

# Book Review Discussion Questions



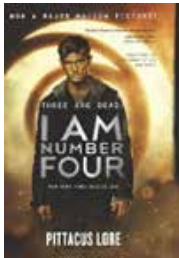
# Table of Contents

I Am Number Four . . . . .	3
Ice Whale . . . . .	3
The Icebound Land . . . . .	3
If You're Reading This, It's Too Late . . . . .	4
I Get a Clue . . . . .	4
The Importance of Being Earnest . . . . .	4
In Front of God and Everybody . . . . .	5
In the Shadow of Lions . . . . .	5
In Too Deep . . . . .	5
Incarceron . . . . .	6
Independence Hall . . . . .	6
The Indian in the Cupboard . . . . .	7
Inheritance . . . . .	7
Inkdeath . . . . .	7
Inkheart . . . . .	8
Inkspell . . . . .	8
Insurgent . . . . .	9
Into the Gauntlet . . . . .	10
Into the Wild . . . . .	10
The Invisible Friend . . . . .	10
Iqbal: A Novel . . . . .	11
Iron Thunder . . . . .	11
Island Dreamer . . . . .	11
Island of the Blue Dolphins . . . . .	12
Ivanhoe . . . . .	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](mailto:reviewrequests@family.org).

# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## I Am Number Four



This contemporary, science fiction book is the first in the “Lorien Legacies” series by Pittacus Lore (a pseudonym for authors Jobie Hughes and

James Frey) and is published by HarperCollins. *I Am Number Four* is written for ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. Why doesn't the principal discipline Mark for his actions? How do people treat professional athletes today? Why do many of them get away with things? Are all athletes this way?
2. What do the Lorien children want to use their Legacies to do? How might they defeat the Mogadorians and save Earth? What superpowers would you like to have? How would you use them to help others?
3. The book claims that many of Earth's greatest minds and artists were actually children of human and Loric parents. How does an idea like this negate God's role in our history? What are some of God's gifts to believers? What are some of your God-given gifts?

## Ice Whale



This historical fiction novel by Jean Craighead George is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA) LLC and is

written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. How does the alcohol brought in by white traders cause problems for the Eskimo communities? How does alcohol abuse hurt people and communities today? What does the Bible say about drunkenness?
2. How does the presence of whalers in the 1800s harm the Eskimos and the ocean life? Why does the author suggest it is OK for the Eskimos to kill whales but not for the white men? Why does each group want to hunt whales? What does this author paint as evil and good? Does her perception of good and evil match the Bible's definition of each?
3. What do you think about the bond that generations of Toozaks felt with Siku? Can humans have a spiritual connection with animals and nature? To whom does a person's spirit connect? Are we able to connect to God on our

own power? Explain. How does His drawing us closer to Him dictate the bond?

## The Icebound Land



This fantasy adventure is the third book in the “Ranger's Apprentice” series by John Flanagan and is published by Puffin Books, a division of

Penguin Young Readers Group. *The Icebound Land* is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. How did Will become addicted to drugs? Was it his fault? What were his choices? Why is it so difficult for the princess to watch him go through it? Have you ever watched someone suffer through an addiction? What was it like? How can you help someone dealing with substance abuse?
2. How is alcohol abused in this book? What are some of the results of the various characters' drunkenness? Which character(s) show restraint concerning alcohol use?
3. What kind of man is Deparnieux? How does he get the attention of the people in his land? Why do some people

think they have to bully others to gain respect? What are some kinder, more Christlike ways to get the attention and honor of your peers?

4. Though Evanlyn doesn't physically battle enemies like the men in this story, what valuable qualities does she possess? How do her courage, ingenuity and loyalty play a critical role? How can you be heroic by demonstrating upstanding character in your family or circle of friends?

## If You're Reading This, It's Too Late



This mystery-adventure book by Pseudonymous Bosch, the second in the "Secret" series, is published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of

Hachette Book Group USA. *If You're Reading This, It's Too Late* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Secrets are a major theme of this book. What are some of the secrets? What are the consequences of keeping those secrets? What are some reasons you shouldn't keep secrets from us, your parents?
2. Cass and Max-Ernest skip school and sneak out of their homes at night. Do they trust the rules and people in authority over them? Explain. Who should you trust as people in authority over you?

Why should you obey them? What are the consequences for your not obeying them?

3. Why might some of the students at Cass and Max-Ernest's school be obsessed by the Skelton Sisters? How could their obsession hurt them? How has an obsession hurt you?

## I Get a Clue



This mystery novel by Nancy Ellen Hird is the first in the "My Edinburgh Files" series published by Desert Fire Press. *I Get a Clue* is written for kids ages 10 to 13.

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

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

1. What are some of the difficulties Libby faces as she tries to be friends with Phil? When have you found yourself in a relationship with someone who frequently makes bad choices? What does the Bible say about the kind of people with whom we should surround ourselves?
2. Why does Mags sometimes ignore or belittle Libby? Have you ever been in Libby's place? In Mags' place? How did it feel? How does God want us to treat others?
3. What piece of encouragement from the Bible does Tom give Libby in his email? When have you felt as Phil did that God was on vacation? How can you stay faithful and draw near to God

even at times when you don't "feel" His presence?

## The Importance of Being Earnest



This humorous play by Oscar Wilde 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](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. How does Oscar Wilde's lifestyle affect your impressions of this script or the characters?
2. What do you think of Wilde's view of romantic love and marriage?
3. What words and actions are a good measure of Jack/Gwendolen's and Algvy/Cecily's relationships? What can you do to develop meaningful, godly friendships and relationships?
4. What was most humorous to you about this play?
5. Which character had the most fun in this script?

## In Front of God and Everybody



This coming-of-age novel by K. D. McCrite is the first in the “Confessions of April Grace” series published by Tommy Nelson, an imprint of

Thomas Nelson. *In Front of God and Everybody* is written for kids ages 7 to 12.

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

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

1. Some people say that the faults we find in others are a reflection of faults found in ourselves. This seems true of April Grace. Talk about some of the things April Grace dislikes about Isabel that are also true of her.
2. Isabel says that sarcasm is a very unattractive trait. What is the difference between sarcasm and humor? How can sarcasm be hurtful? April Grace has a hard time holding her tongue—she says everything that crosses her mind. Do you struggle in this area?
3. April Grace’s grandma almost marries a man she doesn’t love because she likes his flattery. What is flattery? How can you tell if people are sincere when they compliment you? What is missing in a person’s life when he or she succumbs so easily to flattery?

## In the Shadow of Lions



This historical book is the first in the “Chronicles of the Scribe” series by Ginger Garrett and is published by David C. Cook. *In the Shadow of Lions* is written for

kids ages 16 and up.

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

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

1. Although Henry seems to genuinely care for Anne when he begins pursuing her, he has no respect for his marriage vows to Catherine. As the ruler of England, how does his behavior affect his people? Why can’t anyone tell him that he is doing the wrong thing? How does he misuse his authority? Do you know anyone who is misusing his or her authority in your life? How does this misuse affect you?
2. his/her own desires above the will of God. How does his/her actions affect him/her and others? Do you know anyone who has placed his/her own desires above the will of God? How does his/her actions affect you? In this story, are all the men and women who make mistakes evil? Explain. What is the name of one person who does both good and evil? Why is this person like this? Are most people in your life all good or all evil? How does a person’s choices affect how people see him/her? Which characters in this book do you believe

were judged correctly for their actions?

3. Anne initially is firm in her commitment to remain a virgin until her wedding night. Why does she become Henry’s mistress? How do the customs of those around her in the court affect her decision? What is one area where you have taken a godly stand? How do those around you misunderstand that stand? How can you stay firm in your convictions while surrounded by those who believe differently?
4. Was the Bible available to everyone in Anne’s day? How available is the Bible in the area where you live? Are there some areas of the world where the Bible is not allowed? Why do you think many take the Bible for granted?

## In Too Deep



This mystery adventure book by Jude Watson is the sixth book in the “The 39 Clues” series and is published by Scholastic Inc. *In Too Deep* is written

for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. What would children need to really travel around the world as Amy and Dan do? Why couldn’t real kids travel like Amy and Dan, even with Nellie’s assistance? What problems would they most likely run into?



2. How is Isabel's parenting different than ours is? What kind of a role model is she for her children? How would you have felt if you were one of her children in the Hummer on the runway?
3. How do the memories of the night her parents died upset Amy? What new information does she uncover about that night? Why does she decide to keep this information from Dan? When Dan finds out, how does he feel about that decision? Do you like it when people keep things from you? What should you be told? What things are OK for you not to be told?
4. Why does Shep not believe the kids even when they tell him the truth? How are the kids living up to the Cahill philosophy of telling lies all the time? Why isn't that a good philosophy to have?
5. How does Irina's son help Amy and Dan? What do Irina's feelings for her son help her do? How might bad experiences that you have had and worked through help others?
6. Name some of the Australian words used in this book. What did you learn about Australia that you didn't know before reading it? What did you learn about Indonesia? How are people in these lands similar to and different from you?

## Incarceron



This dystopian novel by Catherine Fisher is first in the "Incarceron" series and is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of

Penguin Young Readers Group. *Incarceron* is written for ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. What were some of the constraints that Claudia had to live within? How might living in a less technological age help curb violence in our society? How wouldn't it? Which would you prefer to live in, an actual prison, such as *Incarceron*, or a prison of manners, such as protocols?
2. Almost every character in the story lies, steals or has killed in the past. How did you like or dislike them for their past actions? How did the author help you see past their many faults? Who was the most noble of the characters? Explain. Who was the least noble? Explain.
3. Claudia has two father figures in her life: Jared and the Warden. Why did she have a better relationship with her tutor than her father? How did the Warden show Claudia he loved her? Would that be enough for you to feel loved? What is a better show of love?
4. Discuss the character of Sapphique. What role does he play in giving the prisoners of *Incarceron* hope? Where do you find your hope?
5. Sapphique tells Finn that we should be more concerned with who we are than where we are. What might that mean for Finn? What does that mean to you? Is that statement true?

## Independence Hall



This suspense-thriller novel is the first book in the "I, Q" series by Roland Smith and is published by Sleeping Bear Press.

*Independence Hall*

is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. Q and Angela have to wait in the bus for hours for their parents because of a wedding photo shoot that they are not a part of. How would this make them feel estranged from their parents? How do the kids feel about Buddy? Is Buddy concerned about the kids' family or something else? Who are some people around you who care about you and/or your family? Who are some people in your life who are only there for a specific purpose? (e.g., "I say hi to the mailman every day, but he only stops by to bring the mail because it's his job.")
2. How well did Q and Angela transition from total strangers to sleeping in adjacent berths on the bus and spending most of their time together? What do Q and Angela have in common? How are they different? Why do they decide to make their brother/sister relationship work whether they like each other or not?
3. Why does Angela always wear sunglasses? How observant are you? How could sunglasses

make you more observant or less observant?

4. Why do Boone and his team look down on government agencies, such as the FBI and CIA? What is one example that shows Boone knows what he is doing? How long does it take someone to become an expert in something? In what area do you hope to grow in knowledge and experience to perhaps someday be an expert?
5. Why did Malak pretend to be the one who died? How does she think her actions will stop terrorist groups? How would you feel if the mother you thought had died was alive?
6. How did Malak's decision to go deep undercover affect others? Are Blaze and Roger married? Would you be able to keep this secret from your parent and step-parent? Is it OK for kids to keep this kind of a secret? How can Angela and Q honor all their parents?

## The Indian in the Cupboard



This adventure book by Lynne Reid Banks is the first in "The Indian in the Cupboard" series and is published by Doubleday and Company, a division of Random House. *The Indian in the Cupboard* is written for kids ages 8 to 10.

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

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

1. Why do Little Bear and Boone react with violence when they discover they are small? If you woke up and discovered you were very small, how would you feel? Describe a time when you were afraid because you were young. What did you do? Who helped you?
2. After discovering the magic cupboard, Omri spends most of his time with Little Bear and ignores Patrick. If one of your friends ignores you, how would you feel? What would you do about the situation?
3. Adiel wrongly accuses Omri of hiding his gym shorts and hides the cupboard for revenge. What would be a better reaction to the situation? How would you feel if you were accused of something you didn't do? What does the Bible say about vengeance?
4. At the beginning of the book, Little Bear believes all cowboys want to steal Indian land, and Boone dislikes Little Bear simply because he is an Indian. What do they discover about their prejudices? How would you feel if a stranger judged you? What stereotypes might you have of people?

## Inheritance



This fantasy adventure is the fourth book in "The Inheritance Cycle" by Christopher Paolini and is published by Knopf Books for Young Readers, a division of Random House Books.

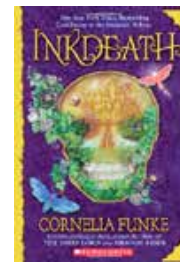
*Inheritance* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. What finally enables Eragon to overcome Galbatorix? What does he cause the evil king to see? Why is it sometimes difficult for us to see our own faults and the problems we cause others? How does asking for forgiveness help us rise above those faults? How does not asking for forgiveness make us weak?
2. What does Eragon believe about religion? Why does he feel serving a higher power is unnecessary? How do you feel about submitting your life to a higher power? How does Eragon's perspective make him prideful of his abilities and those of others? How does pride make Eragon weaker as a warrior?

## Inkdeath



This fantasy adventure is the third book in the "Inkheart Trilogy" by Cornelia Funke and is published by The Chicken House, Ltd., an imprint of

Scholastic Inc. *Inkdeath* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

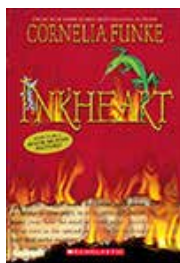
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. To what extent are Mo and Bluejay the same person? How was the Bluejay created? How was Mo recognized as the Bluejay? Does Mo have the freedom to make his own choices? Why might the people of Ombra need the Bluejay? How did words help him become the Bluejay? Have complimentary or harsh words ever helped you change?
2. What are the minor punishments for the people in Ombra? What might the woman in the pillory(stocks) have done? What is thrown at her? How do fire elves hurt those in the stocks? How does Mo feel about these punishments? How does Meggie feel about these punishments? What does Mo say about getting used to seeing such cruelty? Does Fenoglio care about the imprisoned people? In the Bible, what does Jesus say about how you should treat “the least of these” — people who are imprisoned, hungry and hurting?
3. Why does Mo want to stay in the Inkworld? How do Resa and Meggie feel about staying? What does Resa say Mo has developed a taste for? Is Resa right to accuse Mo of wanting to control the story? In what ways has Mo changed?
4. Why does Princess Violante want to kill her father, the Adderhead? How does Violante become bitter? How might a person behave if she were treated badly all her life? At one point, Violante thinks Jacopo is acting mean so that he can make someone angry enough to punish him. Do you agree? Is there a time when punishment or the setting of boundaries can help build a person’s character? How do you see the boundaries we have set for you as helping you develop into a man or woman of character?

5. Is Fenoglio worried about the suffering of his characters? To what extent are the people in Inkworld “real” people? What event inspires Fenoglio to finally begin writing again? Does he learn how to show compassion for others? Why is it hard for you to show compassion sometimes? What helps you show compassion to others?

## Inkheart



kids ages 10 years.

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

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

1. Early in the book, Mo frequently lies to his daughter. Later the reader discovers that the lies were an attempt to keep Inkheart a secret from her. Do you think his lies are justified since he wants to protect Meggie? Or do you think he should have been honest? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think about Fenoglio killing Capricorn? Is it a bad choice? Is it the only way to get rid of him or doesn’t it matter since he isn’t real? Explain.
3. If you could read something or someone out of a book, who or what would you pick and why?

4. How does Elinor change throughout the book? What do you think causes these changes?
5. Why do you think fire is mentioned so frequently?
6. What role does it play in the plot and character development?
7. Basta’s superstitions lead to his downfall. Are you superstitious about anything? What does God think about superstition?

## Inkspell



This fantasy adventure book by Cornelia Funke is the second in the “Inkheart Trilogy” and is published by The Chicken House, Ltd., an imprint of

Scholastic, Inc. *Inkspell* is written for kids ages 9 and up.

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

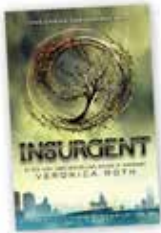
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Farid want to stay with Dustfinger? How does Dustfinger justify leaving him behind once they are separated? Why might Dustfinger be afraid of loving anyone? Tell about a time when you were hurt by someone you cared for. How did you keep from becoming hardened to people?
2. How does Dustfinger’s attitude toward Farid change over the course of the book? How has your relationship with a friend grown deeper over time? What did it take for the relationship to draw you closer?



3. Why does Meggie want to enter the Inkworld? What do her parents think about her obsession with the Inkworld? What happened to Meggie's mother, Resa, while she was living in the Inkworld? How does Meggie plan to return home? What is wrong with her plan?
4. How does Mortola mourn the death of her son? Why doesn't God want us to take revenge?
5. Fenoglio believes he is the supreme creator of his story. Does everything in the Inkworld act according to his plans? When he rewrites Prince Cosimo into the story, what has changed about Cosimo? Why does Farid say Fenoglio should not try to tamper with the story? How does Fenoglio fall short as a creator? Compare Fenoglio as a creator against God, the true Creator. Who would you prefer be the writer of your story?

## Insurgent



This futuristic thriller book by Veronica Roth is the second in the "Divergent" series and is published by Katherine Tegen Books, a division of

HarperCollins Publishers. *Insurgent* is written for kids ages 14 and up.

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

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

1. In the previous book, Tris shot and killed her friend Will when he was under the influence of the simulation and was about to kill her. How does Tris think she might have stopped Will without killing him? Why does Tris hide the truth about Will's death from Tobias? How does having killed a person in self-defense affect Tris' daily life and her reactions to dangerous situations? Why does Tris not tell Will's girlfriend, Christina, the truth when she has the opportunity to do so? How does Tris feel after she is forced to reveal what happened to Will under the influence of Candor's truth serum? What event finally causes Christina to forgive Tris? Who is someone you have hurt? How did you ask for forgiveness?
2. Tris' friend and fellow Dauntless initiate Al committed suicide by jumping off a ledge in the previous book. What does Tris think his reasons for jumping were? Why is she beginning to sympathize with Al's choice? What events have led to Tris being tired of her own existence? What finally stops Tris from taking her own life? Do you ever get tired of doing good for others? What helps you keep going? Why is it important to always have hope? How can our hope never be deferred if it is truly placed in Jesus?
3. What problems does it cause for Tris and Tobias' relationship when Tobias realizes that Tris did not trust him enough to tell him about Will's death? What secrets does Tris accuse Tobias of keeping? How could more honesty have benefited their relationship? Who is someone you are honest with? What kind of secrets would you not tell this person?
4. The five factions abide by a philosophy of "faction before blood." What social problems does this policy cause in regard to how faction members treat their families? Why do faction members distrust faction-transfers who were born in another group, such as Tris who transferred from Abnegation to Dauntless?
5. In what way is the Amity's philosophy of peacefulness admirable? In what way is it problematic? After Tris gets into a fight, why does an Amity official inject Tris with a chemical known as the "peace serum" to make her feel artificially happy and relaxed? Is it right for people in positions of leadership to solve problems among their followers by chemically altering their moods? Is there any situation where conflict can be helpful, not harmful?
6. What has Peter done to Tris in the past that makes it so difficult for her to forgive him? How does Tris react later when she sees that Peter has joined the Erudite and is guarding Jeanine Matthews? How does Peter treat Tris while she is a prisoner? What reason does Peter give for rescuing Tris and Tobias from the Erudite compound? How does Peter's behavior complicate Tris' views about people who seem to be her enemies? Think about your friends. What are some of the complicated personality traits they have? Why couldn't they be placed in only one faction in this book?
7. What are the downfalls of the Dauntless faction? What happens to initiates who fail to pass the strict tests for Dauntless placement? What happens to elderly Dauntless members? What difficulties arise when Dauntless member Shauna is paralyzed as a result of a fight? Tris recalls a Candor children's rhyme, which says that the Dauntless are the cruelest of the five factions. Why does Tris believe that this is

true? Why does she think that Dauntless is the only faction capable of dividing and fighting against itself? What beneficial qualities does each of the five factions possess? In what areas is each faction limited or short-sighted in their approach to life?

4. The family members are willing to hurt each other to win the prize. Have you ever struggled with this in your life? How did you handle this? How did you fix it?
5. What is forgiveness? What does it mean to reconcile with people? What does it mean to bring others to justice? Have you witnessed any of these things in your life? Do you think these are good teachings to live by? Why or why not?

4. What qualities or abilities in a person are most important to God?
5. Do you think Firepaw did the right thing by helping Yellowfang, even though it was against clan rules? Explain. Parents may want to discuss and emphasize the difference between acceptable behavior in the animal kingdom and what is OK in human society.

## Into the Gauntlet



This mystery adventure book by Margaret Peterson Haddix is the 10th book in “The 39 Clues” series and is published by Scholastic Inc.

*Into the Gauntlet* is written for kids ages 8 to 10.

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

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

1. The Kabra children are taught that “truth is a flexible thing.” What does this mean? Do you agree with this? Why or why not? What are your beliefs about truth?
2. Jonah’s museum witness tells him that “no legacy is so rich as honesty.” What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree? Think of an example of this in your own community.
3. Isabel repeatedly threatened the lives of her children. How do you think this made Ian and Natalie feel about their mother? How did it make them feel about themselves? What kind of risk was it for them to turn their backs on their mother and choose to do the right thing with the family?

## Into the Wild



This first fantasy book in the “Warriors” series by Erin Hunter is published by HarperCollins Publishers. *Into the Wild* is written for kids ages 10

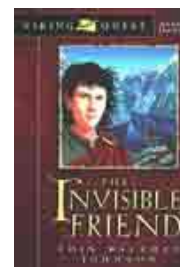
and up.

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

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

1. How did the cats’ hierarchy, which focused on clans, warfare and allegiance, remind you of our society today—gangs, school cliques, etc.?
2. Did Rusty (Firepaw) make a good or bad choice when he left his quiet life for a life of excitement and adventure?
3. In the cats’ world, the strongest and fiercest warriors received honor and respect. How is that similar to humanity?

## The Invisible Friend



This third historical fiction book in the “Viking Quest” series by Lois Walfrid Johnson is published by Moody Publishers. *The Invisible Friend* is written

for kids ages 10 to 14.

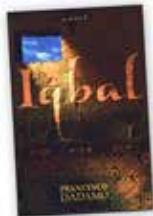
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Where has Mikkel turned his focus? What does God’s Word say about becoming what we serve? What or who have you chosen to serve?
2. Does God still have control in difficult circumstances? How have you seen God working through difficult times in your life? How can you remember that God has a plan for you when things don’t go the way you want them to go?
3. What are Bree’s and Devin’s views on making promises? When you make a promise do you take it as seriously as Devin and Bree? What promises have you made

but have never followed through? What does God say about making and keeping promises?

## Iqbal: A Novel



This historical fiction, coming-of-age book by Francesco D'Adamo is published as a hardcover by Atheneum Books for Young Readers

and by Aladdin Paperbacks. Both are imprints of the Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing division. *Iqbal* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Why do the children's parents sell them into slavery? How do the children feel about their parents' decisions? Do you know anyone like Iqbal, who has done something difficult to help others or to keep them from suffering?
2. What aspects of Iqbal's character make him different from the other child slaves? How does he affect the people around him? What can you do to help inspire others to have the courage to do what's right?
3. How do the living conditions in the carpet factory compare to the way you live? What things can you do to help others who are less fortunate?
4. Why does Hussain Khan have children—not adults—working for him? Why were their debts never erased? How do you know

when someone in authority is being unfair? Whom should you tell?

5. Why does Maria tell Fatima to share Iqbal's story with everyone? Have you ever lost someone you loved? Explain.

## Iron Thunder



This historical fiction book in the "I Witness" series by Avi is published by Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, an imprint of Disney Publishing. *Iron*

*Thunder* is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Despite Tom's young age and relative inexperience, what does he do to demonstrate man-sized courage and confidence? Would you have been able to do the same thing in his place?
2. How difficult is his position? Have you ever had to be strong where others weren't?
3. Tom witnesses others leaving because of the pressure. What kinds of pressures do you face? Have any of your friends given in to peer pressure? How are you able to be strong?
4. Tom shows integrity and doesn't give any information to spies. What did he have to gain, and what did he have to lose?

## Island Dreamer



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

*Island Dreamer* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. Paula buys a skimpy bathing suit to get attention while she's at the beach. What doesn't she understand about building a relationship with a guy? Why is it important to dress modestly? What is the most precious gift you can give your spouse? Why is it important to save this gift for marriage?
2. Why did Todd's dad say he admired Todd when they were in Hana? Have you ever done something because your friends did it?
3. Todd tells Christy that he's going to jump off the bridge. Why does he want to jump off the bridge this time? What is one thing you wanted to do and then were able to do? What is one thing you have done differently than how your friends thought you should do it?
4. How does Paula deceive Christy's mom? Is it a lie? How can actions be as much a lie as words?
5. What did the early missionaries do when they were being

persecuted? Why does God want us to pray for our enemies?

6. What is a God-thing? What God-things happen to Christy and Paula while they're in Hawaii? What God-things have you seen happen in your life?

## Island of the Blue Dolphins



This historical adventure by Scott O'Dell was originally published by Houghton Mifflin in 1960. It is written for children ages 9 through 12.

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

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

1. Karana jumps off the rescue ship because her brother was left behind, even though the captain assured her that they would go back to get him. Why does she do this? Why doesn't she trust the captain?
2. What more could Karana have done to protect her brother after they were alone on the island? What would you have done in her place?
3. After wounding Rontu, Karana decides not to kill him and nurses him to health. Why does she change her mind? Are her actions believable? In what situations have you changed your mind about someone or something?
4. Why does Karana want to have pets? How do they stave off her

loneliness? Tell about a time when you've felt lonely.

## Ivanhoe



This historical book by Sir Walter Scott is published by Penguin Classics 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](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Normans hate Saxons; Saxons hate Normans. Everyone hates Jews. What are some of the problems these prejudices cause for individuals and for England?
2. Name a few of the ways in which the medieval church seems to have strayed from the customs and beliefs of early Christians in the Bible.
3. Many critics feel that Scott's historical accuracy is shoddy and that many of his characters lack depth. Is this still a book worth reading? Which characters and themes do you find interesting? What did you learn?
4. The theme of chivalry pervades Ivanhoe. (Chivalry can be briefly defined as a knightly code of behavior including honor, valor, goodness and respect of women and God.) Which characters offer a good example of chivalry and which do not?
5. Do you think chivalry exists today?