

APPLICATIONS STORIES & DIALOGUES

DISCUSSION GUIDE:

The Wizard of Oz

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The manuals accompanying *Rebecca*, by Dr. Ron Reed, and *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, Second Edition, were used for ideas while developing this discussion guide. Some exercises have been duplicated from each; a specific reference by page number will be found after those activities.

Chapter 1: "The Cyclone"

1. Discuss the characters and scenery of the chapter. A particular color is repeated over and over when making descriptions. Together, identify that color (gray) and list the uses of it found in the chapter. Then discuss why each might have been described in that way. What is **not** described as gray? Why not? Then discuss the idea of symbolism. Mention that the colors of things in different places will change as they read. Why might that happen?

2. Do you think Aunt Em and Uncle Henry loved Dorothy? Why or why not?
Do you think Dorothy loved Aunt Em and Uncle Henry? Why or why not?
Do you think Dorothy loved Toto? Why or why not?
Do you think Toto loved Dorothy? Why or why not?

3. Activity — From what you have read and discussed, draw a picture of what you think it looked like in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2: "The Council with the Munchkins"

1. Dorothy is called "a sorceress." Since this word is so important in understanding the book, the leader will probably need to have this term defined. Then discuss why she would be called that.

2. Dorothy thought that all witches were wicked; also that all witches were dead. From discussing this and #1, students can learn about the difference between truth by definition and truth by evidence. This is a good opportunity to distinguish between the two.

By definition — examples:

All one-cent coins are pennies

No squares are circles.

Some dogs are poodles.

All governors are the chief executives of their state.

By evidence — examples:

Fires are often destructive.

Kittens usually like milk.

Winters in Alaska are generally cold.

All dinosaurs are extinct.

Ask students to classify the following according to being either true or false, and then to give a reason. (by definition or by evidence)

a. Firemen are usually brave.

b. Every circle is round.

c. Cats often like milk.

d. No bricks are made of mud.

e. All potatoes are vegetables.

(*Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, pgs. 18,19)

3. We are told that Oz is not civilized, so they still have witches and wizards. What is the meaning of "civilized?"

4. Dorothy is told that she killed the Wicked Witch of the East. When she denies ever killing anything, the little old woman tells her, "Your house did, anyway, and that is the same thing." Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

a. Reasoning Activity — Which, if any, of the following statements represents good reasoning? In the cases you identify as poor reasoning, explain what you think is

wrong.

1. Mary doesn't have many friends, so I guess she has lots of enemies.
2. Jed's house has two bedrooms, so it must be smaller than John's house, which has three bedrooms.
3. Jack: "You can't believe anyone."
Ginny: "So it follows that we shouldn't believe what you've just said, right?"
4. What goes up must come down. So if an elevator goes up empty, it must come down empty.

(Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery*, pg. 98)

5. The color used often in this chapter is blue. Students may want to discuss the reason for this.

Chapter 3: "How Dorothy Saved the Scarecrow"

1. From Dorothy's appearance and the belief that she killed the Wicked Witch, Boq tells her that she must be a great Sorceress. This is a good opportunity to review the idea of truth by definition and truth by evidence discussed in Chapter 2.

2. Activity — To help distinguish between what is real vs. what appears to be real, have children form a circle. Each child takes a turn saying, "I thought it was _____, but it was really _____." (Example: I thought it was my phone ringing, but it was really one on TV.)

(Rebecca, pg. 4)

3. Scarecrow wants a brain, yet he makes comments about "not minding" that his body is stuffed with straw, and that he "doesn't mind" carrying the basket because he can't get tired. Do you think it would be possible to "not mind" something if you didn't have a brain?

a. Activity — What does the word "mind" mean? How do we use the word "mind"?

1. Keep your mind on your work.
2. Mind your own business
3. Don't mind me.
4. I have a mind of my own.
5. I don't mind if I do.
6. He changed his mind.
7. It blew my mind.

(Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery*, pg. 146)

Chapter 4: "The Road Through the Forest"

1. The Scarecrow couldn't understand why Dorothy would want to leave the beauty of Oz to return to Kansas. The reasoning he used in this conversation gives an ideal opportunity to introduce the idea of inductive reasoning.

a. Activity — Bring to your discussion a brown lunch sack with several pieces of candy, including more than one type. Taking out one piece at a time, ask the students to predict what type will be pulled out next. Discuss why they can't reliably make that prediction. The purpose of this activity is for the students to recognize that a larger sample is necessary in order to make a reliable prediction.

b. Use this activity to lead into a discussion of the Scarecrow's statement about people who have brains and where they would probably like to live.

2. Activity — Give the students some examples of inductive reasoning with both good and bad inferences used. Ask them to determine the type and give reasons for their answers.

- a. I get sick when I eat raspberries.
I get sick when I eat blueberries.
I get sick when I eat blackberries.
Therefore, any kind of food makes me sick.
- b. I always get hiccups when I see a mouse.
I only get hiccups when I see a mouse.
Therefore, the cause of my hiccups is my seeing a mouse.
- c. Suzy always giggles a lot on Mondays, less on Tuesdays, still less on Wednesdays, still less on Thursdays, and very little on Fridays. Therefore, the later in the week it gets, the less Suzy giggles.
- d. The last 100 times I flipped this nickel, it came up heads. Therefore, the next time I flip it, it's bound to be heads.

(Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery*, pg. 112)

3. As the Scarecrow was being made, one of the men said that he looked just like a man; another person said that he *was* a man. What makes a man "a man"?

4. In this chapter we find that the Scarecrow feels like "quite an important person" when he was scaring away the birds from the farmer's field. A crow discovers that the Scarecrow is not a man and quickly eats the corn growing in the field; this makes the Scarecrow feel that he is a fool. Do you think it's possible to change your feelings about yourself so quickly?

5. Locate and then discuss the various times throughout the chapter when the Scarecrow seems able to "think," even though he has no brain.

Chapter 5: "The Rescue of the Tin Woodman"

1. After being rescued, the Tin Woodman describes his

desire to have a heart. This leads to a discussion between him and the Scarecrow about whether it is better to have a heart or a brain. Discuss what the students believe to be true about this situation.

2. Share with the class the book *Happiness Is ...*, by Charles Schultz. Give the students a chance to discuss what each thinks about this; then ask them to draw a picture or write about what it is that they believe happiness to be.

Chapter 6: "The Cowardly Lion"

1. The Lion is thought by others to be brave; in truth, he is a coward. Is the lion what he believes himself to be, or what *others* believe him to be?

2. Discuss the following questions about personal identity:

What makes you you?

a. Is it your name? Is it your face? Is it your clothes? Is it your mind? Is it your thoughts?

b. Are you the same person you were yesterday?

c. Are you the same person you were when you were born?

d. When you're very old, will you be the same person you are now?

e. Are you always the same?

f. If not, when do you like yourself best? For example, do you like best the way you are when you are at school?

(*Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, pgs. 35 and 298)

Chapter 7: "The Journey to the Great Oz"

1. In this chapter, we discover a lot about the Scarecrow. With a partner, create a list of what you see that the Scarecrow is able to do. (When you meet with the students to talk about their lists, also discuss the possibility of the Scarecrow doing each if he didn't have a brain.)

Chapter 8: "The Deadly Poppy Field"

1. Open the discussion with the question "Have you ever had a dream that seemed real?" Let a few students share their experiences. Then relate their dreams to what happened to the Lion in Chapter 8. After discovering the Lion to be asleep in the poppy field and that there was no way to move him, the Tin Woodman said, "...perhaps he will dream that he has found courage at last." If the Lion *did* dream about being courageous, would that have been real? Are dreams real? If not, what are they?

Chapter 9: "The Queen of the Field Mice"

1. Discuss the meaning of the cliché "One good turn deserves another." Allow students to divide into two groups and role play the events of the chapter. After each group shares their interpretation, discuss what took place, especially focusing on the issues of freedom and following through after making a promise. Are these important? If you were _____, how would you have handled it?

Chapter 10: "The Guardian of the Gates"

1. After discovering what had happened to him in the poppy field and how he had been saved, the Lion shared his feelings. Do you think he sees himself to be the same or different from how he saw himself in Chapter 6? Why?

2. Show the class a picture of a clown. Together make a list of the actions that they might expect the clown to do. Then imagine that the clown has taken off his make-up. Will his actions be the same? Will he be the same person? Discuss reasons for their answers.

a. According to what we are told in this chapter, Oz is a great wizard and can take on any shape he wishes. If he is a man, will he be the *same* man, or a *different* man, in the shapes he becomes?

3. When Dorothy is asked, "Where is Kansas?" her response is: "I don't know, but it is my home, and I'm sure it is somewhere." Is this an example of truth by definition or truth by example? (Review of concept taught in Chapter 2)

4. The color mentioned often in this chapter is green. The students may want to discuss the reason for this.

Chapter 11: "The Wonderful Emerald City of Oz"

1. Everything in the Emerald City looks green. Do you think everything is *really* green, or *appears* to be green because of the spectacles?

2. Describe the different ways that Oz "appeared" in this chapter. Do you think there was a reason for each of the ways he looked? This could lead to an interesting discussion about Oz' possible purpose in how he appeared — could it be because of what he hoped each would tell the next?

3. As Dorothy was talking to Oz, his eyes "saw that she was telling the truth." Do you think that you can tell

that by looking at someone? This question provides an opportunity to develop the idea of empathy. Possible questions to discuss might be:

When your best friend is happy, how does s/he show it?

When your teacher is angry, how does s/he show it?

When your mother or father is upset, how does s/he show it?

Do you think you could answer those same questions if they were complete strangers? Why? Why not? Explain.

(Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery*, pg. 279)

Chapter 12: "The Search for the Wicked Witch"

1. After leaving Emerald City, Dorothy discovered that her dress, as well as Toto's ribbon, were no longer green, rather, they were white. How do you think this was possible?

2. Discuss why the Winged Monkeys were afraid of hurting Dorothy. Do you believe that the Power of Good is stronger than the Power of Evil?

3. The Wicked Witch was also afraid of harming Dorothy; however, she *did* treat her as a slave. Discuss how things might have been different if Dorothy had been aware of her power.

4. Activity — Ask the children that have a pet to bring in a picture of himself/herself with that pet. For the children who do not have pets or are unable to bring in a picture, ask them to draw a picture including the two of them. During the discussion on the next day, ask the children to describe their feelings for their pets as we look at their pictures. How do they think their pets feel about their owners? Then discuss Toto's feelings about Dorothy. (Toto didn't care where he was, as long as Dorothy was with him; if Dorothy was unhappy, Toto was unhappy.) Is this kind of relationship possible between a human and a pet?

5. We see, once again, Dorothy unintentionally killing a wicked witch. Refer back to Chapter 2, #4. Could the same comparison be made — "your water did, anyway, and that is the same thing?"

Chapter 13: "The Rescue"

1. After giving the Winkies their freedom, Dorothy asks if they would be willing to help find the Wood Tinman and the Scarecrow. She chose one that "looked as if they knew the most." Can you tell how much a person knows by their appearance?

a. Activity — There are two types of stereotyping: being a member of a group, such as "You're an American, so you *must* love baseball!" and being known to have a certain trait, such as "You love baseball, so you *must* be an American!"

In the following statements, ask the students to determine whether each is a case of good or faulty reasoning. Give a reason for each answer.

a. Eddie says: "My Uncle Frank is from Texas. He must be a cowboy."

b. Ethel says: "Many students who get As are fast readers. But I'm a slow reader. So, I guess I'll never make As."

c. Joe says: "Any drop of water can freeze. This isn't a drop of water. So, it can't freeze."

(Harry Stottlemeier's *Discovery*, pg. 36)

3. Was it luck that caused Dorothy to find the Golden Cap? If not, do you think there was another reason? Explain.

4. The color used often in this chapter is yellow. Students may want to discuss the reason for this.

Chapter 14: "The Winged Monkeys"

1. Discuss experiences when they have played jokes on others, and have had jokes played on them. The discussion will probably include negative experiences — times when the joke "back-fired." Compare their experiences to the joke played by the King's grandfather. Do our intentions necessarily work out that way? What are possible consequences?

Chapter 15: "The Discovery of Oz, the Terrible"

1. When they finally *saw* Oz, he was only a voice. Why do you think he chose to *appear* in this way?

2. Do you think that it is ever okay to not keep a promise? Justify your answer. Discuss some of the following possibilities and if it would be okay to not keep the promise made.

You have promised to:

a. Go with a friend to a movie, but another friend calls and asks you to go to *Wet 'n Wild* on the same day.

b. Help your big sister bake cookies, but you have a book report that's due tomorrow and you haven't even read the book yet.

c. Take a sick friend her make-up work, but your mom's car won't start.

3. For a third time we see an action, although unintentional, have a drastic result in this story. Who, or what,

do you think is responsible for the identity of Oz being uncovered?

4. Why does Oz believe that he was a *good* man, but a *bad* wizard?

5. Activity — Divide the class into three groups. Each group should pick a question to discuss:

- Do you always learn from experiences?
- What is the difference between being brave and being courageous?
- Does having a heart make you unhappy?

Relate their responses to the conversations between Oz and the three characters. Do you think he was looking for a way to “cop out,” or do you think he believed what he was saying?

Chapter 16: “The Magic Art of the Great Humbug”

1. The Scarecrow believed that when he got used to his new brain, he would know everything. What does it mean to “know everything?” Do you think it is possible?

2. The true identity of Oz was known; yet, the Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Wood Tinman were all happy with their “gift” from Oz. He said that they imagined he could do anything, so it was easy to make them happy. Was it right for him to continue acting like something he wasn’t?

Chapter 17: “How the Balloon Was Launched”

1. Before reading the chapter, tell the children that Oz is planning to use his balloon to take both himself and Dorothy away from The Land of Oz. Brainstorm all the possible reasons that Oz might give to his people explaining why he is leaving. After reading the chapter, compare your list with the actual reason he gave. Why do you think he told the people what he did?

2. In this chapter, the Scarecrow had wonderful thoughts, but he wouldn’t say what they were “because he knew no one could understand them but himself.” It seems that he is referring to the others’ lack of the same experiences as he had. This should lead into an interesting discussion about the truth of that statement. Is it possible to understand the words, but not the feelings associated with the experience?

Chapter 18: “Away to the South”

1. What is pride? The people of Emerald City were “proud” that Scarecrow was their ruler because no other city in the world had a stuffed man as its ruler. Do you

think that they had a good reason to be proud?

2. Tell the class that today they are going to vote to decide on who is the kindest person in the class. They are going to pick one person, write that person’s name on a piece of paper, and put it in the ballot box. Don’t talk anymore until all ballots are turned in. Then discuss their feelings as they make their choice. What was their definition of “kind” as they voted? Discuss the difficulty of defining the word, much less choosing the kindest person in the room. The Quadlings think that Glinda, Witch of the South, is a good witch. Is “goodness” something that can be voted on by a group? Are there some things we should not vote on and some that we should?

Chapter 19: “Attacked by the Fighting Trees”

1. After being attacked by the trees as the group tried to pass through the thick woods, the Lion comments, “The trees seem to have made up their minds to fight us, and stop our journey.”

a. Activity — How do we use the word “mind?” Ask the students to explain how the word “mind” is used in each of the following:

You have a mind of your own.

Mind your manners.

My sister changed her mind.

Out of sight, out of mind.

(*Harry Stottlemeier’s Discovery*, pg. 146)

2. How would you describe the relationship in this chapter between Oz and the Wood Tinman? Between Oz and the Scarecrow? Between Oz and the Lion? Between Oz and Dorothy?

Chapter 20: “The Dainty China Country”

1. The travelers come across Mr. Joker, who is “considerably cracked in his head, and that makes him foolish.” What makes one foolish?

a. Activity — After each statement, check whether you agree, disagree, or are undecided.

1. Cheating on a test is foolish.

2. An adult riding on a merry-go-round looks foolish.

3. Asking your parents for a new bike if you make all As for one grading period is foolish.

4. Going to *Six Flags* on a cloudy day is foolish.

5. Your parents think it’s foolish for you to spend your allowance on your comic book collection.

Chapter 21: “The Lion Becomes the King of the Beasts”

1. When passing through the forest, they come upon a “meeting” of the animals who lived there. After seeing

the Lion, the biggest of the tigers welcomed the Lion as the "King of Beasts." We see a "new" Lion! Do you think it was right for him to make the bargain with the forest animals? Why or why not?

Chapter 22: "The Country of the Quadlings"

1. We are told "the country of the Quadlings seemed rich and happy." Can "richness" and "happiness" be measured? Your discussion will probably result in the students agreeing that "richness" can be measured by the material things in the country; happiness is similar to goodness.

Chapter 23: "Glinda Grants Dorothy's Wish"

1. What do you know about Glinda, the Witch of the South, after reading this chapter?
2. What makes a friend a friend? Related questions you might want to discuss:
 - a. Are friends usually very much alike or can they be very different from one another?
 - b. Can two people like each other, but still not be friends?
 - c. Could friends ever hurt one another?
 - d. Can animals be friends with one another?

(Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, pg. 354)

Chapter 24: "Home Again"

1. Do you think that the story described in this book really happened? If not, where has Dorothy "been?"
2. Do you think that grown-ups can learn from children? If so, what do you think Aunt Em and Uncle Henry can learn from Dorothy?

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