How is forgiveness of others a choice and not an emotion?

Watership Down



This adventure, fantasy, drama book by Richard Adams was originally published by Rex Collings Ltd. The novel is now published by Scribner

Publishing, a division of Simon & Schuster. *Watership Down* is written for kids ages 10 years and up.

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

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

1. Although Bigwig is the bigger, stronger rabbit, it is Hazel who becomes the warren's chief rabbit. Why do you think that is? What qualities does Hazel possess that make him a good leader of rabbits? What qualities do you think make an individual a good leader of people? Do you relate yourself more to Bigwig or Hazel? Why?
2. The rabbits spend a lot of time telling stories to each other. What things do they learn from those stories? Can you think of a way God uses stories to help us learn? Why do you think God chose to use parables to illustrate what the kingdom of God is like? Do you find the parables helpful or confusing? Is there something about God you wished He would have explained in a story? How could you use a story from your own life to help someone understand your faith?

3. What is Fiver's role in the story? Why might the Chief Rabbit have been more willing to believe Fiver's prophecy if he were a bigger or older rabbit? Think about a time when you were ignored or belittled because of your age or size. What happened? How did it make you feel? If you have younger siblings, what are some ways you can help them, just like Hazel tried to help Fiver?
4. At first the other rabbits cannot understand why Hazel would help a mouse. What good things come from that friendship? What do you look for when making friends? Do you ever seek out people who are different than you, who might be considered "weaker" in some way? What are some ways that you can reach out to those who may be considered outsiders? What might you learn from them? How might you help each other?

The Watsons Go to Birmingham



This historical fiction book by Christopher Paul Curtis is published by Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, a division of the Bantam

Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, and is written for kids ages 10 years and up.

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

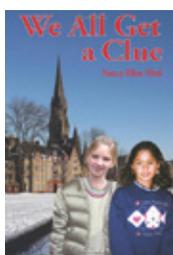
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Byron is a bully at school yet a protector of his brother and sister.

What are the traits of a bully? Are you ever a bully? How do you treat people in our family? How do you act differently at home than in other places?

2. How did Birmingham change the Watsons? What has happened in your life that has changed you? What is one thing that happened that made you treat someone differently? What is one thing that happened that made someone treat you differently?
3. How is Rufus a friend to Kenny? How is Kenny a friend to Rufus? How did they each disappoint each other? Who is one of your good friends? How have you disappointed each other? How did Kenny and Rufus help each other? How have you and your friend helped each other?
4. How do the kids in the book talk differently than the parents? What does God say about the way we should talk? What are our family's rules about the way we speak to friends and each other?
5. Kenny gives his first pair of gloves to his friend, although he lies to his mother to do it. Do you have anything that you could share with someone who has less? Other than giving someone food, clothes or shoes, what other things could you do to help others?

We All Get a Clue



This Christian fiction, mystery by Nancy Ellen Hird is the second book in the "My Edinburgh Files" series and is published by Desert Fires Press. It is

written for kids 8 to 12.

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

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

1. What happens when Elizabeth is serving dessert at the party? Why does Elizabeth's grandmother encourage her not to hide? Tell about a time when you were embarrassed. How did you react to being embarrassed?
2. How does Roopa and Kate's friendship make Elizabeth feel? What is she envious of? Was she replaced? Tell about a time when one of your friends made friends with someone else. Were you envious of the person? Were you replaced by this person? Why is it OK for your friends to be friends with others, too?
3. Why do Elizabeth and Kate initially dislike each other? Have you ever disliked someone and later discovered that you were wrong about him or her? If so, why did your opinion change? Has anyone ever misjudged you? How was that person's opinion changed? What can you do to give others a better first impression?
4. What rule does Elizabeth break when she goes to the manor to help Kate? How could Elizabeth have honored her parents' rules in this situation? Tell about a situation where you were tempted to break the rules. How did you keep from giving in to your temptation?
5. How do Elizabeth's and Roopa's parents respond after the girls help trap the thieves? Why are the kids grounded? What should Elizabeth and her friends have done when they suspected a

break-in? Why is it important to be honest with me and the other adults in your life?

6. How does Elizabeth feel when she goes to tell Lord Blackford about the forgery? What helps her find the courage to do what she needs to do? What are you afraid of? How do you deal with that fear?

We Froze the First Man



This memoir by Robert F. Nelson, as told to Sandra Stanley, is published by Dell Publishing Co. Inc., and is written for adults.

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

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

1. Should people be frozen and revived later? What ethical or moral concerns do the people in Nelson's memoir have? What is your reaction to these concerns?
2. Why is the prospect of death frightening, as it was to Nelson? What makes you most uncomfortable when you think about dying? What does the Bible promise for Christ followers after the body dies?

We Have Always Lived in the Castle



This mystery, horror, historical book by Shirley Jackson is published by Penguin Books; the edition reviewed was published in 2006 and is written for ages

18 and up.

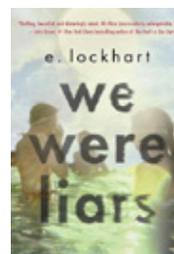
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. According to the author's biography, *Shirley Jackson: A Rather Haunted Life* by Ruth Franklin, Jackson was agoraphobic, dabbled in magic and felt her family was mistreated because her husband was Jewish. How do you see these issues fleshed out in *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*? What are some specific experiences in your life that have shaped your opinions and the stories you tell?
2. How do the villagers treat the Blackwoods in the beginning of the story? When have you seen a group of people or a society turn on someone? How does the collective behavior of the townspeople change over time, and why?
3. Why is Merricat always talking about being on the moon? Why does she try to create magic to keep her world safe? What do you tell yourself when you feel insecure or afraid? In what ways does God promise to guide you through the unknowns in your life?

4. Why is Merricat so happy at the end of the book? Do you think Constance shares her enthusiasm? If you were in their place, what do you think you would be feeling at that point?
5. Why do you think Merricat killed her family? Did you suspect her? Why or why not? How would you respond if you sensed that someone you know might wish to harm himself or others? Who would you tell?

We Were Liars



This contemporary, coming-of-age, mystery book by E. Lockhart is published by Delacorte Press, a division of Random House LLC, and is written for kids 12 and up.

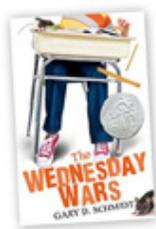
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Why do you think appearance matters so much to the Sinclair family? How might their lives be different if they had been allowed to express their emotions? How do you express your emotions?
2. What part does the mothers' greed play in the tragedy that occurs on Beechwood Island? What could the Liars have done differently to try and change the adults' attitudes? Have you ever acted impulsively when you were angry? If so, what did you do? If you had waited to act, would you have done things differently? Explain.

3. What qualities does Gat possess that draws Cadence to him? Besides appearances, what qualities do you find attractive in a person? Give examples of marriages that you admire. What do you think makes them work well? If Gat had lived, give some reasons why you think his relationship with Cadence would or would not have continued.
4. In what ways does Grandfather show his disapproval of Gat? In what ways do you see people's prejudice being acted out today? How do you keep from treating others differently because of their external appearance?

The Wednesday Wars



This humorous coming-of-age novel by Gary D. Schmidt is published by Clarion Books, an imprint of the Houghton Mifflin Company

and is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. Why is it hard for Holling to be the only Presbyterian in his class? How is his schedule different from those of his Catholic and Jewish friends? When have you felt left out because your beliefs or activities differed from your friends'?
2. How does Mrs. Bigio feel about Mai Thi at first, and why? How does their relationship change over time? When have you developed a friendship with someone

you initially considered an enemy?

3. What does Holling's sister hope to discover when she goes off to "find herself"? What does it mean to Danny and his family to "become a man"? What or who does Holling's father think he (Holling) should be? How would you define your own journey of self-discovery? What beliefs, dreams or goals guide you as you look toward the future?
4. What are some of Holling's greatest disappointments? What events or circumstances give him hope? What are some of the biggest letdowns and most exciting situations you've experienced this year?
5. What were some things Holling learns from Mrs. Baker? Besides teaching him on Wednesdays, how does she make an impact on his life? Talk about an adult, besides your parents, who has helped you see your life in new ways. How has this person encouraged or inspired you?

The Wee Free Men



This fantasy book by Terry Pratchett is the first "Tiffany Aching" adventure, a younger reader novel in the pantheon of Pratchett's "Discworld" book series.

It was published by Corgi, a division of TransWorld Publishers Ltd. and by HarperTempest, a division of Harper Collins Publishers. This book is written for ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. How does Edmund react to his The Queen questions whether Tiffany truly loves her brother, Wentworth. How does Tiffany view him as a possession? How does she prove she loves him? How can someone love someone else even when she doesn't always like him?
2. Are any of your grandparents still alive? Do you get to see them much? How did Tiffany's grandmother influence Tiffany? How do your grandparents influence you?
3. Tiffany drew much of her courage from common sense and stories she remembered. If you face a big problem, where do you look for help? How might your grandparents' tales help you someday?
4. What are Tiffany's farm chores? What are your chores?
5. Miss Tick warns that others who work hard and educate themselves may beat you in life, even if you trust in yourself and believe in your dreams. How might this be true? What are your dreams? What can you do now to help you realize your dreams someday?

The Well



This historical book by Mildred Taylor is part of the "Logan Family Saga" series and is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin

USA and is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. What lies do the Simms boys tell about the Logans? Why does their word hold more weight than Hammer's and David's word? When has someone told a lie about you to get you in trouble or to save themselves from punishment? What happened? How did that make you feel? Why shouldn't you do that to anyone else?
2. Why is Mama so concerned with her boys being nice to the white folks? Why does Papa urge them to use their heads rather than their fists? Why might you be more powerful using your head than fighting?
3. Why is Ma Rachel so upset when white people come to their property? In what way do her past experiences play into her current behavior? When have you had a bad experience that left you scared to be with certain people or in certain situations?
4. Why are people like the Simms so mean and condescending to the Logans, even after slavery has been abolished and black people are free? When have you had someone act like he or she was better than you? Read Philippians 2:3. How should you treat others?
5. What is Hammer like? What aspect of his personality gets him in the most trouble? When have you gotten angry, or even violent, because you felt something was unfair? In Psalm 73, the author paints a picture of unfairness. What does he conclude? Why is being near God the only

protection against grumbling about unfairness?

6. What impact does the Simms boys' prank with the well have on the whole community? When have you seen one person's bad behavior damage many innocent people's lives? How do you keep yourself from hurting others through your actions?

We'll Always Have Summer



We'll Always Have Summer is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. What does the fraternity lifestyle mean for Jeremiah and his friends? How do Jeremiah's fraternity activities influence his daily choices and affect his relationship with Belly? What groups or clubs do you belong to? What kind of influence does each group or club have on you?
2. What prompts Jeremiah to propose to Belly? How does Belly feel about the circumstances of the proposal? What do you think two people should consider before deciding to marry? (Consider the time they've known each other, the values they share, etc.) Why might

This contemporary romance by Jenny Han is the third book in the "Summer" series and is published by Simon & Schuster. *We'll Always Have*

these areas be important to a relationship?

3. How do Jeremiah's and Belly's financial situations differ? What is Jeremiah's attitude toward ordering expensive menu items when someone else is paying for dinner or using his father's credit card to buy Belly an engagement ring? How can you respectfully discuss your finances with another person? How do you keep yourself from trying to keep up with what your friends are buying, when you know you can't afford the item?
4. Why does Conrad wait so long to tell Belly that he loves her? What is Belly's reaction to hearing that Conrad loves her? How does hiding an important truth complicate relationships? How do you know when you should reveal your feelings and when you should keep silent?

The Well of Ascension



This fantasy by Brandon Sanderson is the second book in the "Mistborn" series and is published by Tor Books, an imprint of Tom Doherty

Associates, LLC, and is written for kids ages 15 and up.

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

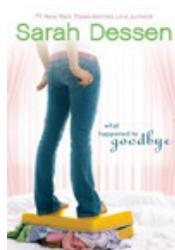
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Vin feel that she isn't what Elend needs for a wife? Have you ever felt like you were not good enough? What was the

situation? What does the Bible say about your true worth? How can we help you know just how valuable you are?

2. Why does Vin dislike OreSeur? Are her feelings justified? Why or why not? Are there people you don't like? Do you think there are people who don't like you? What was the situation? Is it still ongoing? How does the Bible say we are to treat each other?
3. How does Zane manipulate Vin into attacking Cett? Has anyone tried talking you into doing things you knew were wrong? Have you ever tried to do that to someone else? What was the situation, and what was the outcome? How can we help you to discern right from wrong?
4. Why does Vin choose to forgive TenSoon for betraying her? Have you ever been hurt or betrayed by someone you trusted? Have you ever betrayed someone else? Did you forgive them or did they forgive you? What does the Bible say about forgiveness?
5. Why do Vin and Sazed feel uncomfortable with being worshipped? Are they deserving of the people's worship? Why or why not? Who is the only One we are to worship?
6. Why does Sazed lose his faith when Tindwyl dies? Have you ever lost faith when faced with dire circumstances? Do you know anyone who has? What was the situation? What does the Bible say about our faith, even when times are hard? What can you do to strengthen your faith?

What Happened to Goodbye



This contemporary, coming-of-age book by Sarah Dessen is published by Viking, an imprint of the Penguin Group, and written for kids ages 12 years

and up.

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

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

1. What is the significance of Dave and Riley's matching tattoos? Whom do they commemorate? What message is Riley's grandmother trying to convey by letting the kids see her wart?
2. How does Mclean deal with her parents' divorce? Why does she pick a new identity each time she moves? Why is it sometimes hard to show others your true self?
3. Based on how Mclean lives, what does she think is required for someone to develop true and lasting friendships? What do you think is required to develop true and lasting friendships? What do you look for in a potential friend? What do you avoid?
4. Why do Dave's parents ground him? What do you think about his punishment for getting caught with alcohol at a party? How does the involvement of Dave's parents in his life differ from that of Mclean's parents? Who are we more like?

What Janie Found



This mystery coming-of-age novel by Caroline B. Cooney is the fourth in the "Janie" series published by Ember, an imprint of Random House

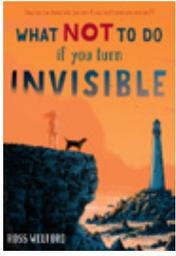
Children's Books. *What Janie Found* is written for kids ages 12 years and up.

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

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

1. What does Janie hope to accomplish by finding and confronting Hannah? Why does she change her mind? What does she hope will be different after that decision?
2. What would you have done in Janie's position? When it is good to confront the past, and when is it better to move forward in other ways?
3. How did Janie feel betrayed by the Johnsons? Would you have felt the same way? Have you ever been betrayed by a friend or family member? How did it make you feel? How did you work through that emotion? How did the relationship end up?

What Not to Do If You Turn Invisible



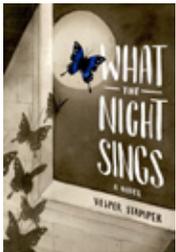
This historical coming-of-age novel by Ross Welford is published by Alfred A. Knopf. This book is written for kids ages 14 to 19.

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

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

1. What does Gerta think about God early in the story? In what ways do her feelings about God and faith change? Name some significant events or people in your life that have helped you grow in faith.

What the Night Sings



This historical coming-of-age novel by Vesper Stamper is published by Alfred A. Knopf. This book is written for kids ages 14 to 19.

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

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

1. What does Gerta think about God early in the story? In what ways do her feelings about God and faith change? Name some significant events or people in

your life that have helped you grow in faith.

2. How is the Jewish faith different from the Christian faith? How is it similar to Christianity? What do traditional Jews believe about Jesus? What do you believe about Jesus?
3. Why does Gerta tell Lev she only wants to marry her music? What does she fear? When have you experienced a significant loss in life that made you afraid to hope or love again? What does Lev mean when he says continuing to live is a *choice*? Have you experienced grief or know someone who has? How have you or how have you seen someone choose to live and walk through these difficult emotions?
4. Why is Lev passionate about printing newspapers and sharing information with other Jews? Why does he write to Gerta even after she has turned down his proposals? Why does he believe written words are powerful? How is the written word different from the spoken word? Which do you feel is more powerful for you? Explain.
5. What are some symbols of hope in this story? How does Lev's faith and Gerta's music give them strength? What gives you strength and hope when you go through dark times? What does trusting in God look like in your world?
6. Why does Lev say being with Gerta is a kind of freedom? Why does Gerta feel pleased that she and Lev are the only ones who will ever see each other's naked, war-scarred bodies? In what ways does Lev and Gerta's relationship embody God's plan for marriage? Would you like to marry

someday? Tell me about the kind of person you'd like to marry?

Whatever Happened to Janie?



This mystery coming-of-age novel by Caroline B. Cooney is the second in the "Janie" series published by Ember, an imprint of Random House Children's

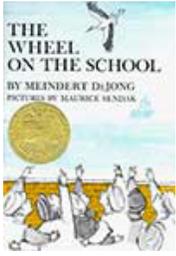
Books. This book is written for kids ages 12 years and up.

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

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

1. How did you feel about the Springs' desire to get revenge on Hannah? How would you have felt if you were in their place? How did the kids resolve their desire for revenge? What does the Bible say about revenge?
2. What role does fear play in the Springs' lives? How is it like another person living in their house? In what ways does fear dictate your decisions and actions?
3. What are Reeve's good and bad qualities as a boyfriend? Is his statement true that love does not involve talking? Explain. How do you define love?

The Wheel on the School



This drama by Meindert DeJong is published by HarperCollins Publishers and is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. When people started treating Janus with dignity, rather than just thinking of him as “the man with no legs,” he became an asset to the community and a friend. Can you think of anyone you’d consider an outcast?
2. What might happen if you and your friends made a real effort to treat him or her with kindness and respect?
3. What do you think of the teacher’s statement “Sometimes when we wonder, we can make things begin to happen?” Is there something you’d like to do or know more about? What are some small steps you could take to follow your dream?
4. This story shows us that when people work together, they can accomplish many things. What might you be able to accomplish if you sought help from the friends and family around you?
5. Many of the townspeople put themselves and the kids in danger for the sake of getting the storks to return to Shora. Do you think they should have been

more careful, or was it worth the risk to accomplish their goal?

When I Was Joe



This thriller by Keren David is published by Frances Lincoln Children’s Books and written for kids ages 12 to 15 years old.

Although not a series, there is a sequel to this book called *Almost True*.

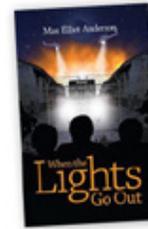
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Why does Claire cut herself? Have you ever known anyone who did this? What do you do when you feel numb and desire to feel things more deeply? What are healthier ways to deal with these emotions? Does Ty do the right thing by keeping Claire’s secret? Explain.
2. Why might Arron, Carl and Ashley bully other kids? Do you know anyone like this at your school? How do you handle people who try to make you do something you don’t want to do?
3. What are Ty’s concerns and problems with religion? What does he believe about his ability to be forgiven for his crimes and sins? What would you tell him about forgiveness if you could talk to him? If Ty were a real person, would God want him to ask for forgiveness? Explain.
4. How does Ty feel when he realizes Nicki might have wanted

to abort him? How are his feelings similar to or different from those he felt when he witnessed a murder? Why did Gran try to keep Nicki from aborting Ty? How does Ty feel about abortion? What does the Bible say about the value of human life?

When the Lights Go Out



This action adventure story by Max Elliot Anderson is published by Comfort Publishing, LLC, and is written for kids ages 13 to 17.

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

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

1. Why does Dave say the Devil is similar to a terrorist? Do you agree with him? Explain your answer.
2. Why is it important to be alert to the possible threats around us? How well do you think the boys handle their situation and deal with the information they discover?
3. What are some skills or lessons the boys learn through their Ranger training? Why is it so important for Rangers to stick together? How could these lessons apply to members of a club, team, youth group or family?

When the Sea Turned to Silver



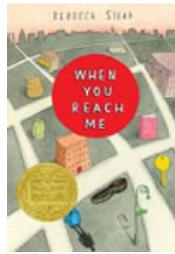
This fantasy, adventure book by Grace Lin is published by Little Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of Hachette Book Group and is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Why does Sal stop talking to Miranda? How does Miranda handle his rejection? How is the relationship between Sal and Miranda like the one between Annemarie and Julia? Have you ever lost a friend or seen your friendship with someone change? What did you do? What are some healthy ways to bounce back after you face friendship problems?
2. Who are some of the people in this book with unique physical or mental characteristics? (Richard has one leg shorter than the other; the laughing man seems crazy; Marcus is a quirky genius.) What makes them “different”? How are they treated or looked on by others? How does God want you to treat those who may have special needs, mental illnesses, or other characteristics? Was Miranda’s mom right to urge her to be cautious about the laughing man and other strangers? Why or why not?

When You Reach Me



This futuristic, coming-of-age book by Rebecca Stead is published by Wendy Lamb Books, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books (a division of

Random House, Inc.), and is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

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

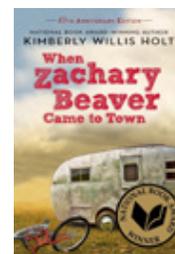
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Sal stop talking to Miranda? How does Miranda handle his rejection? How is the relationship between Sal and Miranda like the one between Annemarie and Julia? Have you ever lost a friend or seen your friendship with someone change? What did you do? What are some healthy ways to bounce back after you face friendship problems?
2. Who are some of the people in this book with unique physical or mental characteristics? (Richard has one leg shorter than the other; the laughing man seems crazy; Marcus is a quirky genius.) What makes them “different”? How are they treated or looked on by others? How does God want you to treat those who may have special needs, mental illnesses, or other characteristics? Was Miranda’s mom right to urge her to be cautious about the laughing man and other strangers? Why or why not?
3. Why does Miranda stop hating Julia? Why does she help Julia rebuild her friendship

with Annemarie? What traits of a good friend does Julia show, despite her brash behavior? Why does Miranda become Alice’s bathroom partner? What suddenly causes her to be more considerate of others’ feelings?

4. Have you read A Wrinkle in Time? If so, what role did it play in this book? Why is it significant to the events in this story?
5. What compels Marcus to return to the past? Why is he willing to risk his own life to save Sal?
6. Why does Miranda’s mom help women who are pregnant and in jail? What does she hope to accomplish? Do you agree with her belief that she can help them become less hard and feel more like people again? Why is her work important? How can you help people who have made mistakes realize that God allows second chances?
7. What clues does the author give about the person writing the notes to Miranda? Did you figure who had written them, or did the ending surprise you?

When Zachary Beaver Came to Town



This coming-of-age, historical book by Kimberly Willis Holt is published by Fish, a division of Macmillan Publishers (2011). It is written for

ages 15 and up.

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

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

1. What is the lie Toby tells about his mother? Why does he feel he needs to lie? What is painful to him about the truth? What are some truths that are painful to you? How might the truth help you in the long run, even when it's painful?
2. Why does Toby help watch Scarlett's little sister? Why does he help Scarlett and Juan get back together? What does this tell you about Toby's character? What have you done recently to put the needs of others above your own needs?
3. Why does Toby write a letter to Wayne, pretending to be Cal? Describe the relationship between Wayne and Toby. Who are some people that you look up to? How can you tell them what they mean to you?
4. How do Toby and his father interact in the beginning of the story? How do they interact by the end of the story? What causes this change? What does his father do to help Toby feel like their mother's absence doesn't have to change the way they live? What would you like to change about the way we communicate?
5. What are some of the challenges Cal, Kate and Toby face in getting Zachary to the lake? Why is getting to the lake important to Zachary? How is Zachary's baptism similar to your baptism (or might be similar to your baptism)? How is baptism an outward sign of an inward commitment in Zachary's case? In your case?

Where'd You Go, Bernadette?



This humor book by Maria Semple is published by Hachette Book Group and is written for kids ages 15 and up.

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

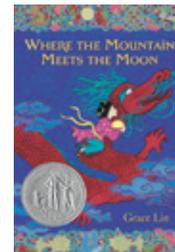
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What was Bee's house before her family moved into it? What are some of the oddities about it? What makes it difficult to fix? What are some odd things about our house? What would you like to see fixed in our house?
2. What does Bernadette do that keeps her from making friends? Do you think she wants to make friends? What does she do with her time instead? What are some behaviors that may keep you from making friends?
3. How is Bernadette's intervention unfair? How do small errors by different people build up into a complicated mess for Bernadette? What had Bernadette done wrong? What had others done wrong? Think about a time when you were wrongly accused of something. What was unfair about that situation? How was it resolved?
4. How is Bernadette's disappearance a misunderstanding? What are some misunderstandings in your world?
5. What is Bee unable to accept? How does Bee continue

searching, even after everyone else has given up on finding Bernadette? What is something you are unable to accept? How do you intend to find the truth about this matter?

6. Do you like Audrey better at the beginning or at the end of the story? What does Audrey do that hurts Bernadette? What does Audrey do to help Bernadette? How does Audrey redeem herself as a character? What does Audrey's character demonstrate about second chances? When have you initially made a mistake but then chose to do what was right by others? How did it turn out?

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon



This fantasy, adventure, allegory story by Grace Lin is published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, a division of the Hachette Book

Group Inc., and is written for kids age 9 to 13.

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

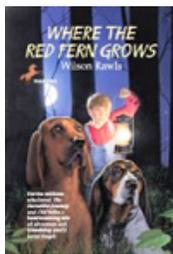
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Describe Minli's mother at the beginning of the story. How does she change throughout the story? What causes her to look at life differently? How do the attitudes of your friends and family impact your outlook on life? How can you surround yourself with

people who guide your mind in a positive direction?

2. Besides Ma, which other characters demonstrate discontentment? How does that impact the people around them? What happens as a result of their behavior? When has your negativity caused grief for you and others?
3. What is the “magic” word Minli sees on the king’s paper? Can a person change her circumstances by changing her attitude? Explain your answer. In what areas of your life do you find yourself always wanting more of something? What are some practical ways you can be more thankful for what you already have?
4. What is significant about the folktales that characters tell in the book? When have you learned something valuable from a story you read in a book, or one told by a relative or friend? How did that story change you?
5. Why does Minli ask the Old Man of the Moon the dragon’s question rather than her own? Why does her family give the dragon pearl to the king? How do Minli’s selfless acts benefit her in the end? When have you had good things happen as a result of the kindness you showed to others?

Where the Red Fern Grows



This coming-of-age adventure story by Wilson Rawls is published by Yearling Books, a division of Random House, and is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. How long did Billy work to earn the money to buy his pups? What have you had to work a long time to get? Could you work for two years to buy one thing? Explain.
2. What qualities in raccoons enable Billy to trap them? How could these same qualities help or hurt people? Which of the qualities mentioned do you have?
3. Why doesn’t Billy give up chopping down the big tree? What task have you faced that seemed so daunting that you could not finish it? How was the task left unfinished or completed?
4. Over the course of the story, how does Papa begin to treat Billy differently? Why does he do so? How does this make Billy feel? Over the course of your life, how have I treated you differently? Explain.
5. Mama tells Billy that everyone needs some help at some time in his life. When have you needed help but were reluctant to accept it?

The Whipping Boy



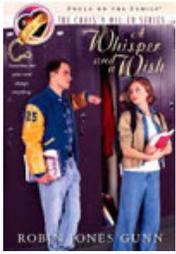
This adventure by Sid Fleischman is published by HarperCollins Publishers and is written for kids ages 6 to 10.

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

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

1. Why do you think there were designated whipping boys in castles? Was a whipping boy an effective way to discipline royalty?
2. How would you feel if someone else was hurt when you did something wrong? How would you feel if you were hurt every time someone else did something wrong?
3. Are others ever hurt when you misbehave? How do your actions affect your family and friends?
4. Why do you think Jemmy can’t leave Prince Horace behind when he has the opportunity to travel in the potato carriage?
5. Why does Jemmy do what is right by Prince Horace when the prince had always been cruel to him?
6. How does God want you to treat your enemies? (See Matthew 5:43-48 and Luke 6:27-36.)
7. How does Prince Horace change because of what Jemmy did for him?

A Whisper and a Wish



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

A Whisper and a Wish is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. What does Christy discover about her relationship with Paula after she returns to Wisconsin at the end of summer? How does she feel about this?
2. How are Christy’s new friends in Escondido similar to Paula’s new friend? How do you feel when a close friend gets a new friend? What can you do about it?
3. How is the situation with Christy and her new friends similar to that of Katie Christian and Peter Pagan in her Sunday school class? What happens to Christy when she follows the bad influence of her friends? Read 1 Corinthians 15:33. What does this verse say about how the wrong people can hurt you?
4. What word does Christy practice saying over and over again after she gets back from Palm Springs? Why does she do this? What kinds of things does Todd encourage her to start saying yes to? What things does God want you to be saying yes to?

5. Why is Christy hesitant to tell Aunt Marti about Brittany’s eating disorder? What should you do if a friend has a problem that endangers his or her health?

The White Zone



This drama, contemporary book by Carolyn Marsden is published by Carolrhoda Books, a division of Lerner Publishing Group Inc. *The White*

Zone was written for kids ages 9 to 15.

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

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

1. How does the growing tension between the Shiites and Sunnis impact Nouri and Talib’s relationship? What does hatred cause each boy to do? When have you allowed hatred to turn you into a different person? How did you act and what did you do that was out of character for you?
2. What makes Nouri and Talib realize they shouldn’t be fighting one another? When have you realized it was time to forgive or call a truce with an enemy? What happened?
3. What religion do Nouri and Talib profess? What do you know about the Muslim belief system? How is it different from Christianity? Why is it important for Christians to love those who don’t believe in Jesus?
4. Why are the Shiites and Sunnis at war, even though both are

Muslim sects? When have you seen different Christian groups arguing with each other? What does the Bible say about God’s desire for unity among Christ followers?

“Who Could That Be at This Hour?”



This mystery adventure by Lemony Snicket is the first in the “All the Wrong Questions” series published by Little, Brown and

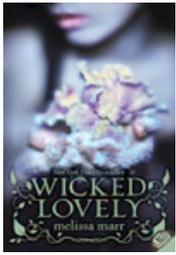
Company, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. “*Who Could That Be at This Hour?*” was written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. Why does Snicket feel as though promises are a heavy burden? When have you had a difficult time keeping a promise? Why is it important to keep promises?
2. What is the significance of asking questions in this book? Who asks the right questions, and who fails to do so? How can you ask good, useful questions?

Wicked Lovely



This teen fantasy book is the first in the “Wicked Lovely” series by Melissa Marr and is published by HarperTeen, a division of HarperCollins.

Wicked Lovely is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. Why is Aislinn afraid to tell Seth that she can see faeries? What does Grams think about sharing this information? Is there any time when withholding information from someone might be the right decision?
2. In what way is Keenan good, and how are some of his choices immoral? Is it all right for him to chase after Aislinn if his motives are pure?
3. Why does Donia envy the Summer Girls? Why wouldn't Donia have been happy if she had chosen to become a Summer Girl? Should anyone be dependent on another person for all of his or her needs? Why is God the only one who can be trusted to meet all your needs?
4. Tavish counsels Keenan to force his physical affection on Aislinn. What does Keenan think is appropriate when it comes to violating another person's will?

The Wild Robot



This science fiction book is first in the “Wild Robot” series by Peter Brown and is written for kids ages 9 to 13. It is published Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group.

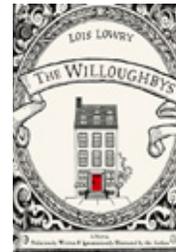
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. How does Roz survive in the wild, particularly as she tries to be a mother? What would have happened to her if she hadn't asked for help? When have you needed to ask for help so you could become better at something?
2. In what ways does Roz become a good friend and community member? How does she help others? What are some ways you can use your skills and experiences to serve other people?
3. What are some ways Brightbill struggles with being adopted? What are some difficult questions and feelings adopted children may face?
4. How do the animals treat Roz when they first meet her? When have you seen people treat someone badly simply because he or she was different in some way? Why are people sometimes afraid of those who don't look or act like them? How can you stand up for people who are new or different?
5. What does Roz learn about friendship and family from the

island animals? Why are friends and family important to you? How do they make your life better?

The Willoughbys



This humor, historical, satire by Lois Lowry is written for kids ages 9 to 13 and is published by Walter Lorraine Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin

Company.

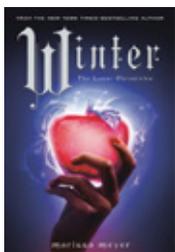
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Why do the Willoughby parents and children want each other dead? Is the author suggesting people in real life should behave this way? Look up the words “parody” and “irony” and discuss what they mean. How did you feel about the use of these literary devices in this book?
2. When do you and your family members fight or disagree? Since real-life families must work through problems (rather than get rid of each other), what are some ways you can help make these situations more manageable? What kind of words or actions might you use?
3. Why does Commander Melanoff live in despair? How does Ruth's arrival change his life? How does Nanny's presence make things better for the Willoughby children? When have new friendships or relationships improved your life?

- How do Nanny and the children survive after the house sells and the parents die? What gives them the idea to live with Melanoff? When have you had to come up with a creative solution to a difficult problem? What did you do?
- What kind of parents are Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby and the former Mrs. Melanoff and her new husband? What do they say or do that you like or dislike?

Winter



This science fiction, romance, fairy tale is the fourth book in “The Lunar Chronicles” series by Marissa Meyer and is written for kids ages 12 to 18 and is published

by Feiwel & Friends, a division of Macmillan Publishers.

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

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

- What does Levana expect from the Lunar people? How has she provided for them? How does Winter think Levana can get the people’s love? Do you think Levana’s plan of fear or Winter’s plan of caring is correct? Do you know anyone who uses fear and intimidation to get what they want? When have you done that? Explain. Name someone who is caring toward others. Is fear or caring more effective in building friendships.
- What does Winter have from the day she was born? What does Levana want that Winter had?

Think of someone who has something you would like. What does this person have? How can you keep from becoming jealous or envious of that person? How can we help you appreciate the blessings that you have?

- Why does Winter refuse to use her bioelectrical ability to even to do good for others? Why is she correct that she doesn’t know what is good for others? Who is the only person she should make decisions for? Why might you think that you know what is best for a friend or sibling? What is your assumption based on? What aren’t you taking into account?
- What is Kai’s backup plan to get rid of Levana, in case Cinder fails? What sacrifice would he have to make to do this? What does the word *sacrifice* mean to you? What have you sacrificed for someone? Who has sacrificed for you? Who does the Bible say has given the ultimate sacrifice for us?
- Why is Wolf afraid that Scarlet will reject him? Why doesn’t she? Think of someone you know who has undergone a physical change. 1 Samuel 16:7 tells us that the Lord does not look at the things people look at. What is God looking at, and what do people look at? Why should you try to look at others as God looks at them?
- How does Cinder feel about ruling Luna as Queen? How have her responsibilities changed? What are some of your responsibilities? How are they bigger now than they were when you were younger? How might they increase as you grow older?

The Winter Room



This realistic fiction book by Gary Paulsen is published by Scholastic, Inc. *The Winter Room* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

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

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

- Eldon and Wayne often disagree with each other and sometimes fight. Why do they do that? Choose one situation where they did this. Describe one way that they could have better handled the disagreement.
- Faith can be hard to understand. What do you think Mother meant when she said Uncle David’s stories are not to be believed? How is this type of belief different from faith?
- What happened in the story of Crazy Allen? How did he turn his own death into a practical joke? What is the problem with practical jokes? Is there anything that you should not joke about?
- Wayne said bragging is similar to lying. Explain why you agree or disagree with Wayne.
- Eldon and Wayne lived with their parents and uncles. How would living with your family and extended family in a small house change the way you live now? What are some of the rules this family has and what are some things this family does to get along? What do you think your

family and your extended family would have to do to get along?

6. Which of Uncle David's stories did you like the best? What made it special to you?
7. Why did Wayne lose respect for his uncle? How did he react? Who is someone that you have lost respect for? Why did this person lose your respect?

Winter Sky



This adventure, mystery, drama book by Patricia Reilly Giff is published by Speak, an imprint of Random House

Children's Book, a division of Random House LLC, a Penguin Random House Company. *Winter Sky* is written for kids 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Why does Siria sneak out of her apartment to follow fire trucks? Do you think this is a wise decision, or one that could put her in danger? Explain. When have you worried about us, your parents, and wanted to be close to protect us?
2. Why does Siria suspect Douglas of setting fires? In what ways does she jump to conclusions about his guilt without getting all the facts? Who really set the fires? When have you jumped to conclusions and assumed something that turned out to be

wrong? What happened? What harm could there be in accusing a person of something he or she didn't do?

3. Why does Siria investigate the arsons on her own rather than telling her father? Why might it have been wise to get the help of a trained firefighter? When is it OK to investigate something on your own, and when should you involve adults who can provide wisdom and help ensure your safety?
4. Where did Siria get her unique name? What does your name mean? How might this definition relate to you?

Wintergirls



This fiction book by Laurie Halse Anderson is published by Speak, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA). *Wintergirls* is written for kids ages 12

and up.

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

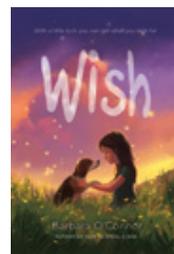
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Lia starve herself? How is being thin different from what she expected? How do you see your body? What do you do to take care of it?
2. Why isn't Lia happy when she reaches goal No. 3: 89 pounds? Why wouldn't she be happy at 75 pounds? How is Lia's desire to lose weight related to the belief that she takes up too much

space? How would you try to help Lia if she were your friend?

3. Why does Lia start cutting herself? Why does she continue? What circumstances in Lia's life contribute to her feeling this way? What choices could she have made differently? Have you ever felt so emotionally numb that you just wanted to feel something, even if it was painful?
4. Lia uses the word canvas to describe her body. What does she mean? What words does the Bible use to describe the human body? What responsibilities do we have relating to the care of our bodies?
5. Lia is fixated on her body and the bodies of those around her. Does the shape of a person's body tell you anything about their personality?
6. Lia thinks that she is fat, but she also thinks that chubby little Emma could be a model. Why does Lia think Emma is beautiful? What role does Emma play in Lia's recovery? Is there anyone in your life who gives you this sense of purpose?

Wish



This contemporary drama by Barbara O'Connor is published by Farrar Straus Giroux. *Wish* is written for ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. What are some things that cause Charlie's wish to change over time? When have you wanted something desperately but later realized it was good that you didn't get it?
2. Why does Charlie make wishes in so many strange ways? What do you think about luck, or the idea that you can make something happen by wishing hard enough? What are some of the ways God promises to help you when you call on Him? Why is God's help more reliable than luck or wishes?
3. What does *unconditional love* mean? Who gives Charlie unconditional love, and who does not? Is God's love for you conditional or unconditional? Explain your answer.
4. What does Bertha tell Charlie not to judge people for? Instead of judging people on their mistakes, what does she say you should judge them on? How does Charlie try to make things right with Howard, Bertha, Audrey and others? When have you had to apologize to others? What did you say and do?
5. Why does Charlie sometimes lash out at others with her words and behavior? When have you known someone who acted this way? What reason might he or she have for being so angry?

The Wishsong of Shannara



This fantasy, adventure, coming of age novel is the third book in the “The Sword of Shannara” series by Terry Brooks and is published by Dey Rey

Books, a division of Random House Publishing Group. *The Wishsong of Shannara* is written for ages 14 and up.

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

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

1. How does Brin regard her own gift of using the wishsong? How does Allanon's assessment of the wishsong differ? Why is it sometimes easier for outsiders to see your talents more clearly than you do? In what ways can underestimating your abilities be as problematic as an overblown sense of pride?
2. In terms of language, personality and experience, how is Slanter different from other Gnomes? How do these differences affect how the other Gnomes treat him? Have you ever been in a situation where your values contrasted sharply with the people around you? What kinds of discomfort can you experience when your focus in life is too different from your peers? How can you prepare yourself to respectfully defend your own point of view?
3. As they journey together, how does Brin feel about Allanon?

How does Allanon's lack of full disclosure make Rone Leah feel? If knowing the full truth would make people more afraid, is it wise for a leader to disclose all the facts? Explain.

4. How does the Sword of Leah make Rone feel when he possesses it? How does he react when it is lost in the fight with the Jachyra? What things in your life contribute greatly to your sense of self — your clothes, technology, sports equipment, other possessions? How would you feel if one or all of these items were destroyed? In what ways would the most important parts of your identity be unchanged after the loss of these material possessions?
5. What does Kimber Boh say to Brin about the nature of friendship? How does Kimber become friends with Whisper? How does she demonstrate her care for Brin? In your opinion, what qualities make a person a true friend? What do friends owe to each other? Who in your life has been a steady, honorable friend and how did they demonstrate their friendship by their actions? How have you been a friend to them?

The Wishing Spell



This fantasy, paranormal novel by Chris Colfer is published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of the Hachette Book Group Inc. *The*

Wishing Spell is written for ages 8 and up.

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

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

1. What does Alex like about her teacher, Mrs. Peters? Why doesn't Conner like her? Does she treat the twins differently? How can two people have such different impressions of the same person? Why do you like or dislike your teacher? What are the qualities you think a teacher should have?
2. Give examples of how Alex and Conner behave differently. How are their personalities different? How are you similar to your siblings (or cousins)? How are you different? If you were in the Land of Stories, which sibling (or cousin) would you like to have with you? Explain.
3. Why is Froggy cursed? Why doesn't he search for the ingredients to the Wishing Spell himself? Do you like him more or less because of his reasoning? What does this tell you about him as a person? Does his outward appearance reflect who he is as a person? Explain. How should you treat people who look different than you?
4. Why does the Huntsman feel he owes a debt to the Evil Queen? The queen offers him redemption. Does she deliver on her promise? What does the word *redemption* mean? How has God redeemed us?
5. What did Red Riding Hood do to Goldilocks? Why did she do this to her friend? Have you ever been jealous of a friend because they had something you didn't? Explain. What does Goldilocks intend to do to Red Riding Hood? Why does she want to do this? Why shouldn't we do things out of revenge? Who will an act of revenge hurt? Does forgiveness

help only the person being forgiven? Explain.

The Witch of Blackbird Pond



This historical novel by Elizabeth George Speare is published by Sandpiper, an imprint of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing

Company. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* is written for ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. How was Kit's life in the West Indies different from her life in the Puritan colony where her aunt lives? What was hardest for Kit to get used to? Where have you felt like an outsider? How has that experience helped you welcome others?
2. Should Kit have continued visiting Hannah Tupper? Was it right for Kit to directly disobey her aunt and uncle? How could she have kept Hannah as a friend while still doing what her uncle and aunt asked? Read Romans 13. How does this apply to Kit? How might it apply to you?
3. Which character do you identify with most? Which character do you most admire? Explain.
4. The Puritans fled England to escape religious persecution. How did they exclude people of other faiths, such as the Quakers? Where else do you see hypocrisy

in this story? Where do you see hypocrisy around you?

5. Proverbs 12:26 talks about choosing friends. What did Kit do right in choosing her friends? What did she do wrong? Why is it important to consider another person's reputation? How can the wrong association prove disastrous?
6. Goodwife Cruff targets Kit from the first day they meet on the Dolphin. What does she accuse Kit of being? How is Goodwife Cruff wrong in her accusations against Kit? Why don't Kit and her uncle press charges of slander against Goodwife Cruff?
7. Matthew Wood and the highly esteemed, yet condescending, Dr. Bulkeley heatedly disagree on politics. What do both men do when Mercy's life is in danger? Is it OK to disagree with people? Even if you disagree with someone, how should you treat that person?

The Witches



This fantasy book by Roald Dahl is published by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin Books. It has also been published by many other publishers.

The Witches is written for kids ages 7 and up.

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

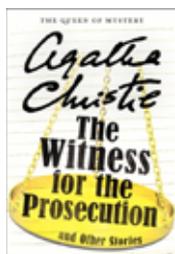
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why doesn't the main character like Bruno Jenkins? How does

the Bible say we should care for animals? What would you do if you saw someone being cruel to animals?

2. Why do people eat more than they need? Why do people boast about how much stuff they own? How can you keep from eating and having more than you need?
3. How do the boy and his grandmother plan to get rid of all the witches? Do you think they will succeed? Explain. What would you do if you were in the boy's place? Are he and his grandmother doing the right thing? Explain.
4. The boy has a very close relationship with his grandmother. Which trusted adults in your life do you most enjoy spending time with? Do you share any special activities or traditions together? What do you like most about these people? What lessons could you learn from them?

The Witness for the Prosecution



This mystery, historical book is by Agatha Christie. William Morrow Paperbacks, an imprint of HarperCollins published this

book in a collection titled *The Witness for the Prosecution and Other Stories* in 2012. *The Witness for the Prosecution* is written for kids ages 14 to 19.

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

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

1. Why does Leonard Vole start spending time with Emily French? When has someone pretended to be your friend because he or she wanted something from you?
1. How does Romaine save her husband? What did you think of her plan? How do you feel about her lying to the jury to protect the man she loves? What is wrong about what she does?
2. Why does Emily's maid, Janet, hate Leonard? When have you disliked someone because you saw him or her being unkind or unfair to someone you loved? How did you handle the situation?
3. What does Mayherne think of Leonard and Romaine when he first meets each of them? When have you thought you could recognize someone's good or bad character, then later learned you had completely misjudged the person?
4. How do you think Mayherne feels about setting Leonard free after he learns the man is guilty? When have you enjoyed some type of victory only to have it end in disappointment?

The Wizard of Earthsea



This fantasy, coming-of-age book by Ursula K. Le Guin is the first book in the "Earthsea Cycle" series and is published by the Houghton Mifflin

Books for Children. *The Wizard of Earthsea* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. How does Ged's father treat him when he performs poorly as a smith's boy? How does his aunt treat him when she believes he is unmagical? What is a parent or adult relative's duty toward a child in their family? How do you see this in your life?
1. In what ways does Ged begin to stretch the truth when he answers the girl in Re Albi's questions about magic? What are the consequences when he sneaks and reads Ogion's lore books in an attempt to learn a spell to impress her? When have you felt a need for other people's approval? What kinds of things have you done in the past to get the attention and admiration of a person?
1. How do Jasper's appearance and behavior make Ged feel inferior? As a result of these feelings, what does Ged look for opportunities to do? What are you tempted to do when you dislike someone? If you act with the intention of harming another person, even in a mild way, how could that harm you as well?
1. What does Serret tell Ged that the Terranon can do for him if he touches it? How does she attempt to persuade him when he refuses? Why are people more tempted to give in and do something they know is wrong when they are tired or afraid? Why is

it hard to resist wrong opportunities when a friend tries to persuade you to join in? How can you set clear boundaries for yourself so that strong emotions and persuasive people don't influence your choices over issues that matter to you?

1. What is Gerd afraid will happen if the shadow catches him? What does his master Ogon advise him to do? What difficult situations in your life do you feel like avoiding? What do you think will happen if you confront them?

The Wizard of Oz



This fantasy book by L. Frank Baum is the first in the "Oz" series and was originally published by the George M. Hill Company. Many different publishing

houses currently publish this book. *The Wizard of Oz* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

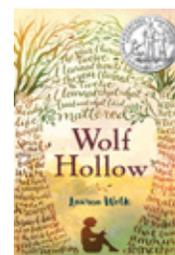
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Dorothy and her friends travel through the dark woods. After that, they come to an open field full of sunshine and flowers. Which was more dangerous for them? What things in our world look attractive but are dangerous?
2. Why are there witches in Oz, according to the Good Witch of the North? Does being civilized have anything to do with whether there are witches? What does the Bible say about those

who use witchcraft? Why might God take sorcery so seriously?

3. When the friends reach the Emerald City, the Guardian of the Gates tells them they must wear special goggles. Why does he say that they need them? What is the reality that we find out later? Why do you think the Wizard feels the need to fool his subjects? Can you think of anything in our world that has a lot of hype, but falls apart or becomes a disappointment once you dig a little deeper?
4. When Dorothy visits the Wizard for the first time, he asks her why he should help her. She says because he is strong and able to help, and because she is weak and helpless. The Wizard tells her that she has no right to expect any help from him unless she does something for him first. How would you describe God's character compared to the Wizard's? What is the real reason the Wizard talks to Dorothy as he does?
5. The Wicked Witch of the West recognizes the magical protection from the Good Witch's kiss and the power of the silver shoes. But she also sees that Dorothy is young and unaware of the gifts she has been given. How is Dorothy enslaved? What lies did she believe? Could Dorothy have faced the Wicked Witch without any special protection or gifts? What might have happened if she'd tried?
6. The China Girl Princess is desperately afraid of being chased through Dainty China Country because if she falls, she'll break. Can the China Doll be repaired if she falls? Why won't she be as pretty if she is mended?

Wolf Hollow



This historical book by Lauren Wolk is published by Dutton Children's Books, Penguin Young Readers Group, an imprint of Penguin Random

House LLC. *Wolf Hollow* is written for kids ages 10 and up.

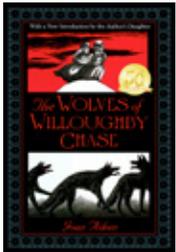
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Why doesn't Annabelle tell her family about Betty's bullying sooner? Should she have mentioned it earlier, or did she have a good reason for waiting? Explain your answer. If you were in Annabelle's place, what would you have done?
2. Why is Betty so mean? When have you known someone like Betty, who is angry and hateful? Why do you think he or she behaved so badly? How does God want you to treat people who act that way?
3. Why do Annabelle and her parents put themselves at such great risk to help a stranger like Toby? When have you helped, or been helped by, someone you didn't know well?
4. Why are Annabelle's parents concerned about her being alone with Toby? What might be the dangers of being alone with a grownup you don't know very well? How would you have handled these encounters with Toby if you were Annabelle?

- How did you feel about Annabelle lying to her parents and leaving out information in her attempts to help Toby? How could this have been dangerous to her or others? Why is leaving out important details wrong? What would you have done in her place?

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase



This historical, adventure, suspense/thriller book is by Joan Aiken. Jonathan Cape first published this book in 1962; the edition

reviewed was published by Yearling, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House in 1987. It is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

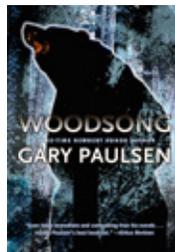
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- What is life like for Sylvia as an orphan? How does Bonnie feel when she thinks her parents have died? When have you felt alone? What made you feel so isolated? What did you do?
- How do James, Patton and Simon help the girls thwart Miss Slighcarp? When have you had good friends help you handle a difficult situation? How have you helped your friends handle a difficult situation?
- What are Miss Slighcarp's real reasons for coming to Willoughby Chase? Who does

she trick to get there? Who helps her in her scheme, and how do they help her? When has someone tricked you? How did that make you feel? How did you handle the situation?

- In a story with wild wolves, an evil governess, a scary school and parents lost at sea, which situation did you find most frightening? What would you have done if you were Bonnie or Sylvia in that situation? What do you usually do when something scares you?
- How do we know that Aunt Jane truly loves Sylvia? What happens to Aunt Jane after Sylvia leaves? What might elderly people in our community need? What are some practical ways we can help elderly people in our community?

Woodsong



This memoir, adventure book by Gary Paulsen is published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children's Publishing Division, a trademark of Simon & Schuster. *Woodsong* is written for kids ages 8 to 14.

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

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

- Why does the author decide to stop trapping animals? How might trapping animals be important to a family's survival? How is this different from what

the narrator was doing? How do his stories impact the way you think about trapping and hunting?

- What are some ways the animals in this book almost act human? Which of these behaviors surprised you? In what ways do they not act like humans? How did that surprise you? When have you seen your pets behave in ways that made them seem almost human?
- Why isn't the brutality of some animals discussed much in today's world? How do people overcome their own brutal instincts? Why might God have given people the capacity to overcome their brutal instincts? What is one way that people are different from animals?
- What did you learn when you read about Paulsen's Iditarod experience? Would you want to participate in an Iditarod or some other extreme adventure? Explain.

Wonder



This coming-of-age book by R.J. Palacio is published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House

Inc. *Wonder* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

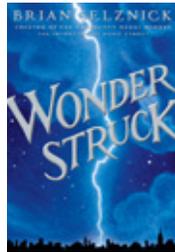
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. How do people react when they see August? What do you do when you see someone who has an obvious physical abnormality or mental disability? Can people help the way they react when they see someone like August? What sort of things could you do for someone like August to help him feel accepted and loved?
2. What changes the way the students at Beecher Prep act toward August? At the beginning of the war between Jack and Julian, whose side would you have been on? Would anything have caused you to switch sides? Which situations have you seen that involve people taking sides between a bully and someone who is bullied?
3. Why does Summer decide to sit with August at lunch? Why do people think she is sitting with him? Would you leave your circle of friends to hang out with someone who is different?
4. Do you think it's too much pressure when Mr. Tushman asks Jack to be friends with August? Would they become friends if Jack wasn't on the welcoming committee? Have you ever been asked by your parents or a teacher to be extra friendly to a kid who isn't popular? How did it make you feel? Did you become real friends with that person?
5. What does it mean to be popular? Why do kids care so much about being popular? Where would you put yourself on the popular scale in your school? Where do you want to be on that scale?
6. How does Via feel about August being her little brother? How has August's facial abnormality affected her life? Do you think Via and August's parents treat their children fairly? Has there

been a time in your life when one of your siblings received more attention than you? Does being fair always mean being equal?

Wonderstruck



This historical, mystery, suspense/thriller by Brian Selznick is published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc. and is written for kids

ages 10 to 14.

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

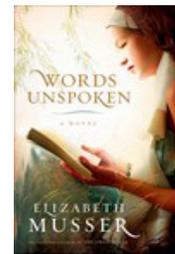
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why did Ben's mother nickname him Turtle? What animal do you think you are like? Why? Are the qualities you share things you like about yourself? If not, what would you like to change and why?
2. Ben enjoys collecting things in his treasure box. What does his friend Billy think about his collection? What does Jamie think about it? Are there things you like to do or collect that your friends do not understand? How does that make you feel? What can you do for friends to show you support their hobbies, even if their hobbies are not something you enjoy yourself?
3. Ben's story is told through words while Rose's is told through pictures. How are their stories similar? Their loneliness? Their bravery? Their experiences? What do you do when you feel lonely or sad? How can you help

a friend or family member who is feeling sad or lonely?

4. What does Jamie do to help Ben when he finds him in the museum? Why does he lie to Ben about contacting his family? What should Jamie have done? What would you do if you found someone your age who was lost and alone? Who should you contact to get them help?

Words Unspoken



This contemporary Christian drama by Elizabeth Musser is published by Bethany House Publishers, an imprint of Baker Publishing Group and is written for young adults ages 16 and up.

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

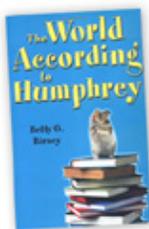
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why do Annie and Ev keep their pasts and Ev's writing career a secret? If you were one of their daughters, would you have felt deceived, or would you have understood their decision? What does the Bible say about lying by omission? Did Annie's and Ev's deceit contradict their Christian beliefs, or did it allow them to live out their faith more effectively? Explain your answer.
2. How is Ev teaching Lissa to drive a metaphor for the way God walks through difficulties and trials with us? What does Ev have on his side of his car that comforts Lissa? Why is this brake pedal significant? What does

Ev say to Lissa when she admits that she hears voices? What does he tell her about thinking vs. thanking?

3. What key message does S.A. Green try to get across in his novels? Do you agree or disagree that nothing in life is random? What has happened in your life to make you adopt this point of view?
4. Have you ever suffered from depression or known anyone who has? What brought on the depression? Was it a particular incident, or a chemical imbalance? What are some ways to help and encourage a person who is depressed? What are some things not to say or do? How can having a faith in God aid in a person's recovery from depression?
5. What is the message in this story concerning alcohol use and abuse? What happens to Ev because of his alcohol addiction? What happens to his sister, Tate, because of hers? Is it wrong to drink alcohol if you're legally old enough? What are your thoughts on how a person should or shouldn't use alcohol?
6. What causes the downfalls of Ted and Silvano? Do lying and cheating ever lead to long-term success? Give an example to support your answer. What would God say about their choices?
7. Why does Katy Lynn decide not to ruin her husband's life and reputation after he's had an affair? What does God say about seeking revenge? Why is it difficult to leave revenge to God?

The World According to Humphrey



Penguin Books. *The World According to Humphrey* is written for kids ages 7 to 9.

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

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

1. What does our family do in the evenings? How is our family like A.J.'s family? How is it different? How is our family like Miranda's? How is it different? What makes our family unique?
2. In a classroom, each person has his or her own story. In your classroom, what might be some of the stories? What is one story you'd like to know from when I was your age? If your school were to have a talent show, what would you do? Where do you feel you are most talented? How do you intend to hone your talent to become even better in that area?
3. Have you ever been in a place where you weren't understood? How did it feel? What did you try to convey that wasn't understood? Which girl in this story had a difficult time communicating with her class? What helped her overcome the language barrier?

Worst Enemies/Best Friends



This first coming-of-age, drama book in the "Beacon Street Girls" series by Annie Bryant is published by Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division. *Worst Enemies/Best Friends* is written for kids ages 9 to 13.

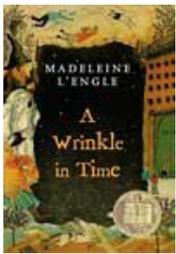
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. How does Charlotte feel about moving to a new town and school? What would be hard about moving seven times? Have you ever had to move? How might facing new people in a new place be hard for you?
2. What are the benefits of Mrs. Rodriguez's table assignments? Why are these table arrangements difficult for Charlotte? How do the table assignments help draw students closer together? How have your teachers encouraged class unity? Did their ideas work? Explain. What do you feel would help your class at school be more unified?
3. What does the girls' sleepover teach Charlotte? What causes her to learn that these girls are not as bad as she thought? When have you made a judgment call about another person? What did you base your conclusion on? What was the truth about this person?

4. How does Charlotte lie to her new friends? How do her actions make her feel? Have you ever felt caught up in a lie that seemed insignificant at first but grew with each passing day? What would you have done if you were Charlotte?
5. Why do Charlotte's friends decide not to have her as a friend? What helps them forgive her? When has a friend lied to you or hurt you? How did you learn to forgive him or her?

A Wrinkle in Time



This first science fiction/fantasy book in the “Time Quartet” series by Madeleine L’Engle is published by Square Fish, an imprint of Roaring Brook

Press. *A Wrinkle in Time* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. Many Christians disagree about whether *A Wrinkle in Time* is a Christian-based book. Opponents of the book dislike elements such as tessering, the crystal-ball-wielding Happy Medium and the fact that Christ is mentioned alongside human artists, authors and religious leaders as people who brought light to the world. What do you think? What aspects of the book honor God? What aspects, if any, do you feel dishonor Him?
2. Why do you think the author used a giant brain to symbolize evil in this book?
3. At first, Meg wishes she could be more like other people. What do you think she learned from her interactions with people who were different — Aunt Beast and the Mrs. Ws? How are you different from others, and how can you use that uniqueness to glorify God?
4. What did you think of Mrs. Murray’s comment, “Just because we don’t understand doesn’t mean an explanation doesn’t exist”?
5. Though Madeline L’Engle made a living using words, critics often note that she clearly addresses the inadequacy of language in this book. The different languages and dialects of the characters cause confusion among them. Additionally, words and human understanding can’t conquer IT. In the end, only love overcomes IT’s power. How did God overcome the language barrier between us and Him? See John 1:14. What part did love play?