

ASHES: VISIBLE & INVISIBLE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

FINISHING THE JOURNEY by Leslea Wahl

1. For someone just joining the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil, the season of Lent becomes a life-changing time of their life—full of hope and excitement—but maybe even some moments of doubt, such as Liz experiences. Have you ever had to make a difficult decision in order to stand up for your faith? If not, do you feel you would have the strength to do that?
2. Liz only discovers the beauty of the Catholic Church after accepting an invitation to attend Mass with her friend Josie. Is there anyone in your life you think may appreciate or benefit from an invitation to attend church with you?

FOLLOW ME by Cynthia T. Toney

3. At which times did Vincent become angry regarding the situation in which he found himself? At whom did he direct his anger, and how did he work through it? Describe a time you became angered by someone, or by something out of your control, and how you handled that anger.
4. Do you think Vincent had good reason to consider abandoning the idea of attending seminary? Have you ever had a sacrifice to make that seemed too difficult for you? How much did prayer help you in making your decision?

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS by Marie Keiser

5. Why is Alvarez dissatisfied with his life near the beginning of the story? What does this say about him as a person?
6. Do Justin's doubts about his faith make his action in admitting his religion more courageous, or less? Why?

THE BIG ASK by Carolyn Astfalk

7. Read the testing of Abraham in Genesis 22:1-19. Imagine yourself in Abraham's place. Is your trust in God strong enough to withstand such a test? How can you grow in trust?
8. Paul struggles to discern what God might be calling him to do. What discernment tools did he use to make a decision? How can you apply those tools to your own decision-making?

LENT ROYAL & ANCIENT by Amanda Lauer

9. Would you continue to practice your Catholic faith if it were illegal to do so? If so, in what fashion?
10. What aspect of Lent is most meaningful to you?

NO GREATER LOVE by Ellen Gable

11. Do you think it was unfair for her parents to ask Lexie to give up her free time to help care for her siblings? Why?
12. At the end of the story, how does Lexie's attitude toward sacrifice change?

A VERY JURASSIC LENT by Corinna Turner

13. Joshua finds the thought, "my dad did everything just right and got eaten anyway," comforting because it reminds him that he does not have ultimate control over his life. Would you find this comforting? Why or why not?
14. When Darryl leaves the safety of the Habitat Vehicle, she makes a massive leap of faith to save Josh. Do you think she did the right thing? Why or why not? Have you ever been in a situation that called for a leap of faith (perhaps a much smaller one!) and did you manage to take it? Are you glad that you did? Why or why not?

LUCY AND THE FORSAKEN PATH by Antony Barone Kolenc

15. How is the medieval attitude toward lepers, as shown in the story, similar to and different from that of Jesus Christ in the Gospels?
16. At the end of the story, what does Lucy recognize about herself and her attitude toward her father?

BREAD ALONE by T. M. Gaouette

17. Read the Gospel of Luke and make note of the parallel between Jesus' time in the desert and Ethan's modern-day struggles. How do you feel about this equivalence?
18. What does Ethan mean when he thinks, "And for the first time in a long, long time, I was sure that I truly wasn't alone, and that I didn't ever have to be hungry again."

PREPARE THE WAY by Theresa Linden

19. Lent is a time of repentance. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord by inviting everyone to receive a baptism of repentance. How important is it for us to recognize our faults, repent of them, and then seek reconciliation with God? How is the sacrament of Confession even more powerful than John's baptism in helping us to prepare our hearts for the Lord?
20. Do you wonder why God accepted Abel's gift with favor but had no regard for Cain's gift? Asher has been taught that Abel gave the very best of what he had, while Cain did not. What can you do differently this Lent to remind yourself to offer God the very best in everything you do, whether it's the way you speak to family members, the way you pray at Mass, or the way you face chores or schoolwork?