

The Silent Gift Discussion Questions

Mary Godwin came from a broken home--"broken" in several ways. What role do you think that played in her attraction to a man like Jerry?

When Mary's father had an affair, and her parents divorced, she was required to grieve alone. Some people aren't forced by their circumstances into grieving alone, but they choose to do so anyway. Why is that? What are the downsides?

When the doctor tells them about their son's handicaps, Mary and Jerry have completely different reactions as to how they deal with Jack. Mary becomes his advocate--nurturing and patient and perhaps even more caring than would otherwise be the case. Jerry, on the other hand, pulls away from his son, distancing himself to the extent that he wants to "put him away" in a state hospital. How do mothers often differ from fathers in how they relate to a child's difficulties, whether minor or severe?

Although Mary values Jack for who he is, she believes the world sees little worth in him because he isn't the same as everyone else. How does one create significance in a society where so much is based upon power, money, beauty and articulation?

Benefitting personally through a divine gift was an issue Mary struggled with throughout the book. Do you think she should have struggled and felt guilty over personal gain from the gift?

Agnes tells Mary she doesn't go to church because of "all the rules and hypocrisy." Most of us have probably experienced these feelings at some time in our church lives. At what point do rules become oppressive and hypocrisy become distasteful? Should these issues be deciding factors in our reaction to the Church? To a local congregation?

Both Jerry and Agnes took advantage of Mary and betrayed her trust. Has there been anyone in your life you thought you knew very well, but in the end revealed themselves to be a completely different person?

Are there any betrayals in your life for which you have yet to forgive someone? How hard was it--or will it be--for you to get to that place of forgiveness?

Though the Bible is very clear that Christians should not involve themselves in anything related to the occult, in society today its practice among people of all ages and interests has gone mainstream (things like horoscopes, numerology

and communicating with spirits, etc.). What are people looking for when they dabble or even commit themselves to pursuing these activities? Why is the Bible so against the occult, and what are the risks?

Did Mary ever cross the line in how she protected and provided for her son? What would you have done differently if you were in her situation?