

Christian School Curriculum Guide

For the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*



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Introduction:

These 5 discipleship habits and practices are based on the values of St. Francis of Assisi. Franciscans see education as a way of embodying and sharing the good news of God at work in our world. Christian schools, regardless of affiliation, are places where students and adults alike can discover their place and purpose in God's story.

The *Read Side by Side Reading Program* can be taught through the lens of the Biblical values promoted by the Franciscans. This document provides an alignment to these discipleship habits and practices. For each read-aloud novel we highlight two-three habits, providing discussion prompts to use with your students as well as corresponding Bible verses to enrich the discussion. These are, by no means, an exhaustive list. Please use your gifts and talents as an educator to further identify ways to integrate Biblical teachings with authentic literature.

We are committed to supporting all Christian schools in their work in this world, and we hope that you will find this document useful as you help students identify ways they can be Christ's hands and feet in the world around them, just as St. Francis was.



5 Discipleship Habits and Practices

St. Francis of Assisi is a beloved saint whose life exemplified that of Christ. His life offers a powerful example of faith, humility, and love for all creation. As a teacher, you can connect these practices with examples in literature to guide your students in living out these habits in their own lives. Below are five key habits of Christ-like living based on St. Francis' teachings—and how your students can apply them in the world around them.

1. Faith in a Personal and Provident God

St. Francis had a deep, unwavering faith in God's care and presence in the world. He saw God as not only the Creator of all but also as a personal, loving Father who provides and watches over His children. His trust in God's providence was evident throughout his life, especially when he joyfully embraced poverty, relying on God's daily provision (St. Francis Leprosy, 2023). Teachers, you can help your students understand that they are loved by a God who cares for them individually and is always there to guide and help them. Learners grow to believe that there is one true, triune God who is all-powerful, awesome, and worthy to be praised. They worship Him through their thoughts, words, and actions.

How you can practice this:

- Start each day with a prayer or a moment of reflection, reminding your students that God is always with them, even during tough times.
- Encourage them to trust that God provides for their needs and that they can always rely on Him for strength and guidance.

How your students can live this out:

- Encourage them to talk to God whenever they face challenges at school or in their personal lives.
- Teach them to recognize the small blessings in their daily life, helping them be grateful for the ways God provides for them.

Examples from Literature:

- **"Martin Luther King Jr." by Rob Lloyd Jones:** This biography of Martin Luther King Jr. highlights his deep faith in God, which was a central part of his leadership in the Civil Rights Movement. King's trust in God's plan and his commitment to nonviolent resistance, even in the face of adversity, can inspire students to understand the importance of trusting in a higher power and having faith in God's guidance, especially during difficult times.
- **"Esperanza Rising" by Pam Muñoz Ryan:** Esperanza's journey from a life of privilege to working in the fields teaches about faith in oneself and in God during hardships. As Esperanza struggles through difficult circumstances, she learns to trust in God's plan for her life.

Classroom Activity:

- After reading *Martin Luther King Jr.*, discuss moments where King's faith guided his actions, particularly in the face of adversity. Ask students to reflect on how King's example of faith might apply to their own challenges.
- In *Esperanza Rising*, have students discuss the role that faith played in Esperanza's transformation. Ask them to share a time when they had to rely on their faith to overcome a problem in their own lives.

2. Reverence for All Creation

St. Francis was a passionate advocate for the reverence of all of God's creation. He believed that the natural world reveals God's presence and goodness (Franciscan Media, 2023). St. Francis treated every creature, from the tiniest insect to the most majestic mountain, with the same respect, seeing them as sacred. Teachers, you can show your students the importance of respecting and caring for the world around them, teaching them that every part of creation is sacred. Learners recognize God's divine nature in everything He created and work to be good stewards of the Earth. They see God's fingerprints all around them and understand God designed everything for a specific purpose.

How you can practice this:

- Organize activities that engage students with nature, such as planting a garden, going on nature walks, or recycling together.
- Incorporate lessons about how the earth and animals are gifts from God that we must care for and protect.

How your students can live this out:

- Teach your students to care for animals and nature, whether it's by feeding a stray pet, planting trees, or picking up litter in their community.
- Encourage eco-friendly habits like recycling, conserving water, and turning off lights when they leave a room.

Examples from Literature:

- **"Poppy" by Avi:** This story of a mouse and her journey to find freedom emphasizes the importance of respecting all life, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. Poppy's adventures through the forest and her relationship with other animals demonstrate a deep reverence for creation.
- **"Holes" by Louis Sachar:** The boys at Camp Green Lake spend their days digging holes, and although it initially seems like a form of punishment, the desert landscape teaches them valuable lessons about the interconnectedness of all things. The book shows how even a harsh, barren environment has a place in God's creation and can be respected.

Classroom Activity:

- Have students write or draw their own "nature journal" after reading *Poppy*, reflecting on the animals and landscapes that are significant to them.
- Take a class walk to observe nature and have students focus on the small details of creation (like plants, insects, or clouds). Discuss how these things, big and small, are all part of God's creation.

3. Appreciation for Beauty

St. Francis deeply appreciated the beauty of creation, seeing it as a reflection of God's goodness. His love for nature was not just about its outward beauty, but about its ability to reflect the Divine (Franciscan Spirit Blog, 2023). Teachers, you can help your students recognize beauty not only in nature but in art, kindness, and the simple everyday moments that surround them. Learners learn to delight in what God created, as well as create their own beautiful works that enhance the world and mirror the love God has for things that are diverse, complex, and creative.

How you can practice this:

- Organize field trips to parks or museums where students can appreciate the beauty of God's creation.
- Use art and music to show students how beauty can be found in many forms, encouraging them to both appreciate and create beauty themselves.

How your students can live this out:

- Help your students take moments throughout the day to appreciate beauty, whether it's through a beautiful sunset, a colorful painting, or a kind word from a friend.
- Encourage them to keep a "beauty journal" where they write or draw about things that inspire awe in them, fostering a habit of gratitude and appreciation.

Examples from Literature:

- **"Glory Be" by Augusta Scattergood:** Set in the 1960s, this novel emphasizes the beauty found in small-town life, friendships, and family. The main character, Glory, learns to appreciate the beauty of her surroundings and the people she loves as she faces personal and social changes.
- **"Streams to the River, River to the Sea" by Scott O'Dell:** The story of Sacagawea is beautifully written and highlights the beauty of nature and the resilience of the human spirit. As she navigates through the vast landscapes of America, Sacagawea's journey embodies the appreciation of the beauty of her surroundings.

Classroom Activity:

- After reading *Glory Be*, have students write a short piece describing the beauty in their own town or neighborhood. Encourage them to focus on small details they might not usually notice (flowers, clouds, acts of kindness).
- In *Streams to the River, River to the Sea*, discuss the spiritual connection Sacagawea has with nature, and ask students to reflect on a time when they felt connected to the natural world.

4. Service to the Poor and Marginalized

St. Francis had a heart for the poor, the sick, and those who were marginalized. He believed that serving others—especially those in need—was one of the best ways to live out our faith. St. Francis saw the poor as brothers and sisters, with Christ dwelling in them. This spirit of service is at the core of the Franciscan way of life (Franciscan Values, 2023). Teachers, you can help your students develop a heart for serving others, showing them how even small acts of kindness can make a big difference. Learners follow Christ's command shared in John 13:34-35, following His example by showing kindness, empathy, and compassion for others. They seek justice in an effort to heal where there is brokenness.

How you can practice this:

- Plan service projects where your students can help others, like organizing a charity drive or visiting a local nursing home.
- Share stories of people who have served others, helping your students understand the value of serving those who are less fortunate.

How your students can live this out:

- Teach them to recognize opportunities to help those in need, whether it's helping a friend who's struggling with their homework or donating toys to a local shelter.
- Encourage them to show kindness to people who might be overlooked, such as standing up for someone being teased or helping someone who's feeling lonely.

Examples from Literature:

- **"Shiloh" by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor:** In this novel, Marty Preston befriends a stray dog named Shiloh and takes action to protect him from his abusive owner. This story teaches children the value of standing up for those who cannot protect themselves, and it highlights the importance of service and compassion toward others, including animals.
- **"Children of the Dust Bowl" by Jerry Stanley:** This non-fiction book chronicles the lives of children during the Dust Bowl era, focusing on their resilience and the community's service to one another in the face of extreme poverty. It's a poignant reminder of how communities work together to help those in need.
- **"Kids at Work" by Russell Freedman:** This book explores child labor and the struggles of impoverished children in America. It helps students see the dignity of work and the need to care for the most vulnerable members of society.

Classroom Activity:

- Read *Shiloh* and discuss how Marty takes responsibility for Shiloh and helps the dog escape a difficult situation. Ask students how they can help those who are marginalized or in need in their own communities.
- Have a class project where students can gather items to donate to a local food bank or shelter, reflecting on the themes of service and kindness found in *Children of the Dust Bowl*.

5. Affirmation of the Unique Worth of Each Person

St. Francis believed that every person is created in God's image and therefore has inherent dignity and value. He treated everyone with respect, no matter their background. This respect for each individual's worth is a foundational value in the Franciscan tradition (University of St. Francis, 2023). Teachers, you can create an environment in your classroom, where each student feels valued and celebrated for their uniqueness. Learners understand that everyone is made in the image of God and is inherently worthy. They reflect the goodness of God through their words and actions, building a grace-filled community, making space for everyone to belong.

How you can practice this:

- Create a classroom culture where kindness, respect, and inclusivity are the norms.
- Recognize and affirm the individual talents and strengths of your students, helping them understand their own worth in the eyes of God.

How your students can live this out:

- Encourage your students to celebrate one another's differences and talents, such as complimenting a friend on their unique skills or supporting someone who is struggling.
- Teach them the importance of treating others with respect, whether it's standing up against bullying or simply listening to a friend who needs to talk.

Examples from Literature:

- **"Maniac Magee" by Jerry Spinelli:** The main character, Jeffrey Lionel Magee, grows up in a world that divides people by race, class, and geography. His journey teaches students to see the unique worth in others, regardless of their backgrounds, and that people are deserving of respect, kindness, and love.
- **"The Castle in the Attic" by Elizabeth Winthrop:** William, the protagonist, has to confront his fears and learn about his own worth through magical adventures. The book shows the importance of believing in oneself and recognizing the inherent dignity of all people.
- **"The Westing Game" by Ellen Raskin:** This mystery novel centers around diverse characters, each with their own backgrounds and struggles. Throughout the story, each character learns about their unique worth as they come together to solve the puzzle.

Classroom Activity:

- In groups, have students explore the different characters in *Maniac Magee* and discuss how each person's unique qualities are important to the story. Ask them how they would affirm those qualities in their own friends and classmates.
- After reading *The Westing Game*, host a "team-building" activity in which students work in teams to solve a problem or complete a challenge, emphasizing the value of working together and appreciating each person's strengths.

Additional Activities to Integrate the Habits:

1. **Reflection Journals:** After reading a chapter or section from one of the books above, ask students to reflect on how the characters are living out the principles of faith, reverence, service, or respect for one another. This can help students internalize these values and apply them to their own lives.
2. **Character Analysis:** Have students choose a character from any of the books mentioned and write about how the character demonstrates one of these discipleship practices. For example, how does Esperanza from *Esperanza Rising* demonstrate faith, or how does Maniac Magee serve others and affirm their worth?
3. **Group Discussions:** Use texts like *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson or *City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau to spark discussions on the importance of community, service, and hope. Ask students to think about how the characters in these books serve others or show reverence for life and the world around them.

Conclusion:

By incorporating the values of faith, reverence for creation, appreciation for beauty, service to others, and affirmation of each person's worth, you can inspire your students to live like Jesus. As a teacher, you can guide them in living out these habits and practices not only in your classroom but also in the world around them. By emulating St. Francis, they can learn that embracing these habits makes the world a more beautiful, peaceful, and loving place for everyone.

References:

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Discipleship Habits and Practices Scope and Sequence

Habits	3 rd Grade	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	6 th Grade
1 Faith in a personal and provident God	3.3	4.1, 4.3, 4.5	5.1, 5.3, 5.5	6.1, 6.3
2 Reverence for all creation	3.1	4.3, 4.4	5.2, 5.5	6.3
3 Appreciation for beauty	3.4	4.3	5.4	6.1, 6.2
4 Service to the poor and marginalized	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	4.1, 4.2, 4.5	5.1, 5.2	6.1, 6.2
5 Affirmation of the unique worth of each person	3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	4.2, 4.4	5.2, 5.3, 5.4	6.2, 6.3

** Quadrant notations next to each habit reference when students will have enough background knowledge to participate in the discussion question.

3rd Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide

Year Long Theme: Resolving conflicts at home, at school, and in the community

Social Studies Focus: The Civil Rights Movement in America

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 3.1 <i>Poppy</i>	Reverence for all creation (Q3) Throughout the book we learn about carnivores and herbivores and the natural order of the world. God designed everything with a purpose. How do you see God's fingerprints in the lives of the animals in Poppy? How do you see God at work in your life?	Genesis 1:21 Revelations 4:11
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q2) Poppy understands that her family will suffer if they don't move to New House. Despite being scared, she selflessly travels through Dimwood Forest because she cares about what happens to her family. Have you ever done something you were scared to do because you knew it was the kind and compassionate thing to do? Did you ask God for help?	2 Timothy 1:7
Unit 3.2 <i>War with Grandpa</i>	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q4) Peter and Grandpa are at war. Peter finally realizes that war hurts and tries to make things right with Grandpa. They begin to show compassion and kindness toward each other and seek to find a compromise that will work for both of them. What are some positive ways to help restore a broken relationship?	James 3:13-18 2 Corinthians 5:18
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q2) Peter knew that his grandpa was lonely and needed a safe place to live. He did not show his grandpa much grace for how he was feeling. Have you ever been in a situation where you had to share something you didn't want to? How did you handle it? How should we approach situations like that?	Hebrews 13:16 Luke 6:34-36
Unit 3.3 <i>Martin Luther King, Jr.</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q3) Martin trusted in God's plan and was committed to nonviolent resistance and peaceful protests, even after his house was bombed. He continued to trust in a higher power, to have faith in God's guidance, and to encourage people to "love their enemies". How have you, or can you, continue to trust God even when things are not going the way you want them to?	John 18:1-11 Acts 16: 16-40
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q4) Martin decided to move back to Alabama after college to fight for equality for black people. He was determined to change things. In what ways did Martin peacefully fight for change? In what ways can you peacefully stand up for what you know to be right?	Matthew 18:15-17 Proverbs 31:8-9
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q3) Through his peaceful protests, Martin worked toward building a community where everyone belonged. How can you build a community like this in your school, neighborhood, and town?	1 Thess. 3:12 1 John 4:7

3rd Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide, *Cont.*

Year Long Theme: Resolving conflicts at home, at school, and in the community

Social Studies Focus: The Civil Rights Movement in America

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 3.4 <i>Glory Be</i>	Appreciation for beauty (Q4) This novel emphasizes the beauty found in small-town life, friendships, and family. Glory learns to appreciate, and stand up for, the beauty of her surroundings and the people she loves as she faces personal and social changes. In what ways can you take time to notice and appreciate the people in your life and the places you are in? Why is this important?	Psalm 133:1 Galatians 6:2
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q2) Glory writes a letter to the editor expressing her opinion about the injustices taking place at the pool. In what ways can you stand up for what you know to be right?	Colossians 3:16
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) Glory believes it is wrong to segregate people based on the color of their skin. She works within her community to fight for justice and equality. Is there a way within our community to make space for everyone to belong?	1 Samuel 16:7 James 2:1-4
Unit 3.5 <i>Maniac Magee</i>	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q1) Maniac Magee is compared to the Good Samaritan from the Bible when he rescues Arnold Jones. In what ways can you be like the Good Samaritan in your life?	Luke 10:25-37 Philippians 2:4
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) Maniac Magee spends time in and defends the people of the East End, regardless of the fact that they are black and he is white. How do you mirror Christ's acceptance of people, in order to create a sense of belonging in your community?	Ephesians 5:2 1 Timothy 4:12

4th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide

Year Long Theme: A journey; both a personal journey and a literal journey

Social Studies Focus: Westward expansion and the pioneering spirit

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 4.1 <i>Shiloh</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q2) Marty struggles with determining what is right vs. what is wrong when deciding what to do about Shiloh. Each character decides what is right/wrong from a different perspective. What does the Bible say about right and wrong? If we believe in a God who provides, how should that reflect in our thoughts, words, and actions?	Leviticus 19:11 Exodus 20:10
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q4) Marty recognizes that Judd's dog, Shiloh, is being mistreated and is unable to save itself. Marty has compassion for Shiloh and works to find justice for him and bring healing to the relationship between Judd, Shiloh, and Marty. How have you had compassion on the poor and needy? In what ways have you looked to other's interests before your own?	Psalms 145:9 Proverbs 31:9 Philippians 2:4
Unit 4.2 <i>Castle in the Attic</i>	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q2) William is selfish and shrinks Mrs. Phillips against her will. He must find a way to make things right with her. Often, we make choices based on selfish desires rather than on what is God pleasing. What is a more Christlike way William could have handled the situation with Mrs. Phillips?	Philippians 2:4 1 John 3:17 1 Cor. 10:24
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q3) As William goes on his quest, he has opportunities to reflect the goodness of God in his words and actions and show grace to others. In what ways does William become the hands and feet of Christ towards characters in the story? How can you be the hands and feet of Christ in the world around you?	Colossians 3:12 Philippians 2:3
Unit 4.3 <i>Streams to the River</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q1) The Evening Star is Sacagawea's talisman. She believes it guides and protects her. She also wears a stone around her neck that she believes helps her. How are her beliefs similar and different from our belief in God? What does God say about relying on earthly objects rather than on Him as the one true, triune God?	Leviticus 26:1 Romans 1:21-23
	Reverence for all creation (Q4) Sacagawea believes in her connection with Mother Earth and all living things on earth. God has asked us to be stewards of his creation. How can we find ways to be stewards of all He has created?	Genesis 2:15
	Appreciation for beauty (Q4) The story of Sacagawea highlights the beauty of nature and the resilience of the human spirit. As she navigates through the vast landscape of America, in what ways does Sacagawea appreciate the beauty of her surroundings? What do you find beautiful in God's creation in your surroundings?	Psalms 19:1 Isaiah 40:26

4th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide, *Cont.*

Year Long Theme: A journey; both a personal and a literal journey

Social Studies Focus: Westward expansion and the pioneering spirit

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 4.4 <i>Children of the Gold Rush</i>	Reverence for all creation (Q4) The children of the gold rush and their families learned to respect the land and wilderness. In what ways do you see them living in harmony with nature? In what ways do you live in harmony with God's creation?	Psalm 104:24-25 Romans 1:20
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) The children of the gold rush were brought into communities with people from all over, including Native Alaskans and people of the First Nations. How did the children and their communities reflect the goodness of God and learn to live with the people who were there first? What does God say about being in community with others?	Philippians 2:3-16 1 Peter 4:8-11
Unit 4.5 <i>Aurore of the Yukon</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q4...after p. 92) Many people traveled to the Yukon in the hopes of getting rich from the gold they would find there. The Yukon became a lawless place with people forgetting to acknowledge that everything they have came from God. How can we be sure that we do not focus on things that take our focus away from God and what He wants for our lives?	Hebrews 13:5 1 Timothy 6:17-19 Matthew 6:24
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q1) Yves and Aurore see a dog being mistreated. Yves steps in to protect the dog. The Alaskan Frontier and Yukon are wild and lacking in kindness and compassion towards animals and humans alike. What does God say about how we should react when we see things that are not right?	Micah 6:8 Romans 15:1-2 Isaiah 1:17

5th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide

Year Long Theme: Surviving hardships

Social Studies Focus: The American Revolution, Industrial Revolution, and slavery

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 5.1 <i>Earthquake Terror</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q4) After the earthquake Jonathan's situation seems hopeless. He is not sure how he and his sister are going to survive. He feels like giving up. In the end he does survive. Sometimes things in our own lives seem hopeless. God is at work in everything in our lives and deserves our praise and acknowledgement of His hand in every situation. How can you praise God, when things are going well, and even when things are difficult?	Mark 4:35-41 Job 2:10
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q3) Jonathan finds his little sister a bother at the beginning of the story. As he becomes more responsible for her safety, he begins to put her needs ahead of his. He feels empathy and compassion for her. How can we show empathy and compassion for others, even when we may not "like" them?	Luke 6:27-31 Colossians 3:12
Unit 5.2 <i>Holes</i>	Reverence for all creation (Q4) The boys at Camp Green Lake spend their days digging holes, and although it initially seems like a form of punishment, the desert landscape teaches them valuable lessons about the interconnectedness of all things. The book shows how even a harsh, barren environment has a place in God's creation and can be respected. Is there some thing or some place that may not initially be thought of as beautiful that you can now find God's beauty in?	Psalms 104:10-14 & 24-25
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q4) Throughout the book Stanley is haunted by his family's curse. By the end of the book, he breaks the curse and rights the injustice by helping Zero. He helps himself, his family, and Zero, who once was broken, to heal and move forward. How can you take a relationship that is broken and heal it?	Luke 6:27-28
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q3) At the beginning of the book, Stanley feels weak and defective. In the middle he has become hardened towards others. By the end he puts aside his own wants and needs to help Zero learn to read and, ultimately, to save his life. How can you reflect God's goodness, through your words and actions, to others in your life?	Philippians 2:1-8
Unit 5.3 <i>Chains</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q2/Q4) Isabel speaks to the ghosts of her ancestors, asking them for guidance and support. How is this different than praying to God and asking Him for guidance and support?	Isaiah 8:19 Mark 11:24
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) The book <i>Chains</i> calls the reader to think about what it would be like to live in a community where you are not accepted. How can we work to create communities that make space for everyone to belong so that no one has to endure what Isabel and Ruth endured?	James 2:1-10

5th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide, *Cont.*

Year Long Theme: Surviving hardships

Social Studies Focus: The American Revolution, Industrial Revolution, and slavery

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 5.4 <i>Kids at Work</i>	Appreciation for beauty (Q4...after p. 89) Lewis Hine was a photojournalist whose pictures brought attention to something that may not be thought of as beautiful. How did his photos reflect God's heart and create beauty out of a part of our history that was rather ugly?	Romans 12:4-8
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q2) Lewis Hine felt so strongly about children being used for child labor that he quit his teaching job to become an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee. He believed that children had a right to be children and risked his health and safety to take these pictures. How can you speak up for those in your community who may not have a voice?	Proverbs 31:8-9
Unit 5.5 <i>City of Ember</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q2) In the story the Believers have faith that the Builders will come back and rescue them from their failing city. They sing songs and praise the Builders. Some people meet and discuss whether an "Invisible Being is watching over them all the time". How is our faith similar to the Believers' faith in the Builders? How is it different?	Psalm 56:3 Matthew 6:25-34
	Reverence for all creation (Q3) Lina and Doon learn more and more about the intentions of the Builders who created the city of Ember because of a man-made disaster. How are the Builders similar to God who purposefully created Earth and everything in it? Now the city of Ember is dying. Lina and Doon search for a way to save their city. How can we help care for God's creation to help it prosper?	Genesis 1:28 Genesis 2:15

6th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide

Year Long Theme: The American Dream

Social Studies Focus: Immigration and the push and pull factors that cause people to move.

	Discipleship Habits and Practices Discussion Questions	Scripture Connection
Unit 6.1 <i>The Westing Game</i>	Faith in a personal and provident God (Q2) The heirs in <i>The Westing Game</i> become consumed with winning the game and winning the money. As a result of this greed, they become suspicious of each other, blame others for wrongdoing, and act inappropriately. God tells us not to have other gods before Him. What kinds of things do we put before God that prevent us from worshipping Him through our thoughts, words, and actions?	Exodus 20:3-6 1 Timothy 6:10 Hebrews 13:5 Matthew 6:24
	Appreciation for beauty (Q4) While this story is wrapped in mystery and clever puzzles, its deeper beauty lies in how characters discover their own identities, heal broken relationships, and find unexpected friendships and purpose. What does God say about friendships? What do you find beautiful about your friendships?	Proverbs 27:9 Eccles. 4:9-10 John 15:12-13
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q3) In the beginning, the heirs are quick to judge one another. As they are paired off, they begin to learn the truth of who each one of them really is and begin to feel empathy and compassion for one another. How can we show empathy and compassion for others, even when we do not know them and may not even “like” them?	Matthew 5:44-46 James 2:1-4
Unit 6.2 <i>Children of the Dust Bowl</i>	Appreciation for beauty (Q3) This non-fiction work reveals the stark, dusty reality of life during the Dust Bowl. Yet, amid the harsh conditions, beauty emerges through community, creativity, and the determination of children and teachers to build something better. The makeshift schools, gardens, and friendships reflect how God sees beauty, even in the poor and needy.	Psalms 113:7-8 2 Corinthians 8:9
	Service to the poor and marginalized (Q3) Leo Hart and the teachers at Arvin Federal Emergency School poured their hearts and souls into the school and the children who attended there. They did not make a lot of money and often worked without getting paid. They had true servant hearts. Is there a project within our community where we could demonstrate that same servant heart for people in need?	Acts 20:35
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) Leo Hart saw the needs of the Okies when no one else did. He worked hard to create a community for the children of Weedpatch Camp, complete with a school, a swimming pool, and a working farm. He gave the people in the camp purpose and a sense of belonging. Where in your community do you see a need for people to be seen and to belong? What can you do to help make that a reality?	Matthew 25:34-40

6th Grade *Discipleship Habits and Practices* Discussion Guide, *Cont.*

Year Long Theme: The American Dream

Social Studies Focus: Immigration and the push and pull factors that cause people to move.

Unit 6.3 <i>Esperanza</i> <i>Rising</i>	Reverence for all creation (Q1) When Esperanza is six her father takes her into the field and tells her that the valley “breathes and lives”. They lay down on the earth to feel it breathe and feel its heart beat. They take a moment to enjoy God’s creation and to understand what it gives to them. In what ways do you enjoy God’s creation and appreciate all it provides to us?	Genesis 1:11-13 & 21-31
	Appreciation for beauty (Q3) Esperanza begins her story in a world of material beauty—fine clothes, rich foods, and a beautiful home. But as she faces hardship and learns humility, she comes to see beauty in relationships, hard work, generosity, and nature. If all your material “richness” was taken away today, where could you still find beauty in your life?	Matthew 6:19-21 Luke 12:15
	Affirmation of the unique worth of each person (Q4) In this book there are many examples where people think they are better than someone else (Esperanza thinks she is better than the peasants, awards are given to white children instead of brown children, the Okies get better treatment because they are white). God tells us that we are made in His image. Jesus gives us the example of loving everyone. How can we act, speak, behave, in order to show Christ’s love to all people?	Luke 19:1-10 Philippians 2:3