

LEADER'S GUIDE

FOR

*Waking Up  
Bees*

STORIES OF

LIVING

LIFE'S

QUESTIONS

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## Introduction: Using the Stories

*Waking Up Bees: Stories of Living Life's Questions* was written to help high school juniors and seniors consider the challenges of young adulthood in the context of Christian values and vision. It may be used as a tool to spark group discussion, or as an aid to directed journal writing. The collection focuses on themes considered in *Creating a Christian Lifestyle*, a senior year religion textbook, although the stories may be used independently as well.

These stories provide a context for critical thinking about themes such as love, suffering, money, communication, marriage, and so on. Young people presented with the task of discussing or writing about such themes in a general way often find themselves at a loss for where to begin, especially with topics about which they may feel uncomfortable sharing their opinions or personal experiences. These stories offer a concrete, safe starting point for such discussion. However, if your class or group members seem open to more personal sharing, by all means encourage that with questions directed to their own situations.

We cannot predict the course of young people's discussion about these stories, so it is recommended that you *not* simply read to the class or group the questions provided in this guide. Rather, use the questions to prepare for leading the discussion, but allow it to develop organically.

Before raising specific questions about each story, give the young people the freedom to respond with their own experience and wisdom regarding whatever most concerned them about the story. Begin by asking general questions such as these:

- What message did this story have for you?
- What did you like or dislike about the main characters?
- Have you had an experience similar to the one in this story?

Move to more specific questions, as indicated in the following pages, if the class or group members seem stumped by the more general questions, and to take the discussion in new directions.

This guide provides some background for each story as well as thoughts and questions directed at exploring various issues. However, the questions provided here are by no means exhaustive. For instance, they do not address the young people's situations directly, because the focus of this guide is the stories, but you will likely want to raise the questions best suited for your group. Also, commentary for your benefit as the leader is provided in brackets and italics where appropriate. For particularly sticky issues, references to the appropriate sections of the *Creating a Christian Lifestyle* (CCL) text and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are provided as a further aid to discussion. If you have the teaching manual that accompanies the text, you may also want to review "Leading Class Discussions" on page 343.

These stories are intentionally messy because life is messy—full of unanswered questions, unexpected detours, and unmarked mazes of possible pathways. The endings of some of the stories are ambiguous, and some of the questions suggested by this guide do not have easy answers—if they have any answers at all. How should you handle this as the group leader? Bravely lead your group right into the thick of the mess. The goal of these stories is to increase students' ability to think critically about life issues in a Christian context, not necessarily to provide pat answers. By doing so, perhaps members of your group will be better equipped to journey through the wonder and mystery of their own lives.

## All Passages by Water Lead Home

**Themes.** Chapter 1, "Changes Ahead," chapter 2, "Growth for Life," and epilogue, "A Dream for Your Future"

### Background

"All Passages by Water Lead Home" employs the metaphor of a journey to talk about life, and the metaphor of the ocean to represent the vast, unexplored world that faces students upon their graduation. The story is set against the backdrop of the characters' heightened awareness of their own mortality as a way of more seriously considering the priorities of a Christian lifestyle.

### Questions and Notes

**Preparing for the journey.** Jim says: "Not knowing where you're going in life makes it more interesting." Do you agree or disagree? Think about your life as a journey. How important is it to plan for that journey, mapping out the route you want to take and the things you want to do along the way, as opposed to being more spontaneous and being surprised by what lies around the next bend in the road? What things (skills, knowledge, resources, etc.) do you think you might need to pack for the journey?

**Taking the risk.** Zoe talks about the risks that her great-great-grandma took to come to America. What choices do Zoe, Annie, and Jim face in the near future as they move into adulthood, and what risks might they have to take to get where they want to go?

**Hazard and opportunity.** Annie expresses fear about the unknown in her future. She's afraid of "getting lost [or] drowning." How might those fears hold her back from realizing her full potential? How might they be helpful to her?

**Interdependence.** Zoe suggests that "it's better to travel together." When might that not be true in the journey of life? What do the travelers in this story gain from their interdependence?

**Saying yes to life.** Zoe lists all the places she might go and the things she might do if she were to live her full life. Imagine you are told that you only have a little while left to live. What would you most regret not being able to experience? [*For example: traveling to certain places, having children, doing charity work, running a company.*] Do you expect to be able to do all those things? Do you feel you're living fully now?

**Freedom and responsibility.** How do you balance pursuing your hopes and desires with your responsibilities as a Christian (such as providing for yourself and your family, serving the poor, contributing to the common good, following God's law)? [*See "Autonomy: The Ability to Shape Your Own Life," CCL, pp. 20-24.*]

**Stepping out in faith.** How is Zoe's awareness of her own mortality a gift to her? [*For instance: it brings her priorities into sharp focus, it makes her aware of the beauty in the world around her, and it makes her aware of her own potential to live life fully.*] If she did indeed find a cure for her cancer, how do you think her brush with death might change the way she would live her life? Jim talks about the "new world" that they all hope to enter after they die. How might an awareness of life after death affect the choices Jim and Annie make about their identity and path during their life on earth?