

# Book Review Discussion Questions



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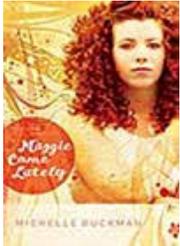
# Table of Contents

Maggie Come Lately . . . . .	3	Monster . . . . .	21
The Magician's Nephew . . . . .	3	Moon Over Manifest . . . . .	21
Magyk . . . . .	4	Motorcycles, Sushi & One Strange Book . . . . .	21
Mandie and the Holiday Surprise . . . . .	4	The Mouse With the Question Mark Tail . . . . .	22
Mandie and the Secret Tunnel . . . . .	5	Mr. Popper's Penguins . . . . .	22
Manga Messiah . . . . .	5	Mudshark . . . . .	23
Manga Metamorphosis . . . . .	5	Mummies in the Morning . . . . .	23
Manga Mutiny . . . . .	6	My Side of the Mountain . . . . .	23
The Mark of Athena . . . . .	6	The Mysterious Benedict Society . . . . .	24
Mark Twain's Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn . . . . .	6	Mystery of the Phantom Heist . . . . .	24
Mason Dixon: Fourth-Grade Disasters . . . . .	7	Mystery of the Silver Coins . . . . .	25
The Masquerade . . . . .	7		
Matched . . . . .	8		
Maudie in the Middle . . . . .	8		
The Maze of Bones . . . . .	9		
The Maze Runner . . . . .	9		
The Medusa Plot . . . . .	9		
Meet Addy: An American Girl . . . . .	10		
Meet Felicity, an American Girl . . . . .	10		
Meet Molly, an American Girl . . . . .	10		
Melonhead . . . . .	11		
The Merchant of Death . . . . .	12		
Mercy Clifton: Pilgrim Girl . . . . .	12		
Messenger . . . . .	12		
Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25 . . . . .	13		
Middle School, the Worst Years of My Life . . . . .	13		
Middle School, Get Me Out of Here! . . . . .	13		
Midnight on the Moon . . . . .	14		
The Mighty Miss Malone . . . . .	14		
Millie's Courageous Days . . . . .	14		
Millie's Faithful Heart . . . . .	15		
Millie's Grand Adventure . . . . .	15		
Millie's Reluctant Sacrifice . . . . .	15		
Millie's Remarkable Journey . . . . .	16		
Millie's Steadfast Love . . . . .	16		
Millie's Unsettled Season . . . . .	16		
MindWar . . . . .	17		
Miracles on Maple Hill . . . . .	17		
The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane . . . . .	18		
Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children . . . . .	18		
The Missing Chums . . . . .	18		
Mixed Bags . . . . .	19		
Moby Dick: A Pop-Up Book . . . . .	19		
Mockingjay . . . . .	19		
Monster . . . . .	20		

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

## Maggie Come Lately



This teen girls' fiction book in "The Pathway Collection" by Michelle Buckman is published by Think Books, an imprint of NavPress. *Maggie*

*Come Lately* 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. Suicide: Maggie's depressed mother kills herself.
2. Rape: Maggie finds her classmate, Sue, raped and beaten and wonders if it could happen to her.
3. Abuse: Maggie's younger brother, Billy, is abused by the father of one of his friends.
4. Teen drinking and drug use: Maggie goes to a party and has a beer because someone hands it to her. Others are drinking and some are smoking joints.
5. Premarital sex: Maggie is frustrated that sex, not love or companionship, seem to be the cornerstone of her classmates' relationships. She ponders the issue frequently, and she wants more for herself than a shallow fling.
6. Modesty: Maggie has some concerns about wearing a new shirt

because she's afraid it shows too much cleavage. Dad's girlfriend, Andrea, says it's OK to be proud of the body God gave you. Andrea, a rape counselor, notes that no one "asks" to be raped by wearing certain types of clothing.

7. Parents dating/blended families: Maggie's life is thrown off when her father starts dating a take-charge woman who tries to run the house before even becoming a member of the family. Maggie struggles to be kind to her for her father's sake but not let this woman run them all over.
8. Do you think God has ever allowed you to go through a difficult situation so you could help someone else later on? Tell me about that.
9. What did Maggie ultimately discover about popularity?

## The Magician's Nephew



This fantasy adventure is the first book (chronologically) in "The Chronicles of Narnia" series by C.S. Lewis and is a prequel to *The Lion, the Witch*

*and the Wardrobe*, which is usually sold as the first book in the set. HarperCollins Children's Books, a division of HarperCollins is the publisher. *The Magician's Nephew* is written for kids ages 8 and up.

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

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

1. Why does Uncle Andrew believe that it is OK for him to break his promises? Why does Jadis believe that it is all right for her to destroy people or treat them like slaves? How do other people suffer as a result of their pride? Is it OK for you to break your promises? If you did, who would suffer? How does doing what is right by others help you not become like Jadis?
2. Jadis and Uncle Andrew both say they have suffered because they have tried to learn forbidden things. How can God help you discern when certain things are off-limits for a reason?
3. In the room of waxworks on Charn, Digory desperately wants to ring the bell in the center of the room. He says that he'll go crazy if he doesn't. Is he telling the truth? How could Digory have known it was wrong to ring the bell? When Digory rings the bell, what problems does he cause? What does he have to do to fix these problems? When did your curiosity or desire to do something get you into trouble? What were the consequences?
4. Polly immediately dislikes Jadis, but Digory is amazed by her bravery and strength. Why does Digory think Jadis is beautiful at first, while Polly does not? What about Jadis' behavior could

have let Digory know sooner that she was not trustworthy? What does Polly notice about her that Digory doesn't? When does Digory finally notice that Jadis is evil? How can the Bible help you recognize what is good and what is evil?

- When Jadis is deathly sick in the Wood between the Worlds, she asks for the children's mercy. What does Polly think they should do? (Leave Jadis, even if the Wood kills her.) What does Digory do? (He hesitates, and his indecision allows the Witch to grab hold of him.) Is there any time when showing mercy is not the right thing to do?

## Magyk



This fantasy adventure book by Angie Sage is the first in the "Septimus Heap" series and is published by Katherine Tegen Books, a division of HarperCollins

Publishers. *Magyk* 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:

- How does Rayne show her How does Sarah Heap discover that her adopted daughter, Jenna, is actually the missing princess of Castle? Who doesn't she tell? Who does she tell? Are Sarah and Silas right to conceal the truth about Jenna? What would have happened if they had told people that Jenna was adopted? What about their decision made

life hard for Jenna (e.g., wondering why she didn't look like the Heaps)? What about it made her life easier (e.g., not telling anyone the secret)? What would you have done if you had been her parents?

- Overstrand of not caring about the common people because she is the ExtraOrdinary Wizard. Why does Silas think Marcia has carelessly abandoned Sully Mullin to the Hunter? How does Silas' opinion of Marcia change when he realizes that she gave Sally her valuable KeepSafe charm for protection? Tell about a time when you thought poorly of someone only to find that the person was actually doing what was right?
- Alther Mella emphasizes that he did not push DomDaniel off of Wizard Tower. Why does Alther feel that it is wrong for an apprentice to overthrow his master, even when the master has turned evil? Are there any cases in the Bible where a young person refused to destroy an older leader who had begun to do evil things? (Consider 1 Samuel 24:6.)
- Why does Boy 412 expect to be mistreated? Why is he surprised when Aunt Zelda wakes him to give him warm milk and toast? How does Boy 412 feel when he realizes that, for the first time, the good parts of his life outnumber the bad parts? Why does it take so long for Boy 412 to speak aloud? How does Nicko's attitude toward Boy 412 change over time, and how does the trust between them develop? Think about other children you know. How might their characteristics, such as quietness or being bossy, stem from how they were raised? How might your characteristics stem from how we raised you?

- Why does Aunt Zelda Heap use a Freeze spell on the Hunter instead of killing him? Why does she want to avoid harming him permanently, even though he was trying to kill her and the children? Is it a fair solution when Aunt Zelda alters the Hunter's memories of his own past, rendering him harmless? Why is it important to protect human life when possible?

## Mandie and the Holiday Surprise



This mystery book, eleventh in the "Mandie" series by Lois Gladys Leppard, is published by Bethany House Publishers, an imprint of Baker Publishing Group.

*Mandie and the Holiday Surprise* is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

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

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

- What do you believe is the real reason Mandie became upset at Mr. Bond for referring to Uncle John as Mandie's parent?
- Do you think Hilda knew what she was doing when she took Mandie's presents?
- Why do you think she only took Mandie's?
- What should Mandie have done when she heard about the new baby?

## Mandie and the Secret Tunnel



This mystery book is the first in the “Mandie” series by Lois Gladys Leppard and is published by Bethany House Publishers. *Mandie and the Secret*

*Tunnel* 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. Have you ever had something When Mandie was afraid, what did she do? Have you ever asked the Lord for help when you were afraid or facing a difficult time?
2. How does Mandie feel when Joe pays attention to Polly? Have you ever been jealous when one of your friends makes a new friend, and she didn't pay as much attention to you? What did you do?
3. Mandie wants to honor her parents, even when it's hard. How does she do this? How do you honor your parents? What does the Bible say God will give to those who honor their parents? What does it mean?
4. What do you think about the people who were after Uncle John's money? What does the Bible say about the love of money? How is this true with Bayne Lock, Mrs. Snow and Ruby?
5. Is God good even when bad things are happening? How do

we know He is? What are other characteristics of God?

6. Mandie doubts God's love for her after her father dies. Was God punishing Mandie? How do you know that God loved Mandie?

## Manga Messiah



This Christian graphic novel by Kozumi Shinozawa is the first book in the five-book Manga Bible set. It is published by Tyndale House Publishers.

*Manga Messiah* 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. Does the manga comic style make these Bible stories seem more adventurous?
2. Did the ancient Hebrew names confuse you?
3. What Bible story became more real for you after reading it in this form?

## Manga Metamorphosis



This Christian graphic novel by Kozumi Shinozawa is the second book in the five-book Manga Bible set. It is published by Tyndale House Publishers.

*Manga Metamorphosis* 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 were the other apostles astounded when Peter began to preach powerfully? What did the people and religious leaders say about the apostles when they spoke boldly about Yeshua? Who gave the apostles the words and wisdom to share their message? Could God allow you to speak with power and authority? Why or why not?
2. How did Paul feel during the days he spent in blindness after meeting the Lord? What went through his head? Is it possible for someone evil to make such a significant life change today? Explain your answer.
3. Why did Mark leave Paul and Barnabas? Why did Paul and Barnabas argue when Barnabas wanted to give Mark another chance to travel with them? What happened in Mark's life because Barnabas gave him a do-over? Have you ever known anyone who was headed in the wrong direction and got a second chance? What happened?
4. How did the apostles respond to imprisonment, stonings and other trials? Why didn't they run away or get depressed? How would you respond in their circumstances?
5. How did the rulers and religious leaders respond to the apostles' teachings about Yeshua? What were some of the consequences of their pride, jealousy and attempts at people-pleasing?

## Manga Mutiny



This graphic novel by Ryo Azumi is third in the five-book Manga Bible set. *Manga Mutiny* is published by NEXT in conjunction with Tyndale House Publishers

Inc. and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Which characters received blessings for their obedience to God? Which were punished for their disobedience?
2. What does the Bible say about the holiness of God and His desire for His people to be holy, too? How might that be related to why God destroyed entire cities or groups of people?
3. What were some actions that God requires of His people that made them uncomfortable or unhappy? Why does God sometimes ask you to leave your comfort zone?
4. Which character in this section of the Bible is your favorite? What do you like or respect about him/her?
5. Which of God's miracles in this part of the Bible impacts you most? Why? What do miracles—the flood, the birth of Isaac, the burning bush or the parting of the Red Sea—tell you about God's character?

6. What new insights did you gain by seeing the Bible come to life in comic book form?

## The Mark of Athena



This contemporary fantasy novel by Rick Riordan is the third in the "Heroes of Olympus" series and is published by Hyperion Books, a division

of Disney Book Group. *The Mark of Athena* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

1. Why might Leo feel like an outsider on the quest? How might the other demigods view him? Describe a time when you felt like an outsider in a group of friends.
2. What did Piper mean when she told the river god that Jason may not be stronger than the river god, but he was better? What qualities, other than superpowers, does a hero possess? Who are the people around you with those same qualities?
3. Describe the differences between the Greek and Roman camps. How do the demigods learn to work together on the quest? How will this help the demigods in the next stage of their quest? What differences will they have to overcome? Think about someone you know whose perspective on something is different than yours. How might this friendship

be valuable to you? What differences will you have to overcome?

4. There are two leaders in the Roman camp, Octavian and Reyna, with opposing views. Who do you think is right and why?

## Mark Twain's Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn



These coming-of-age adventure stories by Mark Twain are published in one volume by NewSouth Books, a division of NewSouth, Inc.

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is read by kids ages 12 and up, and is often taught as a tween novel in classrooms. *Huckleberry Finn*, on the other hand, is most often taught to teens at the high school level, usually around 11th grade, because of its more mature themes. Since these books are published together in a single volume in this version, the age range would incorporate both books. Therefore this version is written for kids 15 and up.

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

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

1. When Pap kidnaps Huck, how does Huck feel about living with his father again? Why does Huck finally decide to leave his father? Do the townspeople think Pap can redeem himself? Does he?

- Miss Watson likes to talk about God and Christian living, but she owns a slave and treats him roughly. Why does she believe it is right for her to own a slave? Does anyone else in town think slavery is wrong? Does Huck? What does Huck's father say about slaves? What does God's Word say about loving your neighbor, and how does that affect your view of slavery? Where does slavery happen today?
- The King and the Duke are able to deceive people in many different towns. Why do the people believe their stories? How does Huck feel about their deceit? Why does he not speak out against them? What does he do to help the Wilks girls? What would you have done in his place?
- At several points, Huck considers turning in Jim to the law. Why does he struggle with his decision?
- How does Tom feel about setting Jim free? How does Huck feel about letting Tom help? What does Tom say they must do to free Jim from the shed where he is being held? Does Tom or Huck have the most practical approach?

## Mason Dixon: Fourth-Grade Disasters



This humorous book by Claudia Mills is second in the "Mason Dixon" series and is published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children's

Books. *Mason Dixon: Fourth-Grade*

*Disasters* is written for kids ages 8 and up.

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

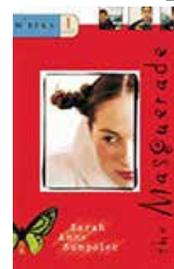
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Which character do you identify with the most in this book? What do you have in common? How are you different from this character? Think about one situation that this character finds himself/herself in. Would you have reacted in the same way or differently? Explain.
- Mason isn't a pet person. How does he feel about Dog at first? How does he feel about Dog later? Are you a pet person? What would be the perfect pet for you?
- Mason's parents want him to try new things, such as new foods or singing with a school group. How does Mason feel about trying new things? Do you like trying new things? Have you ever tried something new that you were sure you wouldn't like, but then it turned out that you did like it? Explain.
- Brody is Mason's best friend. He even gets an identical dog-shaped pencil sharpener and eraser for Mason. What are some traits that make Brody a good friend? What traits make Nora a good friend? How is Mason a good friend? Who are your best friends? What makes them your friends? What makes you a good friend to them?
- Mason's mother tells him, "The more you don't want to do something, the more important it is to do it." How true is that? In what ways might this advice

work well? In what ways wouldn't this advice work well? How is "stretching" yourself often a good thing?

- Dunk has bullied Mason since kindergarten. What are two different ways that Brody responded to Dunk—one in defense and one not? How does Mason react when Dunk teases Brody about being Puff? Why does he act this way? What does Nora do to stop the teasing? What would you have done around Dunk? Is there anyone like Dunk in your class?

## The Masquerade



This first coming-of-age book in the "Becoming Beka" series by Sarah Anne Sumpolec is published by Moody Publishers. *The Masquerade* is written for kids

ages 13 to 18.

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

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

- Beka hides a secret from her family. Because of this secret, she eventually feels trapped in her anger. Do you ever feel trapped by your choices? Beka believes the lie that if she is honest with everyone, they will hate her. With help, she realizes this isn't true. Is there a lie that has been festering in your heart? With whom can you talk about it?
- A girl accuses Beka of being a prude because Beka doesn't like to party. Both times that Beka parties with this girl, Beka gets

drunk and feels sick the next day. Why do you think under-age drinking is popular even though it's illegal and makes people feel empty and sick afterward? Is partying an escape? Have you ever felt the need to escape? What would be a better alternative to partying? Have you ever felt pressure to get drunk?

3. Beka wants peace and a sense of belonging. She first tries to achieve it by lying about her faith. Instead of feeling as though she belongs, she feels more isolated and angry. She then thinks that she can feel more connected by hanging out with a popular group and partying. Instead, she feels empty and pushes her family away even more. The only place Beka finds peace is through belief in God and confession of sin. God gives Beka hope for change and a peace in her life that she never has felt before. Where do you go for peace and a sense of belonging? Have you ever gone anywhere other than to God? How did it make you feel?

## Matched



This is the first novel in the “Matched” dystopian trilogy written by Ally Condie and is published by Dutton Books, a division of Penguin Group.

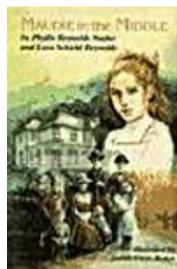
*Matched* is written for ages 12 and up.

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. Cassia is allowed to have her grandmother’s compact. If you were only allowed to leave one thing to your family, what would you choose and why? If you could only have one thing to remember your family by, what would you choose?
2. The Society chooses the jobs for its members based on their strengths and weaknesses. What kind of job do you think you would be assigned? Explain. What would you like about this job? What would you dislike about it?
3. What does the green pill that the people carry with them do? Why do you think her grandfather urges Cassia not to take it? Can you think of a situation where you would be tempted to take that pill? What is another way you could deal with the problem instead of medication?
4. The Society has chosen to preserve a limited number of books, music, poetry and art, and to destroy the rest. Why might they do this? If you had to choose the items on the list, what would be your top five in each category? How are the Society’s rules rigid? How would you react if none of your favorites made their list?

## Maudie in the Middle



This family life book by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor and Lura Schield Reynolds is published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of

Simon & Schuster Children’s Books 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. Why does Maudie think Aunt Sylvie is getting married?
2. What does Aunt Sylvie’s marriage make Maudie determined to do?
3. How would you define bad behavior, such as lying and stealing? Does going against the Ten Commandments always lead to negative consequences?
4. What kinds of bad situations do you find yourself in that are beyond your control?
5. Were they a result of your actions or someone else’s? Can bad things happen to you when it’s not your fault?
6. What chores do you enjoy the least? How do you think the chores you’re expected to do compare to Maudie’s chores?
7. Maudie thinks being the middle child causes her problems. What are some good and bad things about being who you are in your family, the (first, second, third, etc.) child?
8. When Lester took Maudie’s perfume, she chose to let him get himself in trouble instead of telling on him. Tell about someone who has done something wrong to you. Did the person get away with it or did he end up suffering for it?

## The Maze of Bones



This first adventure, mystery book in “The 39 Clues” series by Rick Riordan is published by Scholastic, Inc. *The Maze of Bones* is written for kids

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 Ben react to his mother? How was Nellie a good baby sitter? How was she not a good baby sitter?
2. The kids sometimes deceived their relatives. How were their actions right or wrong?
3. The book implies that their actions were OK because they were part of a contest to solve Grace’s treasure hunt. Is deception ever OK? Explain.
4. What did you learn about Ben Franklin that you didn’t know? Was everything in this book about him true? (Parents could help children dig deeper into the life of Ben Franklin and check the accuracy of the stories in this book. They could do this concerning Paris and its history as well).
5. If you had the choice Dan and Amy did—to take a million dollars or to compete in Grace’s treasure hunt—which would you choose? Why?

## The Maze Runner



This futuristic science fiction novel by James Dashner is the first in the “Maze Runner Trilogy,” which consists of three books and a prequel,

and is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House Inc. *The Maze Runner* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. What role does fear play? How does fear dictate the boys’ lives? What do you fear? How do you deal with it? What does the Bible say about fear?
2. Rather than give up, Thomas survives because he is able to think rather than panic. List and compare leadership qualities between Alby, Newt and Thomas. Who makes the best leader? Why?
3. Thomas has a strong pull to be a runner. How does this inner desire compare to what Christians experience as a call from God? How is his “strong pull” different from a calling?
4. Rules are a big part of life in the Glade. What are the two most important rules? Why do the boys think rules are a good idea? What are the most important rules for you? Are the Glade rules as essential to the boys’ success as

the Ten Commandments are to your success in life?

5. One of the traits being tested has to do with giving up. Newt tells Thomas the Gladers stay busy because if “you get lazy, you get sad. Start givin’ up.” Why is it so important for them not to give up? Have you ever felt like giving up? What motivates you to keep going?

## The Medusa Plot



This mystery adventure book by Gordon Korman is the first book in the “The 39 Clues: Cahills vs. Vespers” series and is published by Scholastic Inc.

*The Medusa Plot* 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. Dan is having a hard time returning to the real world after his months hunting for clues. What might have changed him? How can he use these changes to benefit others? In your life, what has changed you the most? How can this change be used to serve others?
2. Amy and Sinead have become like sisters since the end of the clue hunt. Prior to that, they were enemies. What makes them so close? What part does forgiveness play in their relationship? Are there situations in your life that you could forgive someone

to restore or improve a relationship? Explain.

3. How has Nellie taken care of Amy and Dan in the past? How do you think they feel when they see the video of her getting shot? What can Amy and Dan do to help take care of Nellie? What isn't reasonable about what the Vespers want from Amy and Dan?
4. Leading the family is a huge responsibility for Amy. How is she doing a good job? What could she do better? Who is the leader of our family? How do you know?
5. Dan seems to be battling with a dark side and is hoping to recreate Gideon's serum. What do you think he will do with it? How do you think that will turn out? What do you think will happen with Dan in the end? What would you do in Dan's place?

## Meet Addy: An American Girl



This historical fiction novel by Connie Porter is the first in the "Addy" series and is published by American Girl. *Meet Addy* is written for children 8

and up.

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

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

1. How do slave owners value their slaves? How does God value people? How valuable are you

to God? How should you value others?

2. How does the overseer treat Addy unfairly when she misses some of the worms on the tobacco plants? How has someone treated you unfairly? How does Addy respond? How did you respond? Why might your responses have been different?
3. Why does Addy start to hate white people? What does her mother tell her about hateful feelings? Have you felt hatred toward someone? Why? Do you still feel hatred toward someone? What can you do to get rid of hateful feelings?

## Meet Felicity, an American Girl



This historical fiction book by Valerie Tripp is the first in the "Felicity" series and is published by American Girl. *Meet Felicity* is written for kids

ages 8 and up.

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

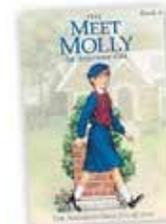
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What activity does Felicity like better—sewing or caring for horses? What are you passionate about? Why do you think God gives people different passions and talents? What kind of world would it be if we all had the same talents?
2. How does Nye treat Penny? How should we treat the things God

has given us, whether they are toys, animals, family members or ourselves? What things, animals or people do you care for?

3. Felicity likes Penny so much that she sins in several ways. What are those ways? What have you done wrong because you were so focused on something else? How did that situation turn out?
4. What secret does Ben keep? How can keeping secrets hurt people? What would you do if you learned someone was doing the wrong thing? Why?
5. What kind of problem does Jiggy Nye have? How does his drinking affect other parts of his life?
6. What does Felicity do at the end of the book? How could falling off a horse hurt you? How do her actions set Penny free? What is right and what is wrong about her setting Penny free?

## Meet Molly, an American Girl



This historical fiction novel by Valerie Tripp is the first in the "Molly" series and is published by American Girl. *Meet Molly* is written for kids 8 and

up.

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

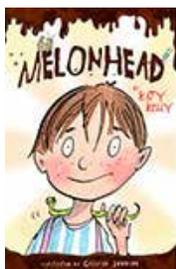
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. When does Ricky first tease Molly and her friends? What does Molly do after Ricky teases

them? What other choice does Molly have? What would have happened if Molly hadn't teased Ricky about liking Delores? Talk about a fight you had with a sibling or friend. What started the fight? What did you do about it? How does Jesus say we should treat someone who is mean to us?

2. How does Ricky take revenge on the girls? Does his act of revenge end his troubles with the girls? God says that we should not take revenge on people. Talk about a time when someone was mean to you. When this happens, what can you do to stop yourself from taking revenge?
3. Why does Susan lie to Jill and Dolores? Why does she cross her fingers as she lies? Does her crossing her fingers make her lie OK? Explain. The Bible says that the Lord detests lying lips, but He delights in those who tell the truth. If you sin and tell a lie, what does God want you to do?
4. Why does Molly's family eat homegrown vegetables such as turnips? Tell about a time you gave up something or sacrificed something for someone else?
5. Why are Molly and her friends jealous of Alison? Talk about a time when you have been jealous of someone and how jealousy feels. How would you rather feel? How can counting your blessings help get rid of jealous feelings? How can God help you change your feelings?

## Melonhead



This humorous slice-of-life book by Katy Kelly is published by Delacorte Press Books for Young Readers, an imprint of

Random House Children's Books and is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. What dangerous things does Adam do? What are some of the choices he makes that go against his parents' rules? How do his parents handle these situations? Do they react appropriately? Do they overreact? Do they have reasons to be nervous and angry about his choices?
2. Why does Adam do things like running on roofs and hiding a snake in his house? Which of his actions are done out of rebellion, because he knows they are wrong? Which are unintentionally wrong? Which of his actions does he do before considering the consequences? What have you done without thinking through the consequences? What did you learn from this?
3. Have you ever embarrassed someone with your actions, as Adam embarrassed his mom when he wrote the head lice story? Have you ever embarrassed yourself, as Adam did when he became caught in a tree? How did someone embarrass you? How did you respond?

4. Have you ever had an idea for an invention (or a reinvention)? What was your idea?
5. Whom does Sam try to find to get help when Adam is trapped? Why is it a good idea to find a grown-up when you really need help? Why is it sometimes hard to tell a grown-up about something you've done wrong? What could happen if you don't get help from someone older and wiser?
6. When Sam's parents make him get rid of Cobra, where does Adam hide the snake? His friend Jonique suggests that hiding a snake is the same as lying about having one, but Adam says it's OK for him to hide the snake from his parents because he's saving a life. What is wrong with Adam's reasoning? Why is hiding something from your parents wrong? When Adam finally tells his parents the truth, what has Adam learned about lying? What are some of the other situations in which Adam lies to—or at least, isn't completely truthful with—his mom and dad? What happens because of his various lies? What does the Bible say about lying? What are some of the negative consequences of not telling the truth?
7. What does the phrase "Necessity is the mother of invention" mean? How does Adam and Sam's project relate to this saying? Where did they get their ideas? Do you think their reinvention would really work or be useful?

## The Merchant of Death



This first fantasy book in the “Pendragon” series by D.J. MacHale is published by Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing. *The Merchant of Death*

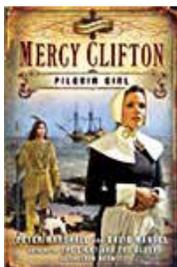
is written for kids ages 9 to 14.

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

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

1. Based on the information presented about the explosive material tank and the way people who owned it acted, what point do you think the author was trying to make about weapons? Do you agree with his viewpoint?
2. Did Saint Dane remind you of anyone mentioned in the Bible?
3. What are some ways Saint Dane tricked and manipulated people and circumstances in Denduron?
4. What makes someone a hero?
5. Was Bobby a born hero, or did he have to grow into his role?
6. What are some ways an average person can be heroic?
7. Why do you think Bobby was encouraged to keep a journal?
8. Do you keep a journal, or have you ever thought about doing so?
9. What might be some positive results of writing down your thoughts, experiences and activities?

## Mercy Clifton: Pilgrim Girl



This historical fiction in the “Crimson Cross” series by Peter Marshall, David Manuel and Sheldon Maxwell is published by B&H Publishing

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. Many bad things happen to Mercy. What do you feel was the worst?
2. What would you have done in her place?
3. Why did Mercy like Jack in the beginning?
4. Why didn’t Mercy like Jack by the end of the book?
5. What convinces Mercy to make the New World her home?
6. Jack is a complex character. Sometimes he is gallant—when he saves Mercy and her dog from a wave—and other times he is mean—when he threatens to leave Mercy in the swamp. From all the things that Jack does, good and bad, which of his actions best characterize him?
7. Mercy believes that God directs her life, and she wants to serve Him. Jack does not. What directs Jack’s life?
8. Who does Jack serve?

## Messenger



This historical autosocial science/dystopian novel by Lois Lowry is the third in the “The Quartet” series published by Walter Lorraine Books, an imprint

of Houghton Mifflin Company. *Messenger* is written for kids ages 12 to 16.

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

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

1. Why do the villagers knowingly trade the deepest part of themselves? When have you seen people in our society make bad choices just to increase their wealth, power or popularity? When have you made an unwise trade for something you were desperate to possess, feel or become? What did you trade? What happened?
2. What does Matty trade near the end of the book? How is his trade different than the ones made by Village citizens at the Trade Mart? How is Matty’s trade sacrificial in a similar way to what Jesus did for us? How does Matty’s trade make him feel? How does personal sacrifice sometimes require you to give up a part of yourself? Tell about a time when you sacrificed for someone else. What was lost? What was gained?
3. What are some good qualities of Village, especially in the beginning? What is the community like? Why do some of the citizens

begin to rebel against Village's open-door policy? How do fear and greed make people different? What is something you fear? Tell about a time when you were greedy. What are some ways you can trust God to help you through your fears and to help you to stop being greedy?

## Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25



This science fiction book by Richard Paul Evans is the first in the "Michael Vey" series and is published by Simon Pulse/Mercury Ink, an imprint

of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. *Michael Vey: The Prisoner of Cell 25* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. Why does the Ingalls family Why is Dr. Hatch so generous to Taylor when she first arrives at Elgen Academy? Have people ever been kind to you or given you something because they hoped you would do something for them? How did that make you feel? What should you do if you are offered a gift with strings attached?
2. Is it normal for kids to be bullied at your school? What should you do if you are bullied? Who are some people you could trust with this information? What could happen if you don't tell anyone?

3. Why are Jack and Wade bullies? Are people responsible for their behavior or are they just victims of their circumstances? How do Michael and Jack become friends? How can you show God's love to people who are unkind to you?
4. Dr. Hatch and the glows think they are better than ordinary people. Are some people better than other people? How do you think God feels when some of His children are mistreated or left out because someone thinks they aren't good enough?

## Middle School, the Worst Years of My Life



This humorous slice-of-life book by James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts, with illustrations by Laura Park, is the first book in the "Middle School" series

published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. *Middle School, the Worst Years of My Life* 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. Why does Rafe decide to break all the rules in the Code of Conduct manual? What kind of attention does he receive for his behavior? How does he feel about what he's doing? If you knew Rafe, what would you say to encourage him to make better choices?

2. Who is Leo? Why does Rafe talk to him? When have you had to say goodbye to a friend or someone close to you? What were some ways you dealt with that loss?
3. Why does Mom allow someone like Bear to live with them? What makes her realize he's a harmful influence on the family? Why do people sometimes hang on to relationships that are unhealthy or even dangerous? What can you do to make sure you're choosing healthy relationships? To whom can you turn if you find yourself in a harmful relationship?
4. What do you think about Rafe going to art school? Will it be good for him, or is it unfair that he's rewarded for his rule breaking? Explain your answer.

## Middle School, Get Me Out of Here!



This humorous contemporary book by James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts, with illustrations by Laura Park, is the second book in the "Middle

School" series published by Little, Brown and Company, a division of Hachette Book Group Inc. *Middle School, Get Me Out of Here!* 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. How do Rafe and his classmates try to get revenge on each other?

What happens as a result of their war? When have you tried to get revenge against someone who has hurt you? What happened? What does the Bible say about revenge?

2. What kind of a friend is Matty? What are some of his behaviors and actions that should have warned Rafe to beware? What are some ways you can determine whether a person will be a good friend or a negative influence?
3. What profound losses has Rafe experienced in his life? How has losing a twin and growing up without a dad impacted him? Who do you know that might need some compassion and grace because he or she has lost family members? How can you help someone whose pain is causing him or her to struggle and maybe even misbehave?

2. Why do the children wear space suits to explore the moon? Why don't we need to wear space suits on Earth?
3. The Bible says that God created the sun, moon and stars (Genesis 1:14-18). What are some ways that God has provided for us through the sun? What has God set the moon to do?
4. Jack and Annie found a flag on the moon. Who put that flag there? Why did Neil Armstrong on the Apollo 11 mission put it there? If you could leave a message on the moon, what would it say?
5. What qualities does Morgan thank the children for? Which would you rather have—a great love of knowledge or a great belief in the impossible? Explain.

credit to your race"? Why does Father say the boxing match between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling is so important?

2. What does Mrs. Needham tell Deza concerning people's best laid plans? What are some ways Deza experiences her family's plans going astray? How do the Malones handle these situations?
3. Why is family so important in this story? What are some ways the Malones support each other through this trying time? How do you and your family members support each other?
4. In a period of national poverty, what "gifts" do people like Mrs. Needham, Dr. Bracy and Mr. Zee give the kids that are more precious than money? Why is it important for people to have a sense of dignity, hope and self-worth? Who do you know that's lacking in self-esteem or hope for the future? How can you encourage that person?
5. What makes a person mighty? What mighty qualities does Deza demonstrate? What mighty qualities do you possess, and how do you act upon them?

## Midnight on the Moon



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the eighth in the "Magic Tree House" series and is published by Random House. *Midnight on the Moon* is

written for kids ages 5 to 8.

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

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

1. What time do Jack and Annie leave their house to go exploring? Did they ask their parents' permission? Why would or wouldn't you go outside and explore in the middle of the night?

## The Mighty Miss Malone



This historical fiction book by Christopher Paul Curtis 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 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 role does the Malones' skin color play in their lives? How must they behave because they're black? How do Deza's parents explain the remark, "You're a

## Millie's Courageous Days



This second historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the original novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz. This

book is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. How is Millie's view of friendship tested through her relationship with Rhoda Jane, Claudina and Damaris? Have you experienced conflict in your friendships? What was the result? Are there any friendships that you can mend?
2. How does Millie honor Rhoda Jane as Rhoda Jane struggles with the concept of a loving God that let her father die? Do you know someone who is having a hard time understanding the love of God? What are some ways in which you can demonstrate this love?
3. What choices does Millie have to make in her own heart before she can see Damaris through the eyes of Jesus? Why does Millie feel she can't fully confide in Claudina? How does God use Mandy Rose to change Damaris? How does Damaris' view of God change after Mandy Rose dies?

## Millie's Faithful Heart



This fourth historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz. This book is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. How does Millie fight against slavery? Why do her efforts fail? Why is it often difficult to defend what is right?
2. What must Millie break to help Luke and Laylie escape? Do you think she was right in doing so?
3. What does Millie mean when she tells Charles she loves him too much to marry him? Why is this a difficult decision for her to make? When have you ignored your emotions and based a choice on your belief in Christ? What was the result? What does God promise to those who follow His commands instead of human desires?

## Millie's Grand Adventure



This sixth historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz.

*Millie's Grand Adventure* 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 does Fan react to the loss of her dog and the family horses? How is her relationship with Cyril affected? How does Cyril's plan strengthen Fan's confidence and help her recover from her

grief? Have you ever suffered a loss like Fan? How did you deal with your grief? What did you learn about God in the process?

2. What does Gordon's offer to search for Rayme reveal about his character? How might he have used the situation to further his own desires? Why do you think it was better for him to act with integrity? Have you ever been torn between following your desires and acting on what you know to be true? What was the consequence of your decision? How did it affect those around you? What can you do to make sure your decision reflects Christ?
3. What did Millie learn about herself in the cemetery after Mrs. Simon's funeral? What does she bury in the grave? Why was it important for her to take that step before God? Is there anything that you need to give up? How can you reconcile with God's present and future plans for your life?

## Millie's Reluctant Sacrifice



This seventh historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz. This

book is written for kids ages 12 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 did Millie originally think God was calling her? How does God reveal His calling to Charles and Millie? What is Millie's reaction to this call? Have you ever felt called by God to do something? Did you obey or turn away? How were you affected by your decision? How can you better prepare yourself to respond positively to God's call in the future?
2. How does Charles want to be a witness for God on their journey to Bolivia? What divine appointment does God provide for Charles? Has God ever provided a similar divine appointment for you?
3. Does Otis believe in God before the voyage to Bolivia? What stands in the way of Otis accepting God? What does God do to help Otis evaluate his pride? What stands in the way of your belief in Christ and His power? What can you do to counteract these obstacles?

## Millie's Remarkable Journey



This third historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz.

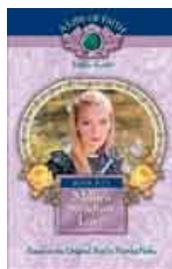
*Millie's Remarkable Journey* is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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. What choice does Millie have to make in regard to slave ownership? Do you think she should have refused to allow Laylie to be her slave? How do they both benefit from their relationship?
2. Do you think Millie is right in deciding to teach Laylie the Bible even though the law forbids the teaching of it? How does Laylie change after reading God's Word? Have you ever taught someone the Bible under difficult circumstances? What was the result?
3. How does Millie voice her beliefs against slavery? How does Uncle Horace react? How would you have approached Uncle Horace differently? Why did some slave owners forbid the teaching of Christianity on their plantations?
4. Did Millie do the right thing when she helped her uncle's slaves escape via the Underground Railroad? What circumstances would merit that kind of disobedience?

## Millie's Steadfast Love



This fifth historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz. This

book is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

1. Why does Cyril see himself as the black sheep of the family? What

event finally helps him see that God values who he is and the gifts he offers to the family? Have you ever felt worthless? What does God's Word say about your uniqueness? What gifts and talents do you think God has given to you? What can you do to remember your value in Christ? How can you use your gifts for His glory? How can you encourage someone else who may be feeling worthless?

2. With what do Gavi and Cyril struggle when it comes to God's plan for their lives? Do you ever struggle with knowing God's purpose for your life? What does the Bible say we were put on this Earth to do? What will happen if you seek God's kingdom first?
3. What gifts does Gavi offer to Millie and the children as they take care of the household together during Stuart and Marcia's absence?
4. What gifts do you see in your family members? How do you use these gifts to help each other? What do the Scriptures say about the body of Christ? How can you encourage others to embrace their gifts?

## Millie's Unsettled Season



This first historical fiction book in the "A Life of Faith: Millie Keith" series based on the classic novel by Martha Finley is published by Zonderkidz.

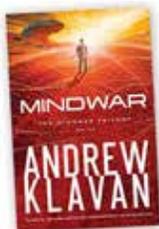
*Millie's Unsettled Season* is written for kids ages 10 to 14.

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. What drives Millie's passion for sharing God's love with her friends? Do you have that kind of passion? In what way can you show God's love to the people around you? Why is showing God's love to others difficult sometimes?
2. What sacrifices do the Keiths make in their move to Indiana? What does Millie give up to help her family? Do you think that is difficult to do? What have you had to sacrifice to follow God? What was your attitude? How did your life change? How can you be better prepared to handle change in the future?
3. How are the prejudices and actions of Helen and Lu detrimental to Millie's witness? What things have hindered your witness? How can you overcome these obstacles?
4. How might Miss Drybread have made a positive impact on Rhoda Jane's family? Why does Miss Drybread have such a negative attitude about God? How does Miss Drybread's attitude make you feel about her? Does she need compassion? Does Rhoda Jane need compassion? Is there someone in your own life who needs to be shown compassion? What are some ways you can demonstrate kindness to someone in need? What does God's Word say about compassion?

## MindWar



This action adventure book by Andrew Klavan is the third in the "MindWar" trilogy published by Thomas Nelson. *MindWar* is written for kids ages 13

and up.

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

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

1. Why does Rick agree to help Mars, knowing he risks his life? Do you think you would have made the same choice? Why or why not?
2. Mariel helps Rick by providing armor and a sword. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Consider each part of the armor mentioned and how you can apply it to your life. Do you believe you need to defend yourself from evil, too? Explain.
3. In the beginning, Rick thought he was a hero because he was the star quarterback. What changes Rick's mind about what a hero is? Do you agree with his conclusion? Explain.
4. Who does Rick blame for the accident and his father's leaving? Why didn't Rick want to pray or read the Bible anymore? Was his dad a phony? Why is it a problem to base your faith on another person's behavior?
5. Rick recalls a quote from Vince Lombardi: "It's not about whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get back up."

Talk about a time when you were down and had to get back up. What motivated you to do this?

6. Read Ephesians 3:16 and 2 Timothy 1:7. How do these verses compare to what Mariel tells Rick when she says his power lies in his own spirit?

## Miracles on Maple Hill



This historical book by Virginia Sorensen is published by Odyssey, Harcourt Young Classics, Harcourt Inc. and is written for kids ages 8 and up.

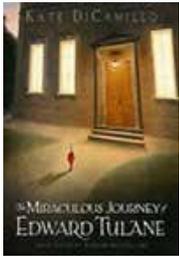
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Are you more like Joe or Marly?
2. Do your siblings bother you, or do you wish you could spend more time with them?
3. When Marly's family rallied to help Father, he began to find joy in life again. When everyone helped make the syrup, Mr. Chris's harvest was saved, and he began to feel better. What does this story teach you about working together?
4. How do you define a "miracle"? Many of the things Marly saw as miracles had to do with the changing of the seasons and the beauty of life around her. Do you consider those things "miracles"?

- Does it seem wrong to you that miracles are mentioned often in this book but God is not?

## The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane



This adventure book by Kate DiCamillo is published by Candlewick Press, an imprint of Walker Books and is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

- Why does Pellegrina tell Edward that he disappointed her?
- How does thinking about her words throughout his journey change Edward?
- When Lolly throws Edward in the trash, all he can think about is how he could get revenge on her. Is seeking revenge ever a good idea? What does the Bible say about revenge? (See Romans 12:19.)
- In the beginning of the story, Edward thinks mostly of himself. In the end, he learns to care about others. How does caring about, helping and loving others make our lives better?
- Bryce's motives in getting Edward for his sister are good, but he does take Edward without asking. Was that stealing?

- What could he have done instead?

## Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children



This fantasy book by Ransom Riggs is published by Quirk Books and written for kids ages 13 to 17.

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

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

- Jacob's psychiatrist, Dr. Golan, pretends to be someone he isn't to gain information. Have you ever thought someone was your friend and then found out that the person wanted something from you? Tell what happened. If that hasn't happened to you, how would you feel if it did?
- Jacob's father thinks that Abe was having an affair because he spent so little time at home. What was Abe really doing? How do you respond when people misjudge someone because they don't know the whole story? What should your response be?
- Jacob is attracted to Emma, but he doesn't think it's right to kiss her. What does he end up doing? Do you ever do the opposite of what you think is right? Tell about one time this happened. What could you have done different?
- Enoch believes he has the right to kill his clay men because he gave them life. What is faulty about

his belief? How should the clay men be treated?

- Why does Jacob lie to his father about where he is going and whom he is with? What might Jacob's father have done if Jacob had told him the truth? What could you have said to Jacob to help him do the right thing?

## The Missing Chums



This mystery book by Franklin W. Dixon is the fourth in "The Hardy Boys Mystery Stories" series, the 1990 edition, and is published by

Grosset & Dunlap Inc., a member of The Putman & Grosset Group. This book is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

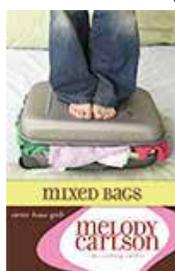
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

- Frank and Joe report the reckless drivers of the Black Cat to the Coast Guard. Have you ever had to report something that might get someone else in trouble? Explain. How did you feel? Would you do it again? Did you experience peer pressure to keep quiet about the situation?
- Frank and Joe give Hank first aid after he is beaten, even though he had tried to attack Frank and is one of the crooks. What would you have done in that situation? How do the boys' actions relate to Luke 6:27-28?
- The crooks argue, fight, blame each other and call each other

names when things don't go the way they had hoped. What are some different ways to respond when things go wrong? When people disappoint you? When plans change or there are unexpected events?

## Mixed Bags



This contemporary fiction book is the first in the “Carter House Girls” series by Wendy Lawton and is published by Zonderkidz, a division of

Zondervan. *Mixed Bags* is written for kids ages 13 to 17.

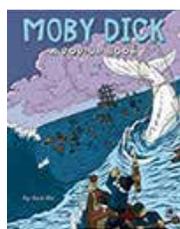
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. Who does DJ consider having as a new roommate? What keeps her from inviting Rhiannon to room with her?
2. Why does DJ volunteer to drive her friends? Why does she feel guilty about being pulled over if she didn't drink? Is there such a thing as guilt by association? How can you avoid being in the same type of awkward situation? Did DJ know her friends were going to drink? Could she have done anything differently? Do you have a plan for what you would do if you found yourself in DJ's position?
3. What did DJ do right with Connor? What mistakes did she make? What did she learn from the experience?

4. Why does DJ feel confusion about Conner by the end of this book? What do you think has happened to him?
5. In what ways do Rhiannon's choices reflect the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? What obstacles does she overcome to be obedient to the Lord?
6. Is Casey's new personality real or a front? What clues make you come to this conclusion? If she were your roommate, what would you do?
7. Inez and Clara are literal servants in the story. How are they treated? What is their attitude in service? What does the Bible say about servants?
8. Kriti's family's business is making high-quality knock-offs, but they are careful not to violate trademark laws. Is this an honest business? What do you admire about her family? What is unethical about their practices?
9. How is Katherine's stance on safe sex hypocritical? What does the Bible say about sex before marriage?

## Moby Dick: A Pop-Up Book



This adventure book by Sam Ita is published by Sterling Publishing Co. and is written for kids ages 6 and up.

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

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

1. Moby Dick shows how revenge is the downfall of Captain Ahab and his crew. How can revenge destroy things in your life?
2. How did revenge govern this story? Did the need for revenge by others help or hurt the main character?
3. Who do you think was the most selfish person in this book? What made him selfish, and how did his actions affect others?
4. Which characters doubted God? What were their doubts based on?
5. How did the graphics make dark subjects appealing? How did it help you understand the story? How did it get in the way of your understanding this story?

## Mockingjay



This sci-fi novel is the third book in “The Hunger Games” series by Suzanne Collins and is published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

*Mockingjay* 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:

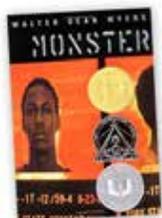
1. What drives Katniss to keep living? How do you feel when you read about the rage she and Gale feel toward Snow and the

Capitol? How would you feel in their situation? Have you ever been so filled with anger or hate that you behaved in irrational ways? What happened? What does the Bible say about hate and revenge? How can you respond in a godly manner even when you feel severely mistreated?

2. Why does Katniss choose Peeta over Gale? Did she make the right choice? Why or why not? What might her life have been like if she had chosen Gale? What situations and conversations made her realize he might not be good for her? Have you ever found yourself behaving differently around a joyful person than an angry person? How did you react in each situation?
3. What role does the media play in this story (and throughout the series, if you've read all of it)? How might the war have been different if both sides were not able to communicate their messages on TV? How does media propaganda impact your life?
4. Which characters value human life? Which value only the lives of those on their side of the conflict? How do the Capitol residents treat and view other human beings, and how does this lead to war? Which groups of people in our country and our world today value human life? Which do not? Explain your answer.
5. Why does Katniss feel her words are more impactful to the district residents when she's not made up for the cameras?
6. Why does Katniss initially vote that members of the Capitol should participate in the Hunger Games? Do you think she had a plan even as she voted for them? How does her decision change her life and the country?

7. What do Peeta and Katniss have at the end of the story that they've rarely experienced before? Why is hope so important? What does the Bible say about hope?
8. What does the Latin phrase *panem et circenses* mean? (Note: It means "bread and circuses." It's the idea that people can be appeased if you keep them fed and entertained.) How does this phrase relate to this story? How were the Capitol residents like the ancient Romans?

## Monster



This coming-of-age book by Walter Dean Myers is published by Amistad and HarperTeen, imprints of HarperCollins Publishers.

*Monster* is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. Steve says that all he did was walk in and out of the drug-store—something dozens of other people did that day and every day. What makes Steve different from the other people who did the same thing? Are all of the men involved in the robbery equally guilty of murder or just the man who pulled the trigger?
2. If Steve had told the truth and testified that he had been the lookout, would the jury still have found him not guilty? Would it

have been fair to sentence Steve to 20 years in prison for his role in the robbery? When have you been in a situation where you were tempted to lie to protect yourself from consequences?

3. Steve's lawyer and his father don't understand why he would choose to make friends with people like James King, the man who shot Mr. Nesbitt. How does Steve's choice of friends affect his life? What decisions lead to Steve being on trial for felony murder? How have your friends influenced your decisions?
4. If your friends were involved in something you knew was wrong, would you agree to play a part in it? What consequences might your decision have?
5. What does Steve mean when he says that he lies to himself in jail? Is it better to pretend things are better than they are or to face the truth head on? Do you ever try to fool yourself that your circumstances aren't as bad as they seem?
6. How does Steve feel when he watches the outside world continue as usual? Have you ever been hurting and watched the people around you continue their lives as if everything were normal? Describe a time in your life when you made decisions that left you somewhere you didn't want to be. What steps did you take to become part of the world again? What would you say to help someone who was feeling hurt and alone?

## Monster



This adventure thriller by Frank Peretti is published by West Bow Press, a division of Thomas-Nelson Publishers.

Although written for adults, this book is read by kids ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. What do you think caused Beck to stutter? What do you think cures her stutter at the end of the book? Is this a realistic way to cure stuttering?
2. Discuss how Reed's faith in God helps give him the strength to keep searching for Beck. Have you ever faced a seemingly hopeless situation? How did God help you through it? Does believing in God mean that no bad things will ever happen to you? Tell how God helped you get through a hard time.
3. Although the monster in this book is a genetically altered chimpanzee, the author suggests that the legends of Sasquatch or Bigfoot may be real. Do you think such animals exist? What evidence do you have to support your position?
4. How are the murders in the book a cover up? Have you ever been tempted to hide something that you'd done wrong? How does God want you to deal with your mistake?

5. Have you been taught the theory of evolution? Creation? Intelligent Design? What is the difference between a theory, a fact and faith? What supports your beliefs? Explain.

## Moon Over Manifest



This historical mystery book by Clare Vanderpool is published by Delacorte Press, a division of Random House Inc., and 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 is Abilene surprised that her father is friends with Pastor Shady Howard? How did Shady become the pastor of Manifest's First Baptist Church? Why does Shady say that even God understands the power of a good story? Why did Abilene and Gideon attend church services when she was younger? Why do you attend church services?
2. Why does Abilene say she is not hungry when Shady first offers her food? Why does Abilene immediately accept the soda and sandwich offered to her by Hattie Mae? Why does Abilene feel it is necessary to hide her belongings when she spends the night in a new place? Why does Abilene initially reject the gestures of friendship made by Lettie and Ruthanne? How long does it take for Abilene to feel like the citizens of Manifest are like

members of her family? When you meet new people, how do you initially react to them? How long does it take for you to feel at home in a new city?

3. Why is Abilene concerned that her father will not return for her? Why does it bother Abilene that she can't find evidence of her father living in Manifest? When does Abilene begin to hope that Jinx is actually her father? What is one thing you thought you knew about us, your parents, but as you grew you began to wonder if that thing were true?
4. Why are the Ku Klux Klan members afraid of foreigners? Why does Pearl Ann Larkin's mother not approve of Ned Gillen's background? Why do the citizens of Manifest in 1918 feel threatened by the German immigrants in town? In what ways are the immigrants left out of town projects, or kept separate from the rest of the non-foreign population of Manifest? What project causes all the citizens of Manifest to band together, regardless of nationality?

## Motorcycles, Sushi & One Strange Book



This contemporary Christian book is the first book in the "Real Life" series by Nancy Rue and is published by Zondervan. This book is written for

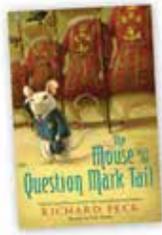
readers ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. Do you know people with ADHD? After learning more about ADHD through Jessie, how might you pray for them?
2. Have you ever had to move away from friends? What was it like? What things does Jessie experience in moving to a new town that you have experienced?
3. What have you done to befriend someone when she/he was new? Tell about a time when someone befriended you. Do you find it easier to become friends with someone at school or at youth group? Explain.
4. Why does Lou show up suddenly in Jessie's life? How would you feel if something like this happened to you? Once they go to Florida, what kind of father is Lou to Jessie?
5. What are some of the reasons Jessie starts to like Lou? Why does she end up wanting to stay with him? Why is her ADHD easier to control when she's with her father?
6. What are some of the challenges Jessie has in living with her new sister? What are some of the challenges you have in living with your siblings? What do you do to get along with your siblings? What does Jessie do to get along with Weesie?

## The Mouse With the Question Mark Tail



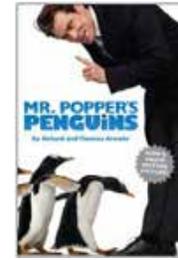
This fantasy book by Richard Peck is published by Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group, and written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

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

1. Ludovic often disobeys his aunt and the headmaster. How does this get him in trouble? Have you ever ignored a parent's or teacher's advice? What happened?
2. Is Ian a trustworthy friend? Explain. Why does Ludovic choose him to serve as Equerry? Who would you have chosen, if you were Ludovic? In your life, if you found you were royalty, who would you choose?
3. How did Ludovic react when he learned his true identity? How does Ludovic's father react when he finds his son? How does his grandmother react? How would you react if you found your identity was different from what you thought it was? Do you think there is more to a person's identity than just his name and title? Explain.
4. How does Ludovic's family or lack of family influence his life? How does your family influence your life?

## Mr. Popper's Penguins



This humorous animal story by Richard and Florence Atwater is published by Little, Brown and Company Books for Young Readers, a division of the Hachette Book Group, USA, and written for kids ages 7 to 10.

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

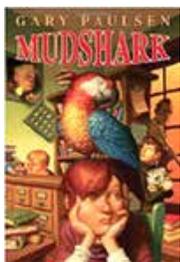
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. When the first penguin arrives, he builds a nest out of things he finds lying around the Poppers' house. What are some of these things? What does he find that you've never heard of? If a penguin were to build a nest at our house, what might he use?
2. Are there other words or phrases in the book that were unfamiliar to you? Can we figure out what they mean by context? If not, how should we find out what they are? (Objects may include icebox, boric crystals, camera tripod, and train-related terms, such as Pullman car, club car, sleeping car, and the observation end of the train. Phrases may include "leaving everything at sixes and sevens.")
3. Both Mr. Popper and his penguins are curious and love to explore their world. What are some really good things about curiosity? What things or places are you curious about? Can you think of any times when curiosity might be dangerous? What can

you do to protect yourself in or from those situations?

4. At what times in the story does having or not having cash affect the characters and what they do? Do you think their approach to money is common today? How would you describe our culture's thoughts about how to use money? What does the Bible say about money and how we are to use it?
5. Mr. Popper has a big decision to make at the end of the book. How does he make it? What does he consider? Who helped him decide?
6. Have you ever had to make a difficult decision? How did you decide what to do?
7. Can you tell where Mr. Popper gets his names for the penguin chicks? (Hint: they're named after real people.) What do these people have in common?
8. Even though this is a made up story, penguins are real. What facts about penguins in this book are true? What details are not true? Is there another animal that you are curious about? What do you think would happen if that animal came to live in our house?

## Mudshark



This humorous mystery by Gary Paulsen is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

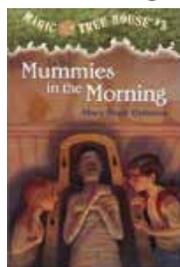
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

[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 people ask Mudshark to help them find things? How does Mudshark know where to find the lost items? How good are you at observation? What could you learn from Mudshark?
2. Who took the erasers from the classrooms? Why does he do it? Why does Mudshark want to protect the culprit? What would you do if your friend had taken something that didn't belong to him? What does the Bible say about taking things that don't belong to you?
3. Why do people think the parrot has special powers? How does the parrot really know where the lost items are? How does Mudshark discover the parrot's secret? How is a miracle different from what Mudshark does?

## Mummies in the Morning



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the third in the "Magic Tree House" series and is published by Random House. *Mummies in the Morning* is written for kids ages 5 to 8.

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

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

1. Why does Jack announce that he will bring the medallion and bookmarks back to the tree

house? Who is he talking to? Why shouldn't you take things that don't belong to you?

2. Why do the Egyptian people march toward the pyramid? Have you ever been to a funeral? If you have, what do you remember about it?
3. Why does Queen Hutepe need the children's help to find the Book of the Dead? What information does the book have for her? Does the Bible say anything about where we will go after we die? How is this different from what ancient Egyptians believed?
4. Why does Annie run away when she sees the mummy? Would you want to see a mummy, if you could? Explain.
5. How does Jack feel when he is separated from his sister in the pyramid? Can you remember a time when you were separated from someone? How did you feel? How did you find that person again?

## My Side of the Mountain



This adventurous coming-of-age book is first in the "My Side of the Mountain" trilogy by Jean Craighead George and is published by Puffin, a division

of Penguin Books USA Inc. *My Side of the Mountain* 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 does Sam lie about so he won't be discovered and removed from his self-made home in the mountains? Is this a good reason for hiding his identity? Explain. Is lying ever justified?
2. How could a young person really survive in the woods alone as long as Sam did? Why wouldn't most young people survive? Would you survive? What do parents do for you that help you survive? Which of these things didn't Sam appreciate?
3. Why does Sam run away from home? Are his reasons justified? Why is running away from home, when it's based on an emotion or selfishness, irresponsible? What happens to a lot of kids today who run away from home? Why don't some of these kids go back home when they find themselves in trouble? If you ever become upset with your family, what will keep you from running away from home?
4. In what ways do you view Sam's new life as an adventure? In what ways do you feel he was irresponsible? What does he miss most about his home? What would you most miss if you were in his shoes and lived in the mountains?
5. What are some of the lessons Sam learns from his experience in the mountains?
6. What clues make you think that Sam may want to be found (toward the end of the book)? How does he feel about his family moving to the mountains to live with him?
7. How do Sam's experiences provide him with a unique

appreciation and respect for nature? How can observing the plants and animals that God made help us to understand and respect Him more?

## The Mysterious Benedict Society



This science fiction adventure is the first book in the "The Mysterious Benedict Society" series by Trenton Lee Stewart and is published by Little, Brown and

Company in conjunction with the Hachette Book Group USA. This book 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 are the bonds the kids form with each other so significant? Why is their teamwork important? What would have happened if each member hadn't done his or her part?
2. What are some of the kids' greatest fears? How do they overcome them?
3. What do you think of Curtain's plan to get the world to love him? Can you make someone love you? What would the world be like if God forced us to love Him and do His bidding? How does He operate instead?
4. Why was the kids' "love of truth" so important to Benedict? Why was it so hard for them to lie and cheat? Where does a love

of truth come from? What does that phrase mean to you? Do you have a love of truth? Explain.

5. Why does Reynie almost give up on the mission and on Benedict himself? What does Benedict remind him about self-doubt? What do you do and/or with whom do you talk when you're feeling insecure about the tasks that lie before you?
6. What role does family play in this story? How do the kids change when they work together? How do they further change when they each gain a family at the end? Why are families important?

## Mystery of the Phantom Heist



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

Children's Publishing Division. This book is written for kids ages 8 to 12.

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

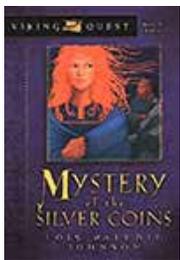
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why does Frank have a hard time seeing Sierra's true character? When have you been blinded by a supposed friend's charm and missed seeing what he or she was really like? What happened?
2. What kind of relationship do Frank and Joe have with their parents? How does the mutual

respect and trust between the boys and their parents benefit Frank and Joe in their detective work? Why are these qualities valuable in a parent/child relationship?

right to dislike the Vikings? What would have happened if Devin had chosen not to forgive them? When have you had a hard time forgiving someone? How did you change on the inside once you were able to forgive that person? Is there anyone in your life that you still need to forgive?

## Mystery of the Silver Coins



This historical fiction book by Lois Walfrid Johnson is the second in the “Viking Quest” series and is published by Moody Publishers. *Mystery of the*

*Silver Coins* is written for kids ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. What is Mikkel’s goal in life? At whose expense is he attaining his goal? When have you overlooked or hurt others while pursuing something that was important to you?
2. What is Bree’s crisis of faith? What does she feel God wants for her life? Do her circumstances reflect this? Is God following through on His promise to her?
3. What happens when Mikkel prays to Bree’s God? Why does God answering Mikkel confuse Bree? How does Bree need to respond to God? In what areas of your life do you need to trust God?
4. What is consuming Devin? What is the only thing he can do to get rid of this hatred? Does he have a