

Book Review Discussion Questions



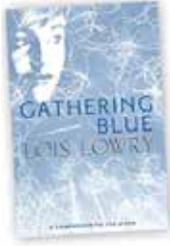
Table of Contents

Gathering Blue	3
Geronimo's Valentine	3
Ghost Knight	3
Ghost Town at Sundown	4
Gideon the Cutpurse	4
Gifted	5
Gingersnap	5
The Giver	5
Goblin Secrets	6
Golden Boy	6
The Golden Compass	7
Golden Spirit	7
The Golem's Eye	7
Gone	8
Gone-Away Lake	8
The Good Earth	9
A Good Horse	9
The Goose Girl	9
Graceling	10
The Grapes of Wrath	10
The Graveyard Book	11
Great Black Heroes	11
The Great Gatsby	11
Growing Up Amish	12
Gulliver's Travels	12

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

Gathering Blue



This social science/dystopian novel written by Lois Lowry is the second book in “The Quartet,” published by Walter Lorraine Books, a division of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Gathering Blue is written for 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. Do you think Vandara is respected or feared in the village? How does respect make a person important? How does being feared make a person important? What is the difference between being respected and being feared? Which would you rather be? Explain.
2. The color blue is rare and valued. How might the blue thread be used? What does the color represent to Kira?
3. Why does Kira choose to remain in her village instead of going to the others? What would you have done in her position? Explain.

Geronimo’s Valentine



This humorous mystery/adventure is the 36th book in the “Geronimo Stilton” series by Elisabetta Dami (but under the pen name of the main character)

and is published by Scholastic, Inc. *Geronimo’s Valentine* is written for kids ages 7 to 10.

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

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

1. What did Geronimo do to cover how he was late for his date? What would have been a better way for Geronimo to handle the situation?
2. How did Hercule ask Geronimo for help with his case? What would have been a better way for Hercule to ask Geronimo for help?
3. What did Geronimo and Hercule do at the cheesecake factory? Is it ever OK to break into other people’s buildings? How could Geronimo and Hercule have done what was right and still investigate the factory?
4. Geronimo was really busy in this book. At what point does a rodent, or a person, become too busy to do anything well? Have you tried to do two things at the

same time when you should have only done one? What advice would you give Geronimo to help him with his schedule?

5. What is one thing Geronimo did for friendship? What is one thing Geronimo did for love? What could Geronimo have done differently?

Ghost Knight



This fantasy adventure book by Cornelia Funke is published by Little, Brown and Company and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

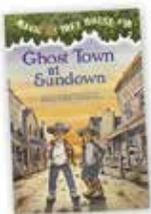
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Longspee tells Jon, “Do not be ashamed of your tears.” Why might Jon be ashamed of crying? Have you ever wanted to hide your tears? Why shouldn’t you be ashamed of them?
2. Some of the violence and rage that Jon experiences when he melts into a ghost stay with him for years. Have you ever watched a movie or read something violent that left a lasting imprint on you or was hard to get out of your mind? How do you now keep yourself from watching or reading this kind of material?

3. Longspee talks about his life of violence and fighting for a just cause. "All that remains is the pain, the fear, and the noise." Why might a life of violence lead someone to this place of sadness? What is a better way to live your life?
4. Jon's mother says, "We make our best friends in dark times because we always remember how they helped us out of the darkness." Why might Jon consider Ella to be his best friend? Have you ever had a friend help you through a dark time? Explain. What would it be like to endure a dark time by yourself with no help from anyone?
5. There is a lot of talk about heaven and hell and where people go when they die. Oddly, no one seems to know for certain the answer. What determines whether you go to heaven? What do you believe? What does the Bible say about heaven and hell? If you had been in this story, what hope could you have given these characters?

Ghost Town at Sundown



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the 10th book in the "Magic Tree House" series and is published by Random House. *Ghost Town at*

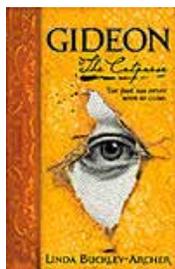
Sundown is written for kids ages 5 to 8.

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

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

1. How do Jack and Annie know that Morgan is back? What should they have done before they followed the rabbit into the woods? What are our rules about leaving the house? Why do we have those rules?
2. Throughout the book, Jack and Annie lie about who they are and how they got to Rattlesnake Flats. If you have ever told a lie, why did you do it? What happened after you told the lie? Who is "The father of lies" (John 8:44)?
3. What does Annie want to do when she and Jack find the colt? Talk about a time when you helped someone or something. How did it make you feel?
4. Why does Slim have his gun out of his holster when he first sees Jack and Annie? What should you do if you ever see a real gun?

Gideon the Cutpurse



Gideon the Cutpurse and *The Time Travelers* are the same book. This fantasy adventure is the first book in the "The Gideon Trilogy" by Linda Buckley-

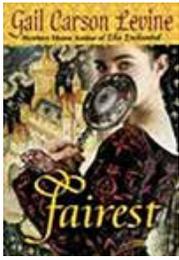
Archer and is published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. *Gideon the Cutpurse* is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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. If you could travel back in time, what year would you choose to visit and why would you choose that year? How would that time period be fun and difficult at the same time? What did Peter and Kate like about the time period where they found themselves? What did they find difficult about being in that time period?
2. What characteristics made Gideon a good friend? What did Gideon do that caused Peter to admire and respect him? How important are those characteristics between friends today? Whom do you admire? Whom do you respect? What did these people do to gain your admiration and respect?
3. How do you think Peter's relationship with his parents will improve if and when he gets back to the present? What has Peter learned that will make him a better son? What have his parents learned that will make them better parents? What can you learn from Kate or Peter about being a better daughter or son? What do you hope your parents could learn from Kate's or Peter's parents to make them even better parents?
4. What did Gideon do when he was working for Lord Luxon? Did he have to steal? What would have happened if he didn't steal for Lord Luxon? What would you do in his place, when there are no easy answers and nothing seems like a good solution? How important is it to do what is right, regardless of the outcome? How did Gideon's choice continue to follow and hurt him?

Gifted



This coming-of-age book by Beth Evangelista is published by Walker & Company 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. Do you know people who are as smart as George? Which character traits does George lack, which prevents him from realizing no one likes him? Why does everyone dislike him? What is a character quality you might lack? How could you grow in this area?
2. Why does even his best friend, Anita, stop liking George? What does George conclude about Anita? How does he vow to treat her in the future? Have you ever treated a friend poorly? What helped you stop this behavior?
3. George doesn't have a lot of respect for his teachers. What causes him to realize that he likes Mr. Zimmerman and even respects him? How have you misjudged an adult? Did this person turn out to be better or worse than your first impression? How did you find this out?
4. What did George do at a science fair to embarrass Sam? What makes George realize how Sam must have felt? What does Sam do to get back at George? What does George do to rebuild his relationship with Sam? Why is asking for forgiveness a good first

step? What might be George's next step? What would you do in his place?

5. What conclusion does George come to about his parents by the end of the story? Do you think your opinion about us [your parents] might change as you grow older? Explain.

Gingersnap



This historical fiction book by Patricia Reilly Giff is published by Wendy Lamb Books, a division of Random House Inc., and written for kids ages 8 to

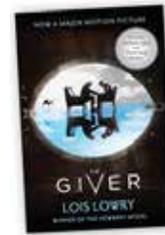
12.

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. Jayna finds that the friends she has made in New York are like family to her. Who is in our family? Which of our extended family relatives feel like they are a part of our immediate family? What are some of the things that make our family close? How might we become closer?
2. Rob and several others in the book are sent to fight overseas. How is this scary for Jayna? How is the war scary for Elise? How is it scary for the country?
3. How is Celine generous in caring for Jayna? Why can't Jayna see this at first? How is Elise kind to Jayna? How does Jayna treat Celine and Elise? Who are some adults who are kind to you?

The Giver



This social science/dystopian novel written by Lois Lowry is the first book in "The Quartet," published by Delacorte Books for Young Readers

as a paperback and Dell Laurel-Leaf as a mass market book. Both are imprints of Random House Children's Books, a division of Random House, Inc. The hardback book is printed by Walter Lorraine Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin. *The Giver* 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 would it be like to live in a perfect community? What would make our world perfect? What would make your life perfect?
2. What was good about Jonas' community, family and life? What would you have disliked if you were in his situation?
3. How is Jonas' community sheltered from dealing with death? What happens to people who are "released"? What kind of people are released? How did you feel when you read about people being killed this way? How does this practice align with your views on life and death? What does the Bible say about the value of human life?
4. Why does Jonas think the kind of love people once experienced must have been dangerous?

How is a world without love dangerous?

- Why do you think the author wrote a book without telling you exactly what happened in the end? What do you think happens to Jonas and Gabriel? How would you have ended the book if you were the author?
- What does The Giver mean when he tells Jonas that everything is meaningless without memories? What would the world be like if people could only remember back as far as the years they personally had lived? How does remembering make us wise? Why is wisdom sometimes painful?
- Imagine you knew and remembered things no one else could. What would it be like? How would you feel? What would you say to others? What if you were sworn to secrecy about your unique knowledge?

Goblin Secrets



This coming-of-age fantasy novel written by William Alexander and published by Margaret K. McElderry Books, a division of Simon & Schuster

Inc., is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

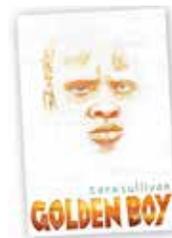
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- When Rownie puts on the mask of the giant, he feels taller. Have you ever worn a mask or

costume that made you feel different? Have you ever wanted to be someone else? If so, who? Why?

- There are many rumors about goblins, but Rownie learns that they aren't true. Why do you think people make up stories about others they don't know? If you heard a rumor about someone, whom would you talk to about it? A friend? A parent? Who do you think would help you find out the truth?
- Graba uses witchcraft and spells to get her way. Read Leviticus 20:6 to see what the Bible says about those who consult with mediums or sorcerers. Why do you think God warns against people who practice witchcraft?
- Vass was supposed to tell Graba to meet with Rownie in the railroad station, but she told the Mayor instead. Did she mean to hurt or help Rownie? Was she right to trust the Mayor? Why or why not?
- Graba is a word that means grandmother. Does she act like a grandmother to the children in her house? How is she different from your grandmother or grandfather? How does she treat Rownie?
- The goblins believe that the words they speak, especially when they're wearing masks, can change reality. How do words change things in this story? Read James 3:5-12. What does the Bible have to say about the power of words in the real world?

Golden Boy



This coming-of-age novel by Tara Sullivan is published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group and is written for

kids ages 12 years and up.

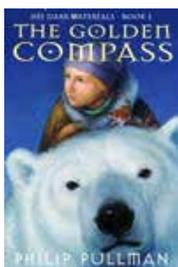
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

- What are some of the lessons Habo learns from Kweli about carving? How do his realizations about wood and carving relate to his own personal growth?
- Why is Habo afraid to tell Kweli the truth about his skin? How does he expect the carver to respond? What does Kweli do when he learns Habo is an albino?
- Why does Habo include his family members in his carving of evil? How do you feel about his belief that even good people often promote evil by looking away and doing nothing when it happens? How have you seen this play out in your school or society?
- Why doesn't Kweli get angry when someone makes fun of him? What does he say to Habo about anger?
- Why is Habo so frustrated about the police officer's response to his plea for help? What are some other situations in the story that make Habo question his worth as a person? What does Kweli tell

Habo about his value as a human being? According to the Bible, which human beings are valuable and why? What must you do to prove your worth?

The Golden Compass



This first science fiction/fantasy book in the “His Dark Materials” series by Philip Pullman is published by Knopf Books for Young Readers,

an imprint of Random House Children’s Books. *The Golden Compass* 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. CHURCH HISTORY

Philip Pullman told the UK’s Daily Telegraph, “Atheism suggests a degree of certainty that I’m not quite willing to accede. I suppose technically, you’d have to put me down as an agnostic. But if there is a God, and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down and rebelled against. As you look back over the history of the Christian church, it’s a record of terrible infamy and cruelty and persecution and tyranny. How they have the bloody nerve to go on Thought for the Day and tell us all to be good when, given the slightest chance, they’d be hanging the rest of us and flogging the homosexuals and persecuting the witches.” How do you think Pullman’s dislike for Christians and the Church begins to surface

in this story? Pullman’s take on Church history isn’t just biased, it’s grossly inaccurate. Pick up a copy of a reputable overview of Church history and learn about times the Church has helped society and those few seasons such as the Spanish Inquisition where the Church has not treated people well.

2. DIVINATION

Leviticus 19:26 warns, “Do not practice divination or sorcery.” Divination includes any practice that tries to see the future or hidden knowledge through supernatural means. While Lyra’s alethiometer (alethia means “truth” in Greek) is never actually called a divination device, that’s exactly the function it serves. Why do you think the Bible forbids divination? If we could know the future or secret knowledge through supernatural means, how might that influence our relationship with God?

2. If you couldn’t change their minds, how would it affect your friendship?
3. Carmen’s Aunt Chris had been saving money for a special visit with her nieces. Why do you think Uncle Mark was so angry with her?
4. Carmen considered calling the police when she heard the adults arguing. If you were with Carmen and Cassie when they heard the adults arguing and glass shattering, how would you have reacted?
5. When is domestic violence justified?
6. Before Carmen became a Christian, she exhibited selfish and bossy behaviors. Her behaviors didn’t change much after she became a Christian. Why do Christians still act mean, selfish and bossy even when they have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

Golden Spirit



This third book in the “Carmen Browne” series on Christian school life by Stephanie Perry Moore is published by Moody Publishers. *Golden Spirit* 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. If your friends refuse to do what you want to do, how would you change their minds?

The Golem’s Eye



This fantasy book by Jonathan Stroud is the second book in the “Bartimaeus Trilogy” series and is published by Hyperion Books for Children,

an imprint of Disney Publishing Worldwide. *The Golem’s Eye* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. Why do the magicians focus on their clothes and outward

appearances? Talk about a time when you judged someone because of his or her looks or were judged because of your looks. What is the best way to really know someone?

2. How does Kitty feel about her companions while they loot Gladstone's tomb? What does she do about these feelings? Talk about a time when your friends or the people around you were doing something you thought was wrong. What did you do? What did you want to do?
3. How do commoners like Kitty feel about the demons? How did the book make you feel about demons and magic? How are demons described in the Bible? How could they affect you? Through who's power do demons have to flee?
4. What does Nathaniel do to gain power? At the end of the book, Bartimaeus tells him that the boy Nathaniel is gone and has been replaced by John Mandrake, his magical name. What do you think this means? Talk about a time when you felt the need to compromise your values to fit in. How might you have felt like a completely different person? What would you do if that situation happened again?

Gone



This contemporary science fiction thriller by Michael Grant is the first in the "Gone" series and is published by HarperTeen and Katherine Tegen Books,

imprints of HarperCollins. *Gone* 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 Quinn tease and argue with Sam about Sam's powers? How would you react if your best friend developed Sam's ability?
2. How do kids act like bullies in this story? How do kids act like bullies in your world? Have you ever encountered a bully? If so, what did you do? If you haven't come across a bully, what kind of things could you do to protect yourself or someone you saw being bullied?
3. What qualities make a hero? Who were the heroes in this story? Besides Sam, who were the minor characters who displayed heroic qualities? In your life, who acts the most heroic?
4. Was this a good representation of what would happen if adults disappeared from your community? What would you do in a situation like this? In what ways might you be like Sam? In what ways might you be like another character?
5. Discuss how different characters cope with stress. What does Sam do? How about Mary? In what ways do you cope with stress? What does 1 Peter 5:7 say we should do with our stress? How would you do this?

Gone-Away Lake



This adventure book by Elizabeth Enright was originally published by Harcourt, Brace & Company in 1957. Today, Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt and Scholastic

publish paperback versions. *Gone-Away Lake* is written for kids ages 8 to 10.

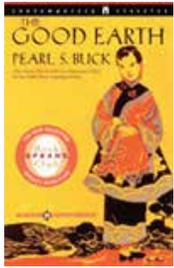
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. For Portia, one of the best things about summer is not having to wear socks! What is one of your favorite things about summer vacation?
2. Pindar tells the children how hurt he was when his best friend Tarquin brought a new friend to Tarrigo Lake. Have you ever felt jealous of a friend's new pal? What did you do? How did you learn that you could have more than one good friend?
3. Julian and Portia keep *Gone-Away-Lake* a secret from everyone, including their parents. Why might they want to keep their discovery a secret? What bad thing happened because of their secret? Have you ever wanted to keep something you found to yourself?
4. People in town made fun of Pindar when he drove his old car and wore old-fashioned clothes. Why might people mistreat others? How does God want us to treat others?

5. What would you like best about finding a place like Gone-Away-Lake?

The Good Earth



This historical fiction, contemporary classic by Pearl S. Buck is published by Washington Square Press, an imprint of Atria Books, a division

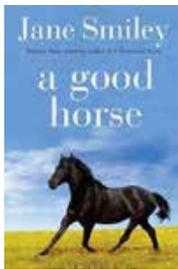
of Simon & Schuster and is written for adults but is sometimes studied by high school classes.

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

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

1. A major theme in Wang Lung's story is his obsession with money and his land. What would the Bible say about his life?
2. In what ways do the decisions he makes contrast with those of a modern-day Christian?
3. Would you say that Wang Lung's life was well lived?
4. What is the true measure of a man's success?

A Good Horse



This contemporary book by Jane Smiley is published by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House Children's Books, and is written for kids ages 10 and

up. Although this book is not part of a series, it is the second book that this author has written about Abby Lovitt. The first book is *The Georges and the Jewels*.

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 don't Abby's parents want her to ride Black George on Sunday? Why do they let her? Why don't they watch her show Black George on Sunday? How is Abby's church similar to or different from our church?
2. What is new and interesting for Abby when she spends the night at the house of the twins from her school? When you have spent the night at someone's house, what have you found to be new and interesting? What do you think your friends find new and interesting at our house?
3. What makes Abby love Jack more than the other horses? How will she feel if Jack is taken away? Why does she decide to let the false owner take Jack instead of letting her parents spend all the money they have to buy him? What would you have done in her place?
4. Why does Abby's family sell all the good horses? Is that fair? Why do they keep doing it? How does Abby try to accept this? How would you accept this? How does God want you to treat others? How does Abby's family demonstrate this in a small way?

The Goose Girl



This fantasy book by Shannon Hale is the first in the "Books of Bayern" series and is published by Bloomsbury USA Childrens, an imprint of

Bloomsbury Publishing. *The Goose Girl* is written for kids ages 11 and up.

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

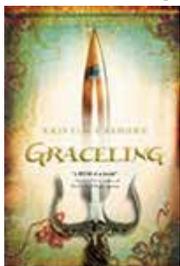
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Ani's aunt says that the gift of people-speaking can be used for good, but it also can be dangerous. How does Ani's mother, the queen of Kildenree, use her people-speaking power for the good of the kingdom? How does Ani's lady-in-waiting, Selia, use her people-speaking power for evil purposes? How do your words influence people? What do you think it means when Proverbs 18:21 says death and life are in the power of the tongue?
2. Why is Ani's handmaid, Selia, jealous of her? Are Selia's complaints fair? Why has Ani not noticed Selia's discontent before? Describe a time when you were jealous of someone or someone was jealous of you. How did jealousy affect your relationship? How could you be more sensitive to people who might have less than you?
3. Selia says that there is no such thing as royal blood and that people are what they make of themselves. Do you agree or

disagree? Explain. How does it fit or not fit with what the Bible says?

4. How does Ani change her identity after she arrives in Bayern? In what ways does Ani grow as a person or become stronger because of the hardships she has to face in Bayern? How have difficulties changed you for the better? Do you think difficulties always change people in positive ways? Explain.
5. How are the forest dwellers of Bayern treated when they move to Bayern's city? What does Ani learn from her friend Enna about how the city people view the poor immigrants from the forest? What different types of students are in your school? How are different groups treated? How could you support others who are mistreated?

Graceling



This fantasy book is the first in the “Graceling” series by Kristin Cashore and is published by Graphia, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Publishing Company. *Graceling* is written for kids ages 14 and up.

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

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

1. What kind of prejudice does Katsa encounter because of her Grace? Why do people in her land avoid the Graced? Who in our society experiences

avoidance and isolation? Have you ever been avoided or ignored? What happened? How did it feel?

2. Why does Katsa struggle so intensely with anger? Is it caused by her Grace or the circumstances of her life? What and who help her tone down her anger? How is her life better as she learns to control her fury?
3. What does Katsa initially believe to be her Grace? What does she later recognize as her true Grace? Why does this realization—that her Grace is survival, not killing—make such a difference to her?
4. Why is Katsa so determined not to marry? What is she afraid will happen if she agrees to marriage and children? How do you feel about her decision to be Po's lover but not his wife? What does the Bible say about God's plan for male/female relationships? Why did He choose to bind men and women together with a commitment rather than allow them the “freedom” Katsa seeks? Does a person lose him- or herself by committing to another? Explain your answer.
5. What does Po mean when he says he's humbled, but not humiliated, that Katsa is a better fighter? How can you allow yourself to be humbled rather than humiliated by the challenges or defeats you face?
6. How does the author portray most of the men (Randa, Leck and the other kings, the cousin Katsa kills, the merchants at the inn, etc.) vs. most women (Helda, Bitterblue, Captain Faun) in this book? Which characters would you consider role models, and why?

The Grapes of Wrath



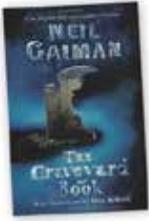
This drama by John Steinbeck is published by Penguin Classics and is written for adults but is sometimes studied by high school classes.

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

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

1. Do you see anything wrong with Casy's definition of holiness?
2. Why did John Steinbeck end the book with Rose of Sharon breastfeeding a dying man?
3. What message was the author trying to send through the imagery?
4. Steinbeck seems to suggest that other people—not natural disasters, bad decisions or bad luck—are the primary cause of the Joads' problems. What do you think?
5. Is there any truth to this idea in our society?
6. What lessons can we learn from the Joad family's hospitality and loyalty even in the face of extreme hardship?

The Graveyard Book



This contemporary fantasy is written by Neil Gaiman and published by Harper Collins Publishers. *The Graveyard Book* is written for 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. Sometimes children don't understand the rules their parents or guardians place on them. What happens to Bod when he disobeys Silas and leaves the graveyard? What happens when he lets himself be seen in school? What rules do you have in your house? What will happen if you disobey them?
2. How do the ghosts in the graveyard all help raise Bod? Besides your parents or guardians, who else helps teach you things?
3. Bod is told not to take revenge in the heat of anger but to wait until a better time. Have you ever wanted to take revenge on someone? If so, what had they done? Did you do something back to them? What does God say about us trying to get revenge?
4. Silas admits he was once evil and did horrible things. Do you think it's possible for evil people to become nice? If so, how do you think they do it? What must evil people do to become Christians? What must nice people do? Is there any difference in what each must do?

5. How was this graveyard different from real graveyards? What does the Bible say happens to people when they die?

Great Black Heroes



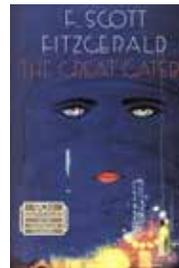
This biographical book in the "Hello Reader!" Science Series by Lynda Jones is published by Scholastic, Inc. and is written for kids ages 4 to 7.

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

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

1. What do you want to be when you grow up?
2. Do you think God can use you? How?
3. What will you have to do to achieve your goal?
4. Are there ways I can help you?

The Great Gatsby



This modernist novel of manners by F. Scott Fitzgerald is published by Scribner Classics, a division of the MacMillan Reference Library

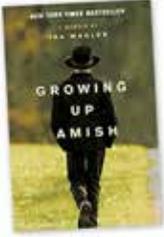
(but is licensed to other publishers and is in the public domain, but only in countries outside of the United States). This book is written for adults, yet it is often studied in high school during 11th grade.

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 was Nick lonely? What makes you feel lonely? What caused him to feel as if he finally belonged in his community? How do small acts of kindness help both the giver and the receiver? How does Nick's kind act help him? What kind thing have you done for others?
2. What does Nick expect from the rich? How does he end up feeling about them? What makes the crimes of the rich disgusting to Nick? Do you think money can hide all the things that you do wrong?
3. Why does Nick forgive Jordan of her lying? How does Jordan's lying hurt her and others? Is Nick really an honest person if he chooses to have a relationship with someone who is an obsessive liar? Who is he lying to?
4. Who do you think Daisy really loves? When you only love yourself, how do your actions hurt others? How does Daisy's love for herself hurt others?
5. Who is Gatsby enamored with? What does he do wrong? What might have happened if he wasn't killed? How do you think Gatsby would have reacted to Daisy leaving him?
6. What are Tom's ideas about races and people? Why are his ideas wrong? What does he gain by believing the way he does?

Growing Up Amish



This coming-of-age memoir by Ira Wagler is published by Tyndale House. *Growing Up Amish* is written for 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. Nicholas Herrfort is the defenseless target of school bullies. What did you feel as you read the description of Nicholas' home life and the treatment he was given by the other children? Would you be embarrassed to make friends with someone who is that unpopular? Were you surprised that children raised in strict, religious homes could abuse a child this way?
2. Why does the pursuit of worldly pleasures hold such a strong attraction for so many, especially Ira? How do worldly pleasures tempt you?
3. Ira writes that nothing stays the same. Is this true in your life? What are some major changes that have occurred in your life in the last five years? Do you find it difficult to accept change? Do you have someone to talk with about your fears and expectations?
4. Have you ever thought that our family rules are too strict? Are you able to talk about it with me? Why do parents set rules? Have you ever thought that running

away would solve your problems? Explain.

5. Ira believes God exists as a dark and frowning force; He's a God who would not or could not affect his life. Many of his faith decisions are based on his own strength and will. How does Ira's understanding of salvation change?

Gulliver's Travels



This political satire by Jonathan Swift is published by Sterling Publishing and is written for adults but is sometimes studied by kids ages 16 and up.

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

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

1. Lying is so foreign to the Houyhnhnms that they don't even have a word for it. What do you think our society would be like if lying didn't exist?
2. Gulliver initially thinks that being immortal like the Struldbruggs would be wonderful. The people of the Laputa nation inform him otherwise. Would you like to live without dying? What would you do with your time? How would living forever on a new earth with Jesus be better?
3. What do you think are some of the most valuable things Gulliver learns on his journeys?
4. By the end of the book, Gulliver is convinced that he and all

humans are descended from Yahoos. Can you name any aspects of the Yahoos that are similar to human traits or behaviors?

5. Which of the places Gulliver visits would you most like to see? Why?
6. Why do you think the book spends so much time discussing excrement and private body parts? Did that bother you, or did you think there was a purpose for it? Explain your answer.