

# Book Review Discussion Questions



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

# DISCUSSION TOPICS

## Pandemonium



This science fiction/romance book by Lauren Oliver is the second in the “Delirium” series and is published by HarperCollins. *Pandemonium* is

written for kids ages 14 and up.

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

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

1. Lena is angry and resentful when she learns that she was used to further the resistance’s cause without her knowledge or consent. Have you ever felt used by a friend? Have you ever selfishly treated someone else this way? What was the situation? How could it have been handled differently?
2. Lena compares hatred to a parasitic fungus on a tree: As the tree feeds the fungus, the fungus rots the tree. Have you ever fed a feeling of hatred until it became a desire for revenge? What was the situation? How was the situation resolved? In what ways can hatred be unhealthy and destructive?
3. Lena realizes that life situations have hardened Raven, especially losing Blue, the little girl she found as a baby and raised. Has anything sad or traumatic ever happened to you that changed

you as a person? What was the event? Do you think the change was for the better or worse? How can God’s Word and promises bring comfort to you in times of hardship and sorrow?

## Paperboy



This historical, coming-of-age novel by Vince Vawter is published by Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division

of Random House Inc. *Paperboy* is written for kids ages 10 and older.

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

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

1. What four words does Mr. Spiro write on the dollar bill pieces he gives Victor? What do they mean? What does he want Victor to learn or think about when he reads these words? What do you think about when you read them?
2. What are some things Victor and Mam experience or discover that could lead them to be bitter or hateful? How do they deal with these situations? What are some things in your world that could lead to your being bitter or hateful? How do you deal with these situations?

3. How does Victor change during the month he spends on Art’s paper route? How does he see the world differently at the end of July? How do you see the world differently by the end of this book?
4. Why does Mam remain calm in the face of prejudice, but lashes out when Ara T. steals from Victor? What people or situations in your life make you particularly angry or frustrated? In what difficult situations are you able to remain calm? In what difficult situations do you lash out the most?
5. Why is Victor disillusioned with God? What does he want God to take away for him? How does he understand God better through Mam’s example? How can you be an example of God’s love to others, as Mam was to Victor?
6. How does Victor make the best of his stuttering so he can grow as a person and connect with others? What is one area where you struggle? How can you grow through the struggles in your life, rather than becoming bitter or giving up?

## The Passage



This contemporary, coming-of-age book is the third in the “Becoming Beka” series by Sarah Anne Sumpolec and is published by Moody Publishers.

*The Passage* 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:

1. How does Beka struggle with her belief in God? How does Christianity look in your life? Does your faith resemble Mark's, Beka's or Josh's? How big a part does God play in your life?
2. Why was Beka upset about Gretchen's rumor? Why did Liz think the rumor was not a big deal? How do your friends view sex? Why does God not want you to have sex until after you are married? How can you keep yourself pure if those around you are encouraging you to do otherwise? Nancy knew where her boundary was when it came to physical intimacies. What are yours?
3. Beka could not understand why God allowed the boys to attack her. What events in your life have caused you to question God's presence? Have you asked Him about it?
4. How did Beka's dad point out that God did protect her? What could have happened to Beka? How did God use her situation for good? Where in your life have you seen God use a bad situation for good?

## Pathfinder



This science fiction book by Orson Scott Card is the first book in the "Pathfinder" series and is published by Simon Pulse, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's

Publishing Division. *Pathfinder* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

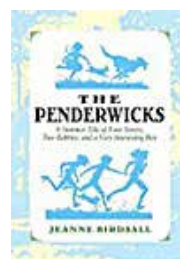
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. How do the expendables interpret their mandate to serve humanity? What do you think of their conclusion—that it's right to forfeit individual human lives for the betterment of a greater number of humans? This thinking relies on the idea that the end result justifies the means for getting there. Is this a biblical concept? Why not? How does our mandate to love others as we would want to be treated keep us from believing the way the expendables do?
2. Rigg finds that his relationship with Father is based on lies and deceit. Why does Father lie to Rigg? How would you feel if you learned that someone close to you had deliberately lied to you? Would you lie to someone if you felt it would keep them from being hurt?
3. Why did the expendables decide to destroy most of the life on Garden? Do you agree or disagree with what they did? What are some things you can do to be a good steward of creation?

4. What evidence led Rigg to believe that humans might not be native to the planet of Garden? How did the other scientists react to the scientist who proposed that there might be two separate origins for life on Garden?
5. How is Loaf different from Umbo's father? How is he different from the man Rigg called Father? What makes him a good authority figure? Do you know anyone who acts rough but is actually gentle and loving? Describe some of the quality traits of your father (me).

## The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy



This first humor, adventure book in the "Penderwicks" series by Jeanne Birdsall is published by Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers, an imprint of

Random House Children's Books. *The Penderwicks*: This book is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

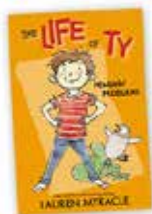
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. On several occasions, Batty is endangered because her sisters aren't watching her. Why is it important to keep an eye on your younger brothers or sisters when you're put in charge of them?

2. What did you dislike about Mrs. Tifton and Dexter, and how can we make sure we don't treat others the way they did?
3. It was sad that Jeffery didn't feel he could talk to his mom about what he wanted. Do you feel as though you can talk to me/us?
4. If not, what can we do to make that better?

## Penguin Problems



This slice-of-life story by Lauren Myracle is the first in the "Life of Ty" series published by Dutton Children's Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Penguin Problems is written for kids ages 6 to 9.

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

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

1. What changes for Ty when his baby sister arrives? Why is he so uncomfortable with the new circumstances in his life?
2. Why does Ty feel upset with the behavior of friends Lexie and Taylor? Which kids in your class behave in ways that make you uncomfortable? What do they do that bothers you?
3. What are some ways Ty shows he cares about other people (and animals)?

## Perfectly Dateless: A Universally Misunderstood Novel



This contemporary Christian book by Kristin Billerbeck is published by Revell, an imprint of the Baker Publishing Group. This book is written for kids

ages 13 to 16.

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

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

1. In the end, Daisy doesn't get a prom date. Tell about a time you didn't get something you wanted. What did you learn from the experience?
2. What did Claire say about Daisy's appearance? How did this add to Daisy's pressure to fit in? If you were Daisy's friend, what would you have said to Daisy instead?
3. Why didn't Daisy tell anyone that Claire was living alone? What would you have done if you were Daisy? How did lying about it backfire on her? Tell about a time that you didn't tell the whole truth and the situation backfired on you.
4. What helped Daisy realize that Chase wasn't the person she thought he was? Who have you known that turned out to be different than you expected? How have other people thought you were different than what they expected? How did this revelation make you feel?

## Peter and the Starcatchers



This fantasy by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson is published by Hyperion Paperbacks for Children, Disney Editions and is written for kids

ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. Peter always tells people he's the oldest so he can stay in charge. He also steals food because the soup they're given is filled with living creatures. How do you feel about his actions?
2. Do you think lying and stealing are ever appropriate?
3. When explaining why Starcatchers return starstuff rather than keeping it for themselves, Molly says, "If people have power, even if they start out using it for good, in time they will use it for evil. Do you agree or disagree? Give examples from real life to support your answer.
4. If you found a chest of starstuff, what would you do with it?
5. How did you feel about the bloodshed in this book? Did you think it was too violent?
6. Though this is a fiction book, Molly talked about the starstuff affecting real historical figures. How does that confuse the real world and this imaginary world?



## Peter Pan



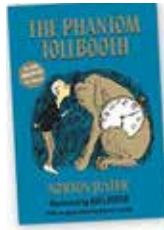
This fantasy book by J.M. Barrie is published by Viking Penguin, a division of Penguin Books USA Inc. and is written for ages 10 and up.

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

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

1. Which characters are particularly self-absorbed? How does their pride show itself in their behavior? What, if anything, do these characters learn about the dangers of caring too much or too little about others' opinions? What does the Bible say about pride?
2. What message is the author trying to convey about growing up? What are some of the advantages of growing up? What are the disadvantages? In what ways do you wish you could stay a child forever? In what areas would you like to be an adult?
3. How do mothers, both real and pretend, play important roles in this story? Why do the pirates and the lost boys all want mothers? What is life like for these boys and men without mothers? What role does Mom (or do I) play in our family?

## The Phantom Tollbooth



This fantasy novel by Norton Juster with illustrations by Jules Feiffer is published by Knopf Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Random House

Books for Young Readers, Random House Inc., and is written for kids ages 8 and older.

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

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

1. What are some interesting and valuable things Milo learns about words and numbers? Why do you like words or numbers better? Why is it important to learn about words and numbers?
2. Which character in the kingdom of Wisdom is most interesting to you? Explain. How are you like or unlike this character?
3. What happened in the kingdom of Wisdom when its residents stopped paying attention to the sights and sounds around them? (The sight and sounds faded or were taken away.) What cautionary lesson is the author trying to teach his readers?
4. What was the secret the kings couldn't tell Milo until he returned from his journey? (They couldn't tell him the task ahead was completely impossible.) What was their lesson for Milo? (Many things are possible as long as you don't know they're impossible.) What tasks in your life

seem impossible? What might happen if you tried anyway?

5. Why is Milo so bored with life before his trip through the tollbooth? What does Milo's journey teach him about his own life and his own world? How do you think Milo's outlook and actions will change after his adventures in the kingdom of Wisdom?

## Phoebe the Spy



This historical fiction by Judith Berry Griffin is published by Puffin Books, an imprint of Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, a division

of the Penguin Group and is written for kids ages 8 to 11.

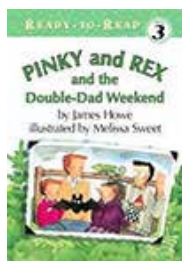
Search for a review of this book for parents at [pluggedin.com/book-reviews](http://pluggedin.com/book-reviews).

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

1. What are some of the instructions Samuel gives to Phoebe when he sends her to spy? Do you think he expects too much from a young girl or puts her in too much danger? Why or why not? Would you have been able to do the work that Phoebe did? Explain. Would you have been able to protect the general as she did? Explain.
2. Why does Samuel say it is a strange freedom they are fighting for? What do the slaves stand to gain if America becomes a free country?
3. Why might Hickey be so nice to Phoebe? Have you ever had

someone act friendly to you because they wanted something from you or were trying to fool you? What happened?

## Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend



This humor book in the “Ready-to-Read” series by James Howe is published by Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster

Children’s Books. This book is written for kids ages 4 to 9.

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

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

1. What kinds of things do you like doing with your dad (or grandfather, or uncle, etc.)?
2. What are some things your dad does best?

## The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists



This humorous book by Gideon Defoe is the first in “The Pirates” series and is published by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House Inc. This book is

written for kids ages 14 and up.

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

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

1. The pirates believe the Pirate Captain is harsh but fair. Does he treat the pirates fairly? How do you feel about the pirates being made to walk the plank? Is there another way the Pirate Captain could have handled the situation?
2. How do the Pirate Captain and the Bishop of Oxford describe The Holy Spirit? What does the Bible say about who the Holy Spirit is? What do you think the role of the Holy Spirit is in our lives?
3. Darwin’s motives for wanting the lecture to be a success are to further his career and get attention from women. Have you ever wanted to be successful at something for selfish reasons? What was the situation and what was the result?
4. The Bishop of Oxford is killing young women so he can look younger. How important is a person’s appearance? What does the Bible say about what God sees when He looks at us?

## Pirates Past Noon



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the fourth in the “Magic Tree House” series and is published by Random House. *Pirates Past Noon* 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 are Jack’s and Annie’s reaction to Captain Bones kidnapping them and saying that he won’t free them until they help him? Would they have helped him if he had asked? How should he have asked for their help?
2. Why might Captain Bones hate books? What does he consider to be “something good”? What kind of books do you like? What do you think is “something good”?
3. What do Pinky and Stinky do when Captain Bones shoots his pistol into the air? How are they “gold-greedy” pirates? What does it mean to be greedy? What is something you really like or want? How can you keep from being greedy about it?
4. Why is Jack tempted to look inside the treasure chest? Why does he leave without opening it? Why was that a good choice? What was more important than Kidd’s treasure?

## Pitchers’ Duel



This sports fiction book is seventh in the “Chip Hilton Sports” series by Basketball Hall of Fame Coach Clair Bee. It was published by Grosset & Dunlap in 1950,

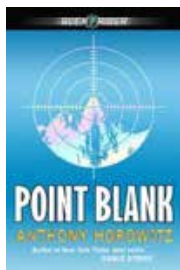
updated by Randall and Cynthia Bee Farley and republished by Broadman & Holman Publishers in 1999. *Pitcher’s Duel* is written for kids ages 12 and up.

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 did you think of the way Chip handled the people who wanted to tarnish his reputation and get Coach Rockwell fired? What would you have done in his situation?
2. What would you do if you had to choose between accepting a college scholarship and playing for a major league team?
3. Chip demonstrated a great deal of respect for his coach and his mother. Do you think kids today show that kind of regard for authority figures in their lives? Why or why not?

## Point Blank



This action/thriller is the second book in the “Alex Rider” series by Anthony Horowitz and is published by the Penguin Group. *Point Blank* 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. Alex has a strong sense of what’s right and what’s wrong. On what does he base his sense of right and wrong? Are all people’s consciences as reliable as Alex’s? As a Christian, should you rely solely on your conscience when

it comes to deciding what is right and wrong? What kind of guidance does the Bible give about right and wrong?

2. What would being a part of a family mean to Alex? Why might Alex like to be a part of our family? What wouldn’t Alex like about being a part of our family? As Christians, we are adopted into God’s family. What does this mean to you, to be a son or daughter of the King and a member of our heavenly Father’s family? What might it mean to Alex?
3. What do all of the students at Point Blanc do? Why does this alarm Alex? What would you like about all kids acting the exact same? Why is it important that all kids not act the exact same? Why do you think God made each person uniquely different? How has God made you uniquely different? Why is it important for you to be yourself instead of trying to act, talk, dress and think like everyone else?
4. Why doesn’t Alex want to go on the secret spy mission to France? What spurs him on to solve the case once he arrives? How does Alex sacrifice to serve and free others? What happens as a result of his sacrifice? What have you had to do to sacrifice for others? What happened as a result of that sacrifice?

## Polar Bears Past Bedtime



This fantasy adventure book by Mary Pope Osborne is the 12th book in the “Magic Tree House” series and is published by Random House. *Polar Bears Past*

*Bedtime* 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).

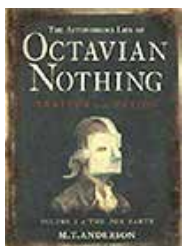
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. What do Jack and Annie use to make them brave? What makes you brave? Who can help you be brave? Why is asking God for courage better than using a mask?
2. Why does the seal hunter make the masks? Who do we thank for our food, our home and everything we need? Why?
3. What happens when Jack and Annie go on the ice? Why is it dangerous to walk on ice? How do you know if things are safe?
4. Why doesn’t the magic tree house take Jack and Annie back after they answer the first riddle? Where is the place Jack and Annie love best? Where is the place you love best? Describe it.
5. What animal do Annie and Jack play with in the Arctic? What differences are there between the polar bears in the story and polar bears in real life, perhaps that you’ve seen in the zoo? What



would you do if you saw a wild polar bear? Explain.

## The Pox Party



This first historical fantasy volume in “The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing: Traitor to the Nation” series by M.T. Anderson is published by Candlewick Press, an imprint of Walker Books. *The Pox Party* is written for kids 14 and up.

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

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

1. Do you think what happened to Octavian could really have happened to anyone back in the time of the Revolution? Does the idea of a “pox party” seem unrealistic? (Note: In an interview captured at the back of the book, the author points out the historical credibility of some of the experimentation carried out on the fictional Octavian. He also mentions that pox parties\* were a real happening.)
2. How could the scientists in this book have been so wrong in their assumptions?
3. The scientists, such as Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Gitney, talk about God and Christianity. Does their behavior appear Christian-like to you? Explain.
4. Even though Octavian is highly educated and smart, he comes to a point where he feels like a slave because of the way he is treated.

- Do you think the way we’re treated by others has any impact on what we accomplish in life? How can a person overcome the prejudices of others?
5. For the most part, the scientists treat Octavian’s mother like a distinguished lady. When does she realize she is still just a commodity to them?
6. What does the Bible say about slavery? How does God want Christians to respond when they witness people of different ethnicities being treated unequally?
7. Why is Dr. Trefusis willing to risk his life to help Octavian escape?
8. How would you feel if you walked into a secret room in your house and discovered you were the test subject in an experiment? What would you do?
9. How did you feel when you read about the gruesome way Octavian’s mother was treated prior to (and following) her death?

## Pretties



This second futuristic fantasy book in the “Uglies” series by Scott Westerfeld is published by Thorndike Press, an imprint of Thomson-Gale.

*Pretties* 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. Does any of the technology in Tally’s world seem like it could be real someday?
2. When are technological breakthroughs good, and when can they be dangerous?
3. Tally and Zane realize that they need more than parties and attractive bodies to enjoy life. What do you think are some of the keys to having a fulfilled life?

## Pride & Prejudice



This historical romance by Jane Austen is published by Penguin Group and is written for adults but is sometimes studied by high school classes.

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

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

1. Nearly every interaction in this book revolved around the social class system of the era. Do you think social rank and family name still play a role in society today? Give some examples.
2. Do our misunderstandings, preconceived notions and judgments sometimes keep us from really getting to know others (as was the case with Elizabeth and Darcy)? Can you think of a time when you really liked someone once you got to know him, even though you didn’t at first?
3. Which male/female relationships in the book did you admire, and why? Which did you dislike, and why?

4. What does the Bible say about pride and about prejudice?

## Prince Caspian



This fantasy adventure is the fifth book in “The Chronicles of Narnia” series by C.S. Lewis. HarperCollins Children’s Books, a division of

HarperCollins is the publisher. *Prince Caspian* 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. As a child, Caspian hears stories about the Old Narnians, but his uncle Miraz says they aren’t true. Why don’t the Telmarines believe in talking animals, dwarfs, or any of the other creatures? Do all of the Old Narnians believe in Aslan? How can you tell whether something you hear is actually true?
2. Nikabrik the dwarf says that he’ll follow any leader who will get rid of King Miraz. Does it matter to him whether that leader is good or evil? Why do Trufflehunter and Caspian say they don’t want ogres or hags to help them overthrow Miraz? How are these two perspectives different? Which do you feel is godly? Explain.
3. What happens when a hag and a werewolf offer to help Nikabrik? How do you decide if a person will be a good friend? How can God help you know whom to trust?

4. Why was Lucy the first person to see Aslan? What does Edmund say about her being the first of them, originally, to find Narnia? When the other children finally believe her, why can’t they see Aslan? What does the Bible say about walking by faith?
5. When Miraz trips and falls during their swordfight, what does Peter do? Why does he step back to let Miraz get to his feet? What do Miraz’s own men do to him while he is down? How is Peter’s character different from those of the Telmarine soldiers?
6. When Aslan asks Prince Caspian if he thinks he is prepared to rule Narnia, what does Caspian say? Why does Aslan say this is a good answer? What new laws does Aslan make for Narnia? What does Aslan do for the Telmarines who want to leave Narnia?

## Princess Academy



This modern fairy tale by Shannon Hale is published by Bloomsbury USA and 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. Miri questions and argues against the rules of the academy a number of times. Do you think she’s right in doing this?
2. Is Miri’s behavior respectful, or should she have acted differently toward authority figures?

3. Does Miri do the right thing by helping the other girls pass their princess exam, or is she cheating?
4. How did you feel when you learned that Britta’s father had involved her in a lie so she could marry the prince?

## The Princess and the Goblin



This fantasy adventure book by George MacDonald was originally published in 1872 by Strahan & Co. It currently is available online and

is in the public domain so various publishers have re-published it. *The Princess and the Goblin* 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 is Princess Irene supposed to do whenever she is scared? Where does the thread lead her? What path does she take to reach her grandmother the first time? What good comes out of it? What path does she take to reach her grandmother the second time? What good comes out of it?
2. When does Curdie first feel the thread? Where does the thread lead him? Why can Curdie now feel the thread when he couldn’t feel it before?
3. How is faith in God similar to the thread that Princess Irene and Curdie follow? What do you use to keep you on the right

path? Have you put your trust in the One who has woven that thread for you? If you haven't, would you like to? If so, [click here](#) to find out how.

4. What does the book say are characteristics of a prince or princess, such as a true princess would never lie? Does Irene have the qualities of a princess? What does Curdie do that demonstrates princely qualities? What qualities of a prince or princess do you possess?
5. What scares the princess? Is her grandmother strong enough to handle the plans of the goblins? What scares you? Is your God strong enough to handle situations that scare you?

## The Princess Diaries



This first pre-teen/teen chick-lit book in the “Princess Diaries” by Meg Cabot is published by HarperCollins Publishers. *The Princess Diaries* is written for kids

ages 12 and up.

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

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

1. Mia gets to experience things many young women only dream about—dating the most popular boy in school, being made over (complete with designer hair, makeup and clothing) and discovering she is royalty. Which of these things do you dream about?

2. What do you like best about Mia—her unpretentious attitude, desire to help others, adolescent imperfections or something else?
3. Mia cheats on a test, demonstrates a bit of remorse and lies to her friends and family with little regret. Her intentions were usually good. Does this make her actions OK? Think about one of those situations. What could she have done instead?
4. High school students use and discuss drugs and alcohol. Mia doesn't use them because she cares for her body. How are Mia's reasons for not doing drugs or drinking alcohol similar to or different from yours?
5. What is God's plan for sex and purity? How is this similar to or different from what Mia believes?
6. Who in this story stood up for the underdog? How did this action affect the story? How would your doing this affect a situation in your life?
7. Mia took quite a few stands. What stands do you take? How do you assert yourself?
8. Mia learned more about friendship. Why is it important to choose friends wisely?

## A Princess of Mars (basis for the movie John Carter)



This science fiction book by Edgar Rice Burroughs is the first book in the “Barsoom” series and is published by Penguin Classics, a division of

the Penguin Group. The book and its sequels are the inspiration for Disney's John Carter science fiction movie. *A Princess of Mars* is written for ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. John Carter sees the green Martians and is appalled because he thinks they are hideous. Have you ever judged someone based on his looks? By what should you judge people?
2. Ignorant of Barsoom's customs, John Carter angers Dejah Thoris when he does not ask her to marry him after he fights for her. Have you ever unintentionally made someone angry? How was the situation resolved? Is there anything you could have done differently?
3. The keeper of the atmosphere factory helps Carter, but then regrets his decision soon after. Have you ever regretted helping someone? Why did you feel this way?
4. How do the green Martians and the red Martians treat their eggs and children differently? With the low death rate and lack of resources, are the green Martians justified in their actions? Why or why not? How does our society treat children?



## The Princess Plot



This chick lit mystery is the first book in the “Scandia” series by Kirsten Boie and is published by Chicken House, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc.

*The Princess 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. How does Jenna’s pride in being “star quality” put her in an unwanted position? How does Norlin’s pride cause him to change his appearance and political views? Has vanity ever hurt you? Explain.
2. What role do the media play in this story? Do you agree with Malena’s friend Liron, that whoever controls what goes into people’s minds controls what will happen next in the country? How is this applicable in our society today? Explain.
3. Where in our world are people exploited, the way the northern Scandians were by the southerners? What can you do to advocate for those people?
4. Why does Bolstrom tell Norlin they must encourage the southerners to fear the northerners? Is he right that fear usually turns to hate? How have you seen that played out in your own life?
5. Why is it important for Jenna to realize that no matter who her father is, she is still Jenna? What

roles do your friends and family play in determining what kind of person you are? What role does God play in determining the kind of person you are?

## The Problem Child



This fantasy book by Michael Buckley is the third in the “The Sisters Grimm” series and is published by Amulet Books, a division of Abrams. *The*

*Problem Child* 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 doesn’t Grandma Relda want Sabrina and Daphne to learn about magic? What happens to Sabrina when she begins to use magic? How can you tell that she isn’t ready for that kind of power?
2. Why is the Little Mermaid so unhappy? What does she do to make herself feel better? Talk about a time when you were sad. What did you do to make yourself feel better? What are some good ways to make yourself feel better?
3. How do the Everafters feel about the Grimms? How do the Grimms feel about the Everafters? Talk about a time when someone treated you badly because you were different. How did that make you feel? If you saw someone being treated badly, how would you react?

4. Why doesn’t Grandma Relda want Sabrina and Daphne to look for their parents? How does this make Sabrina feel? How does Sabrina react? What else could she have done instead of being disobedient? Talk about a time when you thought we treated you unfairly. What can you do when you feel that way?

## Prodigy



This science fiction, dystopian novel by Marie Lu is the second in the “Legend” series and is published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons, a division of the Penguin Group.

*Prodigy* 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. Metias tells June that few people ever kill for the right reason. Do you agree? Explain. For what reasons should a nation declare war on another nation? For what reasons shouldn’t a nation declare war on another nation?
2. Does Razor prove trustworthy? How do you judge whether someone is telling you the truth? Who can you talk to if you’re unsure of a friend’s truthfulness? Has someone you trusted ever lied to you? How did you find out? How did you treat that person after the lie?
3. Day and June are fictional 15-year-olds. In what ways do they act like ordinary teenagers?



How do they differ from the teenagers you know? In what ways do their ages affect the decisions they make?

## Prom and Prejudice



This teen romance by Elizabeth Eulberg is published by Point, an imprint of Scholastic, Inc., and 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:

1. In what ways does Darcy show prejudice against Lizzie? How is she prejudiced against him? What could they have done from the outset to avoid mutual anger and misinformation? What can you do to defuse conflicts or misunderstandings with people you don't know well?
2. Have you ever known people like Wick, who take advantage of others to gain wealth, status or popularity? Have you ever used someone else to get something you wanted? What would you want to change about your behavior? Has someone ever used you to get something she or he wanted? How did that make you feel?
3. Why does Lizzie say you become a better person when you have to work for things? Think about a situation where you had to earn something rather than having it given to you. How did you feel about yourself afterward?

## The Prophecy



This supernatural thriller is the first book in the “Watchers Chronicles” series by Dawn Miller and is published by Zondervan. *The Prophecy* is written

for teens ages 15 to 18.

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

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

1. Why do you think the Watchers have drifted apart after having been such a close circle of friends in their middle-school years? Why might their faith have dwindled? How could not keeping in touch with good Christian friends hurt your relationship with God? Explain.
2. How do Sam, Jenna, Carly, and J rescue Jonah? What would you do if you found yourself in a situation like they did?
3. Have you ever sensed that you were being prompted to do something that you didn't think was right? How did you keep from following through on that temptation?
4. What kind of spiritual warfare is going on in this book? What kind of spiritual warfare goes on around you? How is it the same? How is it different? What part does free will play into this?
5. How might dabbling in drugs make one more susceptible to other temptations?

## Pygmalion



This play by George Bernard Shaw is published by Penguin Group and is written for adults but sometimes studied by high school classes.

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

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

1. Did Eliza transform into a different person mainly because she learned how to speak differently, or did something else change in her? Explain.
2. What did you think of the way Professor Higgins and Colonel Pickering tried to create Eliza “in their own image?” Did they help her by reinventing her? Or did they just make her life more complicated? How might this apply to Christians? How can we ensure that, when we share the Gospel, we point others to Christ rather than trying to make them like us?
3. What did you learn about gender and class inequalities during this time period? Do these prejudices still exist today? Give some examples.
4. Do you think Henry and Eliza will end up together? Why or why not?
5. Eliza felt like a duchess only when she was treated like one, not because she could speak or behave like one. Do you think it's possible to make individuals better by treating them better than they're used to being treated?