

DEAR CANADA

DISCUSSION GUIDE

A Christmas to Remember

Tales of Comfort and Joy
By various authors

1. Describe some of the historical Christmas traditions in this collection of stories. How do they compare to your traditions? What do you celebrate?
2. For the characters in these stories, Christmas was a time of hope, dreams, and miracles. War and disease and poverty and famine were set aside for that one day when all was good in the world. Whether they celebrated simply being alive; sharing a meal with family; or being showered with gifts like the one little girl with the many variations of the Shirley Temple dolls, what was the meaning of Christmas for the characters in these stories?
3. Giving thanks is a common theme in this collection of story vignettes. Name a few of the characters and what they were thankful for. What are you thankful for?
4. Another theme that runs deep in the collection is remembering those less fortunate than you. Anya's story is a good example of that. Although Anya's family is struggling to get by after being released from an internment camp, Anya leaves her leftovers by the side of the road for a man begging for money or something to eat. It is not only an act of compassion, but one of forgiveness. Who is that man and how does he react to her kind gesture?
5. Aside from Anya, other characters in these stories give back and help others less fortunate. What are some of the things they do? Have you ever helped someone in need? What are the kinds of things you can do to help someone in need?
6. In Devorah's World War II diary, Dev's brother Adam talks about how proud he is that she and her friends are trying to educate people about how Canada won't take in any Jewish refugees. He jokes to his sister about finding a Band-aid big enough to heal the whole world. What would you do to try to heal the world? Why do some people use Christmastime to raise awareness of causes or troubles?
7. Acceptance is another theme that runs through the pages of this collection. In one of the stories, Charlotte stops being friends with Eva because her family is German. Have you ever stopped being friends with someone because of who their family was? Has anyone ever done that to you? What was the outcome in the story? Do they become friends again?