

THE SHACK

(discussion questions)

1. Have you or has anyone you've known experienced a "Great Sadness" in life? If so, is there anything that helps? Do you know anyone whose life has been radically changed by the influence of evil? Is it possible to protect ourselves from evil? What does "deliver us from evil" mean in The Lord's Prayer?
2. Do you believe that God can contact us in tangible ways like the note that was left for Mack? Why did Papa want to meet Mack at *the* shack? If God were to invite you to meet him somewhere, where would it be?
3. Even though Mack didn't come right out and say it, he blamed God for what happened to Missy. Would you have also blamed God? Could God have prevented Missy's death? If so, why didn't He?
4. What was your reaction to the personification of the three members of the Trinity? Did you have a hard time with the way God's gender and/or race was portrayed? Why or why not?
5. Which member of the Trinity do you relate to the easiest? What is your mental image of each member?
6. Were there parts of the book that you disagreed with or that left you confused? Which ones and why? How did the portrayal of God in the book differ from your own image of Him?
7. What did you think of the relationship between Jesus, Papa, and Sarayu? Do you think this is an accurate depiction of the Trinity? Does God seem too lenient?
8. Does Mack blame himself for Missy's death? How does he let his grief define him?
9. Why was it important for Mack to reconcile with his father? How do our relationships with our parents define us? How do they color our relationship with God?
10. How would you define forgiveness? In the book, Papa tells Mack on page 225 that forgiveness does not establish relationship. Do you agree? Why was it important for Mack to forgive his father? Why was it important for him to forgive the killer?
11. Did the book make you think of any aspect of Christianity in a new way?
12. Do you think suffering brings people closer to God or causes them to distance themselves from Him? What has been your personal experience? Do you struggle with believing God is good in light of all the tragedy in the world?

13. Do you agree with the explanation of why God gave us the Ten Commandments on page 202? Are we made righteous by following rules? What do you think the author thinks about organized religion?

14. On page 206, Sarayu talks about how God is a verb, not a noun. She goes on to explain the difference between responsibility versus response and expectancy versus expectations. Do you agree with this idea?

15. What did you think of the depiction of heaven near the end of the book? What do you think heaven will be like? Will heaven be the same for everyone?

16. What part of the book spoke to you the most and why?