

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo.

1. Opal's dog is called Winn-Dixie. Tell why Opal decides to give her dog that name.
2. What words does Opal use to describe Winn-Dixie when she first sees him? Of these qualities, which one causes Opal to adopt Winn-Dixie despite the way he looks?
3. As Opal gives her new dog a bath, she tells him they are a lot alike. In what ways are Opal and her dog alike?
4. What sort of relationship does Opal have with her father, the preacher, at the beginning of the book? How does their relationship change by the end of the book?
5. At Opal's urging, the preacher tells her ten things about her mother, one for every year of Opal's life. Describe Opal's mother on the basis of those ten things.
6. At one point Opal says, "Just about everything that happened to me that summer happened because of Winn-Dixie." What happens to Opal that makes her say this? Give examples from the book to support your answer.
7. Opal is an only child. Her mother left the family when she was only three, and her father moves from church to church. How has Opal been affected by these family changes?
8. For a variety of reasons, Opal feels like an outsider in her new town. Describe a situation when you felt like an outsider. Then compare your experiences with Opal's.
9. Winn-Dixie brings comfort and joy to a lot of characters in this story. Write the name Winn-Dixie in the center of a piece of paper with a circle around it. Then draw several lines out from the center, like spokes in a wagon wheel. At the end of each line write the name of a character whose life Winn-Dixie touched. What do these characters have in common?
10. Opal describes her friend Gloria as the best adult she knows. In what ways does Gloria act like the mother that Opal doesn't have? How do Gloria's qualities bring Opal closer to her *real* mother?
11. Opal wants to make Sweetie-pie happy by coming up with a theme for Gloria's party. What theme might Opal choose and why?
12. Opal wants to write her mother a letter telling her what she has learned over the summer because of Winn-Dixie and all her other new friends. What are some of the things Opal could say to her mother?
13. After the party, Opal goes to Gloria's mistake tree and tells her mother she won't miss her as much because her heart feels full. How has Opal's life changed to make her feel this way?
14. In the story Frannie compares life to a Littmus Lozenge, because the sweet and sad are often mixed up together. Do you agree with this point of view? Explain your answer.

Activities:

- Write a list of ten qualities that describe who you are. As models, use the lists describing Opal's mother and Winn-Dixie.
- Imagine Miss Frannie the librarian has asked you to tell a story about something amazing that happened to you. Think about something that's happened in your life that would make a great story. The write your story and share it with the group. Make sure your story has a beginning, a middle and an end.
- Opal wants to create a dog care handbook for her class based on her experiences caring for Winn-Dixie. What would the handbook say? Create a handbook and make sure to include tips on feeding, grooming, and other important information.