

Book Review Discussion Questions



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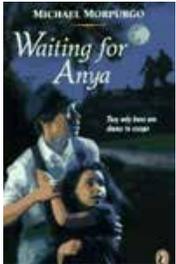
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Book reviews cover the content, themes and worldviews of fiction books, not their literary merit, and equip parents to decide whether a book is appropriate for their children. A book's inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by Focus on the Family.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

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Waiting for Anya



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

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

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

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

1. Early in the story, Benjamin tries to comfort Jo, encouraging him not to take his (Jo's) role in the bear hunt to heart. What was Jo's part? Should he have warned the village? What was the mother bear's part? Should she have protected her cub? Who is to blame for what happened to her? How was Benjamin and Jo's meeting a good thing that came out of this hunt? How does the explanation help Jo?
2. Some of the villagers (including Jo's grandfather and father) use the word *Boche* pretty regularly to describe the Germans. It's not a kind word, and was meant to insult the Germans. Why do you think some of the villagers felt it was OK to use that word? Do you think God would agree with them?
3. Who enforced Nazi law? How do the German soldiers take

Benjamin and the little girl away? What happens to Benjamin and the girl? In Nazi trials after the war, German soldiers often defended their actions by saying they were just doing their jobs — what they were ordered to do. How might Jo disagree with that defense? How does he not do what he's told to do so he can help others?

4. What biblical direction might apply to the decision that Jo makes to help Jewish refugees? What happens when godly people come to different conclusions about the same issue? What are some complex situations in the world (or your own life) today? What do you think is the best response and why? What is the best way to respond to people who see the situation differently?
5. At what point in the story are things at their absolute worst between Jo and his father? What specific things contribute to that event (e.g., secrets/lying, combat experience, drunkenness, not knowing all the facts)? What does Jo's grandfather do to help resolve the situation? What do Jo's father and Jo do?
6. When Benjamin and the little girl are being led away, they both thank Jo — as if they appreciate his bringing the horse. Are they speaking to more people than just Jo? Are they speaking about more than the horse? If so, what are they really trying to say?

Wanderville



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

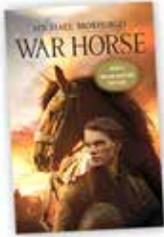
Group, an imprint of Penguin Group LLC (a Penguin Random House Company). *Wanderville* is written for kids ages 9 to 12.

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

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

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

War Horse



This historical fiction/animal story by Michael Morpurgo is published by Scholastic, Inc., and written for kids ages 8 to 12. Although

this book is not part of a series, the author wrote a prequel to *War Horse* (published in 1982) called *Farm Boy* (published 1997).

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

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

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

Water Walker



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

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

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

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

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

is forgiveness of others a choice and not an emotion?

The Watsons Go to Birmingham



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

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

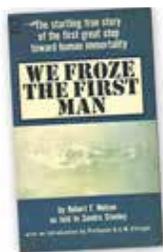
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. Byron is a bully at school yet a protector of his brother and sister. What are the traits of a bully? Are you ever a bully? How do you treat people in our family? How do you act differently at home than in other places?
2. How did Birmingham change the Watsons? What has happened in your life that has changed you? What is one thing that happened that made you treat someone differently? What is one thing that happened that made someone treat you differently?
3. How is Rufus a friend to Kenny? How is Kenny a friend to Rufus? How did they each disappoint each other? Who is one of your good friends? How have you disappointed each other? How did Kenny and Rufus help each other? How have you and your friend helped each other?

- How do the kids in the book talk differently than the parents? What does God say about the way we should talk? What are our family's rules about the way we speak to friends and each other?
- Kenny gives his first pair of gloves to his friend, although he lies to his mother to do it. Do you have anything that you could share with someone who has less? Other than giving someone food, clothes or shoes, what other things could you do to help others?

We Froze the First Man



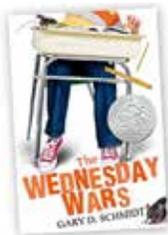
This memoir by Robert F. Nelson, as told to Sandra Stanley, is published by Dell Publishing Co. Inc., and is written for adults.

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

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

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

The Wednesday Wars



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

kids ages 10 to 14.

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

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

- Why is it hard for Holling to be the only Presbyterian in his class? How is his schedule different from those of his Catholic and Jewish friends? When have you felt left out because your beliefs or activities differed from your friends'?
- How does Mrs. Bigio feel about Mai Thi at first, and why? How does their relationship change over time? When have you developed a friendship with someone you initially considered an enemy?
- What does Holling's sister hope to discover when she goes off to "find herself"? What does it mean to Danny and his family to "become a man"? What or who does Holling's father think he (Holling) should be? How would you define your own journey of self-discovery? What beliefs, dreams or goals guide you as you look toward the future?
- What are some of Holling's greatest disappointments? What events or circumstances give him hope? What are some of the

biggest letdowns and most exciting situations you've experienced this year?

- What were some things Holling learns from Mrs. Baker? Besides teaching him on Wednesdays, how does she make an impact on his life? Talk about an adult, besides your parents, who has helped you see your life in new ways. How has this person encouraged or inspired you?

The Wee Free Men



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

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

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

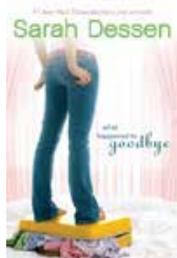
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- How does Edmund react to his The Queen questions whether Tiffany truly loves her brother, Wentworth. How does Tiffany view him as a possession? How does she prove she loves him? How can someone love someone else even when she doesn't always like him?
- Are any of your grandparents still alive? Do you get to see them much? How did Tiffany's grandmother influence Tiffany? How

do your grandparents influence you?

3. Tiffany drew much of her courage from common sense and stories she remembered. If you face a big problem, where do you look for help? How might your grandparents' tales help you someday?
4. What are Tiffany's farm chores? What are your chores?
5. Miss Tick warns that others who work hard and educate themselves may beat you in life, even if you trust in yourself and believe in your dreams. How might this be true? What are your dreams? What can you do now to help you realize your dreams someday?

What Happened to Goodbye



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

and up.

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

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

1. What is the significance of Dave and Riley's matching tattoos? Whom do they commemorate? What message is Riley's grandmother trying to convey by letting the kids see her wart?
2. How does Mclean deal with her parents' divorce? Why does she

pick a new identity each time she moves? Why is it sometimes hard to show others your true self?

3. Based on how Mclean lives, what does she think is required for someone to develop true and lasting friendships? What do you think is required to develop true and lasting friendships? What do you look for in a potential friend? What do you avoid?
4. Why do Dave's parents ground him? What do you think about his punishment for getting caught with alcohol at a party? How does the involvement of Dave's parents in his life differ from that of Mclean's parents? Who are we more like?

What Janie Found



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

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

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

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

1. What does Janie hope to accomplish by finding and confronting Hannah? Why does she change her mind? What does she hope will be different after that decision?
2. What would you have done in Janie's position? When it is good

to confront the past, and when is it better to move forward in other ways?

3. How did Janie feel betrayed by the Johnsons? Would you have felt the same way? Have you ever been betrayed by a friend or family member? How did it make you feel? How did you work through that emotion? How did the relationship end up?

Whatever Happened to Janie?



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

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

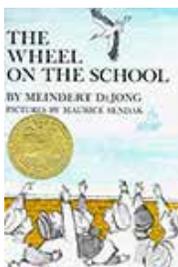
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

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

involve talking? Explain. How do you define love?

The Wheel on the School



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

Search for a review of this

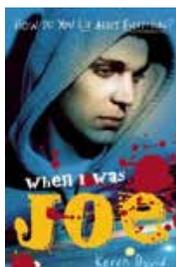
book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

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

danger for the sake of getting the storks to return to Shora. Do you think they should have been more careful, or was it worth the risk to accomplish their goal?

When I Was Joe



This thriller by Keren David is published by Frances Lincoln Children’s Books and written for kids ages 12 to 15 years old. Although not a

series, there is a sequel to this book called *Almost True*.

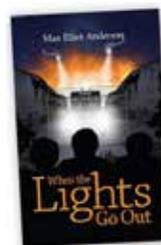
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

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

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

When the Lights Go Out



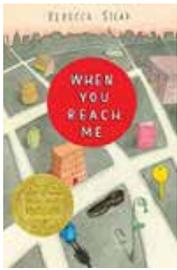
This action adventure story by Max Elliot Anderson is published by Comfort Publishing, LLC, and is written for kids ages 13 to 17.

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

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

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

When You Reach Me



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

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

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

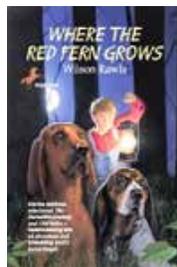
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

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

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

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

Where the Red Fern Grows



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

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

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

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

The Whipping Boy



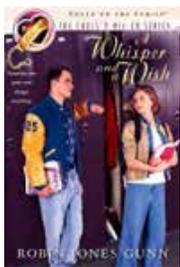
This adventure by Sid Fleischman is published by HarperCollins Publishers and is written for kids ages 6 to 10.

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

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

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

A Whisper and a Wish



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

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

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

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

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

“Who Could That Be at This Hour?”



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

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

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

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

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

Wicked Lovely



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

Wicked Lovely is written for kids ages 13 and up.

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

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

1. Why is Aislinn afraid to tell Seth that she can see faeries? What does Grams think about sharing this information? Is there any time when withholding information from someone might be the right decision?

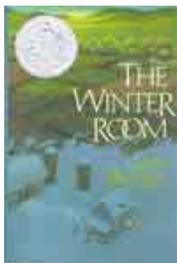
2. In what way is Keenan good, and how are some of his choices immoral? Is it all right for him to chase after Aislinn if his motives are pure?
3. Why does Donia envy the Summer Girls? Why wouldn't Donia have been happy if she had chosen to become a Summer Girl? Should anyone be dependent on another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

3. What happened in the story of Crazy Allen? How did he turn his own death into a practical joke? What is the problem with practical jokes? Is there anything that you should not joke about?
4. Wayne said bragging is similar to lying. Explain why you agree or disagree with Wayne.
5. Eldon and Wayne lived with their parents and uncles. How would living with your family and extended family in a small house change the way you live now? What are some of the rules this family has and what are some things this family does to get along? What do you think your family and your extended family would have to do to get along?
6. Which of Uncle David's stories did you like the best? What made it special to you?
7. Why did Wayne lose respect for his uncle? How did he react? Who is someone that you have lost respect for? Why did this person lose your respect?

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

1. Why does Lia starve herself? How is being thin different from what she expected? How do you see your body? What do you do to take care of it?
2. Why isn't Lia happy when she reaches goal No. 3: 89 pounds? Why wouldn't she be happy at 75 pounds? How is Lia's desire to lose weight related to the belief that she takes up too much space? How would you try to help Lia if she were your friend?
3. Why does Lia start cutting herself? Why does she continue? What circumstances in Lia's life contribute to her feeling this way? What choices could she have made differently? Have you ever felt so emotionally numb that you just wanted to feel something, even if it was painful?
4. Lia uses the word canvas to describe her body. What does she mean? What words does the Bible use to describe the human body? What responsibilities do we have relating to the care of our bodies?
5. Lia is fixated on her body and the bodies of those around her. Does the shape of a person's body tell you anything about their personality?
6. Lia thinks that she is fat, but she also thinks that chubby little Emma could be a model. Why does Lia think Emma is beautiful? What role does Emma play in Lia's recovery? Is there anyone in your life who gives you this sense of purpose?

The Winter Room



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

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. Eldon and Wayne often disagree with each other and sometimes fight. Why do they do that? Choose one situation where they did this. Describe one way that they could have better handled the disagreement.
2. Faith can be hard to understand. What do you think Mother meant when she said Uncle David's stories are not to

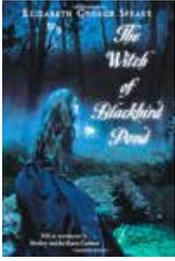
Wintergirls



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

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

The Witch of Blackbird Pond



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

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

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

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

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

5. Proverbs 12:26 talks about choosing friends. What did Kit do right in choosing her friends? What did she do wrong? Why is it important to consider another person's reputation? How can the wrong association prove disastrous?
 6. Goodwife Cruff targets Kit from the first day they meet on the Dolphin. What does she accuse Kit of being? How is Goodwife Cruff wrong in her accusations against Kit? Why don't Kit and her uncle press charges of slander against Goodwife Cruff?
 7. Matthew Wood and the highly esteemed, yet condescending, Dr. Bulkeley heatedly disagree on politics. What do both men do when Mercy's life is in danger? Is it OK to disagree with people? Even if you disagree with someone, how should you treat that person?
2. Why do people eat more than they need? Why do people boast about how much stuff they own? How can you keep from eating and having more than you need?
 3. How do the boy and his grandmother plan to get rid of all the witches? Do you think they will succeed? Explain. What would you do if you were in the boy's place? Are he and his grandmother doing the right thing? Explain.
 4. The boy has a very close relationship with his grandmother. Which trusted adults in your life do you most enjoy spending time with? Do you share any special activities or traditions together? What do you like most about these people? What lessons could you learn from them?

The Witches



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

The Witches is written for kids ages 7 and up.

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

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

1. Why doesn't the main character like Bruno Jenkins? How does the Bible say we should care for animals? What would you do if

The Wizard of Oz



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

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

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

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

1. Dorothy and her friends travel through the dark woods. After that, they come to an open

field full of sunshine and flowers. Which was more dangerous for them? What things in our world look attractive but are dangerous?

2. Why are there witches in Oz, according to the Good Witch of the North? Does being civilized have anything to do with whether there are witches? What does the Bible say about those who use witchcraft? Why might God take sorcery so seriously?
3. When the friends reach the Emerald City, the Guardian of the Gates tells them they must wear special goggles. Why does he say that they need them? What is the reality that we find out later? Why do you think the Wizard feels the need to fool his subjects? Can you think of anything in our world that has a lot of hype, but falls apart or becomes a disappointment once you dig a little deeper?
4. When Dorothy visits the Wizard for the first time, he asks her why he should help her. She says because he is strong and able to help, and because she is weak and helpless. The Wizard tells her that she has no right to expect any help from him unless she does something for him first. How would you describe God's character compared to the Wizard's? What is the real reason the Wizard talks to Dorothy as he does?
5. The Wicked Witch of the West recognizes the magical protection from the Good Witch's kiss and the power of the silver shoes. But she also sees that Dorothy is young and unaware of the gifts she has been given. How is Dorothy enslaved? What lies did she believe? Could Dorothy have faced the Wicked Witch without any special protection or gifts?

What might have happened if she'd tried?

6. The China Girl Princess is desperately afraid of being chased through Dainty China Country because if she falls, she'll break. Can the China Doll be repaired if she falls? Why won't she be as pretty if she is mended?

Wonder



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

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

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

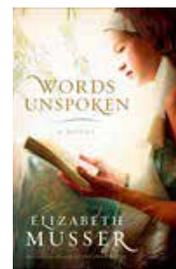
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. How do people react when they see August? What do you do when you see someone who has an obvious physical abnormality or mental disability? Can people help the way they react when they see someone like August? What sort of things could you do for someone like August to help him feel accepted and loved?
2. What changes the way the students at Beecher Prep act toward August? At the beginning of the war between Jack and Julian, whose side would you have been on? Would anything have caused you to switch sides? Which situations have you seen that involve people taking sides between

a bully and someone who is bullied?

3. Why does Summer decide to sit with August at lunch? Why do people think she is sitting with him? Would you leave your circle of friends to hang out with someone who is different?
4. Do you think it's too much pressure when Mr. Tushman asks Jack to be friends with August? Would they become friends if Jack wasn't on the welcoming committee? Have you ever been asked by your parents or a teacher to be extra friendly to a kid who isn't popular? How did it make you feel? Did you become real friends with that person?
5. What does it mean to be popular? Why do kids care so much about being popular? Where would you put yourself on the popular scale in your school? Where do you want to be on that scale?
6. How does Via feel about August being her little brother? How has August's facial abnormality affected her life? Do you think Via and August's parents treat their children fairly? Has there been a time in your life when one of your siblings received more attention than you? Does being fair always mean being equal?

Words Unspoken



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

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

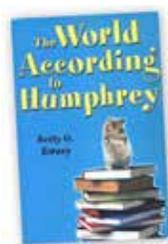
If your children have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

1. Why do Annie and Ev keep their pasts and Ev's writing career a secret? If you were one of their daughters, would you have felt deceived, or would you have understood their decision? What does the Bible say about lying by omission? Did Annie's and Ev's deceit contradict their Christian beliefs, or did it allow them to live out their faith more effectively? Explain your answer.
2. How is Ev teaching Lissa to drive a metaphor for the way God walks through difficulties and trials with us? What does Ev have on his side of his car that comforts Lissa? Why is this brake pedal significant? What does Ev say to Lissa when she admits that she hears voices? What does he tell her about thinking vs. thanking?
3. What key message does S.A. Green try to get across in his novels? Do you agree or disagree that nothing in life is random? What has happened in your life to make you adopt this point of view?
4. Have you ever suffered from depression or known anyone who has? What brought on the depression? Was it a particular incident, or a chemical imbalance? What are some ways to help and encourage a person who is depressed? What are some things not to say or do? How can having a faith in God aid in a person's recovery from depression?
5. What is the message in this story concerning alcohol use

and abuse? What happens to Ev because of his alcohol addiction? What happens to his sister, Tate, because of hers? Is it wrong to drink alcohol if you're legally old enough? What are your thoughts on how a person should or shouldn't use alcohol?

6. What causes the downfalls of Ted and Silvano? Do lying and cheating ever lead to long-term success? Give an example to support your answer. What would God say about their choices?
7. Why does Katy Lynn decide not to ruin her husband's life and reputation after he's had an affair? What does God say about seeking revenge? Why is it difficult to leave revenge to God?

The World According to Humphrey



This contemporary adventure book by Betty G. Birney is the first in the "Humphrey" series and is published by Puffin Books, a division of Penguin Books.

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

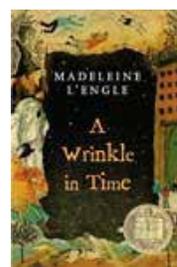
Search for a review of this book for parents at pluggedin.com/book-reviews.

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

1. What does our family do in the evenings? How is our family like A.J.'s family? How is it different? How is our family like Miranda's? How is it different? What makes our family unique?

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

A Wrinkle in Time



This first science fiction/fantasy book in the "Time Quartet" series by Madeleine L'Engle is published by Square Fish, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press. A

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

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

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

1. Many Christians disagree about whether *A Wrinkle in Time* is a Christian-based book. Opponents of the book dislike elements such as tesseracting, the crystal-ball-wielding Happy Medium and the fact that Christ is mentioned alongside human artists, authors and religious leaders as people who brought

light to the world. What do you think? What aspects of the book honor God? What aspects, if any, do you feel dishonor Him?

2. Why do you think the author used a giant brain to symbolize evil in this book?
3. At first, Meg wishes she could be more like other people. What do you think she learned from her interactions with people who were different — Aunt Beast and the Mrs. Ws? How are you different from others, and how can you use that uniqueness to glorify God?
4. What did you think of Mrs. Murray's comment, "Just because we don't understand doesn't mean an explanation doesn't exist"?
5. Though Madeline L'Engle made a living using words, critics often note that she clearly addresses the inadequacy of language in this book. The different languages and dialects of the characters cause confusion among them. Additionally, words and human understanding can't conquer IT. In the end, only love overcomes IT's power. How did God overcome the language barrier between us and Him? See John 1:14. What part did love play?