

INTRODUCING *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*

ABOUT *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*

Narnia . . . where the adventure begins. In this series of exciting stories, children who get into the fantasy world of Narnia must time and again test their bravery and capacity for belief in order to come to the aid of others – and learn more about themselves. The Narnia Chronicles are filled with fascinating and fanciful characters—talking animals, dancing trees, evil witches, and creatures wholly of the author's imagination. Readers who enter this enchanted world meet these creatures in richly imagined settings and distinctly different lands, brought there by magic along with the children who stumble across the mysterious portals connecting our world with theirs.

The Chronicles of Narnia are among the world's best-known fantasies. Stories of the imagination in which the action often depends on magic or the supernatural. They are part of the classic fantasy genre that includes Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

The seven books of *The Chronicles of Narnia* were published between 1950 and 1956. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* came first – it was because of the popularity of this book that the other books were written. But the author later expressed a wish that the book be sequenced by Narnian chronology, rather than the order in which they were first published. Thus the series now begins with *The Magician's Nephew*, in which the world of Narnia is created, and ends with *The Last Battle*, in which it is destroyed – so that a new world can begin.

ABOUT C.S. LEWIS (1898-1963)

As a young child, C.S. Lewis used to hide with his brothers in a dark wardrobe, where they told each other stories. When he was eight years old they made up a land called Boxen, where talking animals lived. Years later, these experiences helped inspire Lewis to write one of the most popular children's series of all time, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Clive Staples Lewis (known to his friends as Jack) was born in Belfast, Ireland. After attending Oxford University and serving in World War I, he became a University Fellow, writing many books on literature, religion and philosophy. As bombs devastated London during World War II, four children came to live with Lewis in his country home.

He decided to write them a story and the world of Narnia was born. In these books, Lewis combined elements of fantasy – fanciful creatures and imaginary lands – with representations of good versus evil.

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO SHARING *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*

READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES	THEMES
Analyse Structure	Beliefs
Examine Voice and Viewpoint	Courage
Investigate Character	Decision Making
Keep a Journal	Fantasy
Recognise Literary Devices	Power

READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Analyse Structure

Ask students to look at how the author uses digressions, stories within stories, flashbacks, and shifts in point of view to get across information and keep the story moving. What role does suspense play in these stories? How is it created and sustained? Look at, for example, Trumpkin's story in *Prince Caspian*. Students should be aware that part of an author's art is deciding what to leave out. Watch for what Lewis tells us he isn't telling us!

Examine Voice and Viewpoint

Ask students to consider the following questions: Who is the narrator of the Narnia Chronicles? What words would students use to describe the narrator's voice? How does the author use humour and irony to entertain the reader? What effect does this have on the story? Ask students to take special note of asides to the audience, places where the narrator breaks the story to talk directly.

Investigate Character

Ask students to analyse the characters they encounter in the Narnia Chronicles. They may consider their traits, motivations, conflicts, points of view, relationships, and the changes they undergo. How is C.S. Lewis able to establish a character with a few carefully chosen details? How does a character affect the action? Can we tell what a character will do in a given situation based on what we know about him or her? When do characters change, and why? How do recurring characters evolve over the course of the Narnia Chronicles?

Keep a Journal

Students can keep journals to record their responses to the Narnia Chronicles as they read. You might ask students to use their journals to do any or all of the following:

- Pause at points when characters face a difficult decision and ask themselves: What would I do in this situation?
- Choose a character who speaks in a distinct style and write a paragraph in that character's voice.
- Choose a character whose point of view is *not* shown in a particular section and tell the section's story from that character's point of view.
- Record questions they would like to ask the author or the characters.
- Note literary devices such as metaphor and symbolism. Keep lists of new vocabulary words.
- Write down quotations they find interesting and might like to discuss later. In particular, they could note observations that they think would apply to *our* world.
- Sketch drawings inspired by mental images the text evokes.

Recognise Literary Devices

Lewis' lively writing provides repeated opportunities to identify word play, analogies, similes, metaphors, allegories, and symbolism. Ask students to be aware of how different characters use language, for example: Aslan, the children and the different Narnian animals. How do these devices enrich the text?

THEMES

Beliefs

Characters regularly confront issues of good and evil. How does what a character believes affect how he or she acts and vice versa? What are some examples of good and evil behaviour? How do the characters respond to good and evil?

Courage

What is courage? When do characters show courage? Ask students to examine the difference between rash action and courageous action. What is the difference between caution and cowardice? How does fear affect how the characters perceive the world, and how they act?

Decision Making

Throughout the Narnia Chronicles, characters face difficult choices. Ask students to pause periodically in their reading to reflect on what they would do in a particular character's situation. As they continue reading, ask them to note which tactics lead to successful resolutions.

Fantasy

Ask students to discuss the different elements that make up fantasy, for example, imaginary worlds and strange creatures. What images of the Narnian fantasy world are most vivid? How do the children adapt to the altered realities of Narnia? What preconceptions do they bring with them?

Power

Ask students to discuss the meaning of power. Why do people want power? How does a good ruler use power? How is power sometimes misused?

DISCUSSIONS ACROSS THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

The following questions are designed to spark discussion about the issues and topics raised in this series.

Childhood and Adulthood

“Children have one kind of silliness, as you know, and grown-ups have another kind.” (*The Magician’s Nephew*). How would you describe the difference between these kinds of silliness? What are some other observations the author makes about children and adults? Do you think Lewis remembered his own childhood or had a sense of how children think? Why or why not?

Complexity of Emotion

Lewis frequently shows characters feeling more than one thing at once, or experiencing closely alternating emotions. Find examples of this in the books and see if you can explain the characters’ experience. Can you think of a time when you felt two different ways about something in your own life?

Gender Roles

Compare male and female roles in the books. How do the Narnia Chronicles reflect different expectations for boys and girls? How do attitudes to gender roles at the time the series was written (early to mid-1950s) compare with attitudes now?

Recurring Characters

Which characters were your favourites? Why do you think the author decides to send particular characters – and not others – on each specific voyage?

Talking and Non-Talking Animals

What distinction is made between talking and non-talking animals? Why do Narnians consider it horrible to kill or eat a talking animal when it is acceptable to kill or eat a non-talking one? What does this say about the importance of speech to the author, or as an attribute of humanity?

INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

You may not have time to read all of the Narnia Chronicle with your class. If not, you might want to encourage students to continue reading the books on their own. The following are suggestions for independent projects for your students who read the whole series.

Create a Values Chart

Make a chart with two columns, “Values” and “Characters.” In the first column, list the following values represented in the Narnia Chronicles: charity, faith, humility, justice, mercy. In the second column, list the characters in whom you see these values embodied.

Make a Narnia Map

Create a map of the world of Narnia, showing its physical features, towns and other places of interest. You may want to include drawings of some of the characters and events.

Make a Narnian Timeline

Narnian time moves differently to ours, and you learn a little more about this in each book. Make two parallel timelines showing how much time has passed between the books – in Narnia and in England.

Write a Character Study

Choose two characters who appear in several books. Write a character study of each, describing how he or she grows and develops from one book to the next.

Write a Descriptive Poem

From its creation in *The Magician’s Nephew* to its destruction in *The Last Battle*, the world of Narnia is revealed in increasingly detailed layers. Write a poem evoking the physical world of Narnia.

Write a Fantasy

C.S. Lewis used the genre of fantasy to create a world in which characters must regularly confront issues of good and evil, right and wrong. Write your own fantasy. Create a world based wholly on your own imagination, filled with fanciful creatures facing conflicts that test their morality.

Write a One-Act Play

Select a scene from one of the books and rewrite it as a one-act play. Describe the setting and write new dialogue as needed. Be sure your play reflects the viewpoints of the characters as presented in the book.

Write an Interview

Suppose you could interview C.S. Lewis. Write questions about the books and then answers you think he would give based on your reading of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. You might like to work in pairs, with one being C.S. Lewis and the other being the interviewer.

NARNIA WORKSHEETS

BOOK 1

THE MAGICIAN'S NEPHEW

“Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters.”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where the woods are thick and cool and where Talking Beasts are called to life – a new world where the adventure begins.

Digory’s uncle Andrew has used dust from another world to make magic rings, that he himself is afraid to use, to explore other worlds. But when Digory and his new friend Polly stumble into Uncle Andrew’s attic, the magician is not afraid to try the rings on the children! Digory and Polly are then drawn into worlds beyond our own, where they find many unexpected adventures. When Digory’s action in one world awakens a witch from a spell, the children’s travel between the worlds takes on a new urgency – to stop the witch in her quest for power.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of the different ways Lewis allows us to discover the characters? For example, what do we learn from how they appear, how they act and react, what they say, and how they contrast with one another?
- How does Lewis create a sense of place as the characters arrive in new worlds? Through whose point of view are new places described?
- What is the Wood Between the Worlds? What effect does it have on Polly and Digory? On the Witch and Uncle Andrew? What do you think the Wood symbolises?
- One of the first experiences that enters Narnia, after Aslan sing it to life, is laughter. Why do you think the author decided to establish Narnia with a joke?
- Why do you think Aslan sends Digory for the apple, when he could easily make it appear?
- What does the choice of the Cabby as the first King of Narnia seem to say about the attributes of a good leader?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

**“Make your choice, adventurous Stranger
Strike the bell and bide the danger,
Or wonder, till it drives you mad,
What would have followed if you had.”**

First review and describe the different reactions Digory and Polly have to this challenge. Then consider: which choice would you make? Would you rather have the danger and the definite answer – or the safety and the lingering question?

Digory is sent on a mission to bring back an apple that will protect Narnia. The same apple can restore health to his mother. What do you think you would do if someone you loved was sick and you were given the chance to save him or her, but you had to break an important rule to do so?

DISCUSS QUOTES

Explain the following quotations. What do they mean in context? What do you think of the ideas expressed?

“Men like me, who possess hidden wisdom, are freed from common rules just as we are cut off from common pleasures. Ours, my boy, is a high and lonely destiny.”

(Uncle Andrew)

“Things always work according to their nature. She has won her heart’s desire; she has unwearied strength and endless days like a goddess. But length of day with an evil heart is only length of misery and already she begins to know it. All get what they want; they do not always like it.”

(Aslan)

JOURNAL WRITING Sensory Images

“But it was a different kind of quietness. The silence of the Wood had been rich and warm (you could almost hear the trees growing) and full of life: this was a dead, cold, empty silence.”

Listen for a quiet moment. Then describe the quiet.

BOOK 2

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

“Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy...”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – the land beyond the wardrobe, the secret country known only to Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy – the place where the adventure begins.

Four children journey from London during World War II to stay at an unusual house in the countryside. Through a forgotten wardrobe filled with musty coats, the children find the enchanted land of Narnia. A secret world of magic and danger, Narnia is ruthlessly ruled by the White Witch, who has cast the land into eternal winter. Only the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, can break the Witch’s evil spell. And a rumour is spreading: Aslan is on his way back. It is at this turbulent moment that four children stumble through the wardrobe and find themselves centre stage in the battle for the control of Narnia.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some individual character traits of each of the four children: Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy? How do they change over the course of the story?
- Compare and contrast the characters of the Lion and the Witch (for example, what kinds of powers they have, how they exercise power, how they treat others, what they want).
- What do you think is the most courageous act shown in this book? Explain.
- Why do you think Edmund lies about having been to Narnia? How does lying affect him?
- In what ways is the Professor an unusual grown-up? What do you think about his “logic”? (See Chapter 5)
- How does Edmund justify his choice to go to the White Witch? Why do you think people make up excuses for doing something that deep inside they know is wrong?
- Why do you think Aslan chooses not to resist as he is dragged and bound by the White Witch’s creatures, even though “one of those paws could have been the death of them all”?
- What do you think of the Professor’s advice to the children at the end of the book?
- An allegory is a story that has a second meaning. Can you think of another meaning for the story of the Lion and his return to life?
- What message might the author be sending to the reader?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

“If it comes to that, which *is* the right side? How do we know that the Fauns are in the right and the Queen...is in the wrong? We don’t really know anything about either.” (Edmund)

What do you think the answer is? How *do* you know right from wrong – and if you don’t know, how do you decide what to do?

At the end of the book, the children become Kings and Queens of Narnia. Reread the description of some of the things they did during their reign (see Chapter 17). If you suddenly found yourself ruler of a land, what would you do? What laws would you make? What goals would you try to reach?

EXPLORE LANGUAGE

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is written in a friendly, informal voice, in the idiom of 1940s Britain. Therefore, occasional words and phrases may be unfamiliar to modern readers. Examples in the first chapter include the word, “wireless” (radio) and “looking-glass” (mirror). As you read, write down words and expressions that seem to come from a different time or place. Work in small groups to discuss what these expressions mean, and create a two-column “translation” chart including definitions in familiar modern English.

Lewis is wonderful at creating *analogies*, this helps readers understand something they don't know by comparing it to something they might know. Examples include the long description of the ride on the Lion's back (Chapter 15) or of the statues coming to life again (Chapter 16). Think of something you have done or seen that others may not have experienced. Try to come up with a way to describe this to someone by comparing it to something that would be more familiar to them.

JOURNAL WRITING Write a Fantasy

Imagine you slipped through a secret passage into another world. Make up a fantasy about meeting someone there. Write about what happens and how you get back.

BOOK 3

THE HORSE AND HIS BOY

“Why, I might be anyone!”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where horses talk and hermits like company – the place where the adventure begins. It's Narnia's Golden Age where Peter is High King.

A boy named Shasta and a talking horse named Bree – separately captured in youth and enslaved in Calormen – together attempt to make their escape to Narnia, a land the horse dimly recalls and the boy does not know at all. Soon they meet another pair of fugitives – a Calormene girl named Aravis, escaping an arranged marriage, and her talking horse, Hwin. Their escape route takes them through the wondrous city of Tashbaan, where they find themselves in the midst of a larger adventure. It falls to them to save the lands to the North – Archenland and Narnia – from a surprise attack by the Calormenes. In the process, Shasta learns who he really is and even finds his real father.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Why do you think Bree decides to talk to Shasta, after years of hiding the fact that he is a talking horse?
- What mistakes do Shasta and Aravis make about each other and why?
- In what different ways do the characters show pride? How does this help them? How does this hurt them?
- Why do you think the book is called *A Horse and His Boy* rather than *A Boy and His Horse*? Find places in the text where Shasta appears to be Bree's boy.
- What kind of leader is The Tisroc? How do we know? Why do you think he agrees to Prince Rabadash's plan?
- What are some words used to describe Aslan in this book? How is he able to be such different things at the same time? How do people react after they see Aslan?
- Why do you think Aslan scratches Aravis's back?
- Why do you think Lewis decided to narrate the battle at Anvard through the Hermit's reflecting pool rather than the scene, or through Shasta's perspective? What tone does this lend the battle?
- Is Prince Rabadash's punishment appropriate? Why or why not?

THINKING ABOUT DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

How do cultural differences, and the perception of cultural differences, play a role in the relations between the people of Calormen and the people of the lands to the North? Find examples in the text of how rumours and prejudices are fed by limited information.

DISCUSS QUOTES

Explain the following quotations. What do they mean in context? What do you think of the ideas expressed?

“These little barbarian countries that call themselves *free* (which is as much to say idle, disordered and unprofitable) are hateful to the gods and to all persons of discernment.” (The Tisroc)

“But as long as you know you're nobody special, you'll be a very decent sort of Horse, on the whole...” (The Hermit)

JOURNAL WRITING Language

People have different ways of speaking in this book depending on where they are from and what their position is in society. Choose a character and “translate” what he or she is saying into your own words or into language another character might use.

BOOK 4

PRINCE CASPIAN

“All you have heard about Old Narnia is true. It is not the land of Men. It is the country of Aslan, the country of the Waking Trees and Visible Naiads, of Fauns and Satyrs, of Dwarfs and Giants, of the gods and the Centaurs, of Talking Beasts. ... The King does not allow them to be spoken of.”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where animals talk and where magical things happen – where the adventure begins.

In a dreary train station in England on their way back to boarding school, Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy suddenly feel themselves being tugged into another world. They arrive on an unknown island where they find the ancient ruins of a palace. But something feels familiar about the place. Eventually the children recognise that they are at Cair Paravel, where they themselves ruled as Kings and Queens of Narnia. They discover that they have been called back to Narnia because the forces of Old Narnia are in trouble. Just one year has passed in our world, but hundreds of years have passed in Narnia. The rightful king, Prince Caspian, is fighting a war against his uncle, King Miraz, who wants to destroy the country of Aslan – the talking beasts and trees, the dwarfs and fauns – and all memory of Old Narnia. In desperation, Caspian’s forces have blown a magical horn – the very horn Susan once received from Aslan – to summon the Lion and the children to help them in their struggle.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Once more we meet Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. In what ways have they stayed the same? In what ways have they changed? How have their previous adventures shaped them? How do they behave differently as children and then as Kings and Queens of Narnia?
- Compare and contrast Nikabrik and Trufflehunter. What different points of view do they represent?
- “But because they have quarrelled with the trees they are afraid of the woods. And because they are afraid of the woods they imagine that they are full of ghosts.” (Chapter 4). What observation about fear does this reflect? Why do you think King Miraz is afraid of the stories of Old Narnia?
- How does faith or lack of faith guide the actions of characters in this book? What difficulties face a person who believes in something others cannot see? How does Susan feel when she does not follow Aslan? What does Aslan mean by telling her she has “listened to fears”? What do you think is the author’s view of faith?
- What do you think of the way Peter faces the possibility that he may be killed by Miraz?
- In what way does Aslan test Caspian about his suitability to be King? How does Caspian pass the test?
- How does Reepicheep earn his tail back? Do you think he deserves this?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Aslan implies that Lucy should have followed him, even if the others would not follow her. What would you do in this situation?

DISCUSS QUOTES

Explain the following quotations. What do they mean in context? What do you think of the ideas expressed?

“I’ll believe in anyone or anything...that’ll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything, Aslan *or* White Witch, do you understand?” (Nikabrik)

“Wouldn’t it be dreadful if some day in our own world, at home, men started going wild inside, like the animals here, and still looked like men, so that you’d never know which were which?” (Lucy)

“And now we’re coming back to Narnia just as if we were Crusaders or Anglo Saxons or Ancient Britons coming back to modern England.” (Peter)

JOURNAL WRITING Mental Images

Reread Lucy’s thoughts in Chapter 10 about the trees coming back to life. If a tree you have seen could come to life what do you think it would be like? How would it move? How would it speak? What would it do? Write or draw your answer.

BOOK 5

THE VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER

“My son,” said the star; “it will be no use... to sail from the World’s End with men unwilling or men deceived. That is not how great unenchantments are achieved.”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where anything can happen, and usually does – and where the adventure begins.

Eustace Clarence Scrubb complains a lot. He also makes fun of the Narnia stories he hears his cousins Lucy and Edmund discussing. His point of view changes, however, when the three children are suddenly drawn up into a painting of a ship and find themselves swimming in the cold ocean waters off Narnia. There they are rescued by Prince Caspian and the crew of the *Dawn Treader*, who are on a mission to find the seven good lords banished from Narnia by the former King, Miraz. Meeting adventures at every island, the *Dawn Treader* travels beyond known lands, urged on by Prince Caspian’s vow to find his father’s friends and by the mouse Reepicheep, who longs to sail all the way into Aslan’s country at the End of the World.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- *Eustace Clarence Scrubb*: What is he like at the beginning? Choose a fact or story about Eustace and explain what it tells us about him. How does he change as a result of his experiences on (and off) the *Dawn Treader*?
- *Reepicheep*: Why do you think he is so concerned with honour? How do you think being small (and a mouse) affects his behaviour? What does he do that’s surprising? Why do you think he longs to sail to the End of the World?
- Examine how points of view shift throughout this book. Locate some of the choices the author makes about whose point of view to tell a particular story from, and explain why you think he has chosen that character at that point.
- Talk about what happens to the characters and what they learn on the separate islands.
Dragon Island: Why do you think the author chose to have Eustace change to a dragon?
Deathwater Island: Why do you think Reepicheep gives this name to the waters that turn things to gold? Of which island does Caspian say, “There are some things no man can face?” Why does he believe this?
- Edmund said to Ramandu’s daughter: “When I look in your face I can’t help believing all you say: but then that’s just what might happen with a witch too. How are we to know you’re a friend?” She replies, “You can’t know, you can only believe – or not”. What do you think of this answer? In a world of enchantment, how do you know whom to trust?
- How does Caspian convince the crew to continue the voyage with him to the World’s End? How is he able to change the terms of the argument so that the crew members are eager to be included?
- Explain the effect the Last Sea has on the crew of the *Dawn Treader* and on the children. “Everyone on board was filled with joy and excitement, but not an excitement that made one talk. The further they sailed the less they spoke, and then almost in a whisper. The stillness of that last sea laid hold on them.” What is your understanding of this experience?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

There are several points at which Caspian has to decide whether to go on or turn back. Remember that once he passes the Lone Islands he does not even know if there is any land ahead. Reepicheep keeps urging them onward for the sake of adventure. Others want to turn back. What do you think you would advise if you were there, and why?

Reading Coriakin’s magic book, Lucy is tempted to try the spell that lets you know what your friends really think of you. Would you be tempted by this spell? Why or why not?

JOURNAL WRITING Dealing with Fear

Throughout the book, look at what makes people afraid. How does fear make people act? How do things look different when people are not afraid of them? Keep this theme in mind as you read and record observations in your journal.

BOOK 6

THE SILVER CHAIR

“Pole, I say, are you good at believing things? I mean things that everyone here would laugh at?”

“I’ve never had the chance,” said Jill, “but I think I would be.”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where a prince is put under an evil spell – and where this adventure begins.

To escape from bullies at school, Eustace and Jill run through a door in a wall – and come out into another world. Aslan has a job for them: to rescue Narnia’s lost Prince. The only son of King Caspian, Prince Rilian disappeared in pursuit of a serpent, and no one in Narnia knows what happened to him. But Aslan gives Jill signs, which – if she is able to remember and follow carefully – will help her and Eustace find the Lost Prince. The children’s journey takes them through the land of dangerous Giants, and on into underground caverns, where they finally encounter the Queen of the Deep Realm – and the knight she has enchanted. In this world far below the earth, the witch tries to convince them all that no other world exists... and she almost succeeds.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Examine the characters.
 - Jill:* In what ways is she different from the other children who have gone to Narnia?
 - Eustace:* How has he changed since his last visit to Narnia?
 - Puddleglum:* Why does he always act as if the worst will happen? Does he believe it will? Are there any times when his attitude is helpful? How does the way he talks about himself differ from the way others perceive him?
- What do you think of the way Aslan behaves towards Jill when she first encounters him by the river? What is he trying to get her to learn, or to acknowledge?
- Look for places where stories are told within the story. Explain how this device is used to slow down or speed up the story, to show different points of view, and to get information across. How does the credibility of the speaker affect the way we receive the information?
- Find examples of times when characters act unafraid although they are really afraid. When is this a foolish thing to do? When is it necessary?
- How does Jill use expected “girlish” behaviour to get what she really wants from the Giants? How can people use other people’s mistaken expectations of them to their own advantage?
- Why does the witch try and enchant the characters into believing there is no Overworld? For what might this be an allegory?
- Reread Puddleglum’s speech beginning, “Suppose we *have* only dreamed, or made up, all those things – trees and grass and sun and moon and stars and Aslan himself,” continuing through “I’m going to live as like a Narnian as I can even if there isn’t any Narnia” (Chapter 12). How does this argument lead to victory over the witch?
- How do the children finally get revenge on the bullies at school in their own world? Do you find this a satisfying ending? Why and why not?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

The Knight makes the children promise not to cut the cords no matter what he says. Then when his “enchantment” comes upon him he reverses his argument. “It is at this hour that I am in my right mind: it is all the rest of the day that I am enchanted” (Chapter 11). How should the children know what to believe? What would you do in the children’s situation?

DISCUSS QUOTES

Explain the following quotations. What do they mean in context? What do you think of the ideas expressed?

“You have seen lamps, and so you imagine a bigger and better lamp and call it the *sun*. You’ve seen cats, and now you want a bigger and better cat, and it’s to be called a *lion*.” (The Witch)

“Friends... when once a man is launched on such an adventure as this, he must bid farewell to hopes and fears, otherwise death or deliverance will both come too late to save his honour and his reason.” (Prince Rilian)

JOURNAL WRITING Write a Conversation

Since Aslan knows all that is to come, he must know that Jill will miss some of the signs. If that’s true, why do you think he gives them to her? Why do you think he sends the children on this quest rather than simply freeing Prince Rilian himself? If you could talk to Aslan, what would you ask him about this? How do you think he would answer? Write this imagined conversation into your journals.

BOOK 7

THE LAST BATTLE

“The stars never lie, but Men and Beasts do. If Aslan were really coming to Narnia the sky would have foretold it.”

SETTING THE SCENE

Narnia – where you must say goodbye – and where the adventure begins again.

A donkey in a lion’s skin is claimed to be the real Aslan and is used by figures far more powerful than he to control Narnia for their own ends. In despair, King Tirian calls to children from another world – children who always seem to come when Narnia is in trouble. It is up to the two who arrive – Jill and Eustace – to rescue the King from the Calormenes and expose the false Aslan. However, it is not easy for all the Narnians to see who is real and who is false. And to some it makes no difference. It leads to the end of Narnia, and to the beginning of another world.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- In the first chapter, which do you think is Shift’s most clever argument in getting Puzzle to do something he doesn’t want to, or something he knows he shouldn’t? Why do you think Shift acts as he does?
- How are people and animals manipulated into believing the false Aslan? How is the argument “He is not a *tame* lion” used? The Mouse says, “He seems to have come back very angry this time... We must have all have done something dreadfully wrong without knowing it...” How does their sense of guilt make them more gullible?
- Characters frequently face the decision of when to act and when to wait. When is quick action helpful? When is it harmful? Find examples in the text.
- How does the symbol of the stable door operate? Why do you think it is bigger on the inside than on the outside?
- Who are the seven friends of Narnia? What has happened to the eighth, Susan? Why do you think the author reveals this information slowly?
- Explain the role of the Dwarfs in the story. How did they come to be so mistrustful? What do you think they mean by their refrain, “The Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs”? What happens to them on the other side of the stable door and why? Why can’t they see what the others see?
- Explain the relationship between the Old Narnia, the world that is destroyed, and the world the narrator comes to call the “real Narnia.”
- What happened to the children in their own world? Do you think this ending is sad? Why and why not?

THINKING ABOUT DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

Susan is not allowed into the “real Narnia” because she has come to see Narnia as a childish game and is now only interested in clothes and make-up. “She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up” says Lucy.

Do you think this treatment of Susan is fair? Why do you think the author treats her so harshly? If you have read the other books, are there any hints that Susan might grow up like this?

DISCUSS QUOTES

Explain the following quotations. What do they mean in context? What do you think of the ideas expressed?

“Their prison is only in their own minds, yet they are in that prison; and so afraid of being taken in that they cannot be taken out.” (Aslan)

“All the service thou has done to Tash, I account as service done to me.” (Aslan)

JOURNAL WRITING Metaphor

“All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.” Explain the metaphor the author chooses to end *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Why do you think he made this choice?

THE LIFE OF C.S. LEWIS

- 1898 Born in Belfast, Ireland
- 1905 Moves to a new house called Little Lea. This rambling house may have been the inspiration for Professor Kirk's house in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.
- 1908 His mother dies. Sent to school in England.
- 1917 Begins studies at University College Oxford but, five months later, called up to fight in the First World War.
- 1919 Returns to Oxford and publishes his first book, a collection of poetry.
- 1925 Begins teaching at Magdalen College, Oxford (remains until 1954).
- 1929 Becomes a Christian.
- 1939 Four evacuee children come to stay. They inspire the stories that become the Chronicles of Narnia.
- 1950 Publication of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.
- 1951 Publication of *Prince Caspian*
- 1952 Meets Joy Davidman. Publication of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*.
- 1953 Publication of *The Silver Chair*.
- 1954 Publication of *The Horse and His Boy*.
- 1955 Becomes a Professor at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Publication of *The Magician's Nephew*.
- 1956 Marries Joy Davidman. Publication of *The Last Battle*.
- 1960 Death of Joy Davidman Lewis.
- 1963 C.S. Lewis dies.