

Jonathan's Journey to Mount Miapu

Discussion Questions

For kids:

1. Jonathan has an intense fear of the dark. Have you ever been afraid of the dark? What other things are you afraid of? Can you relate to Jonathan's challenges in keeping his fear a secret, feeling embarrassed, and wanting desperately to overcome it?
2. When Jonathan emerges from the drainpipe, he is alone and begins to realize he is lost. What would you do in this situation? Do you think he made the right choices?
3. How does Jonathan feel about Ariella when he meets her? Does he trust her? How and why do his feelings change over the course of the book? Was there a particular moment or event that changed what Jonathan thought about Ariella?
4. What does Grandma Trudy's character represent for Jonathan? What is her role in the story?
5. What do you think about Mount Miapu? What things do you like or dislike about it? Would you like to visit Mount Miapu one day if you could? Who would you bring?
6. Do you think it's possible that other worlds like Mount Miapu exist?
7. What did the animals in the story represent/symbolize? What was Seebolt the tiger's purpose in the story? What about the hawk? What was its purpose?
8. Do you remember some of the things Jonathan learned in his training with Cornelius? Was there anything that you might be able to use in your life? What was it and how might you use it?
9. What do you think was the most important thing that Jonathan learned from his adventure?

10. The issue of bullying appears in the book. How did Jonathan's experiences on Mount Miapu help him face the bullies? What qualities or characteristics did he gain that helped him?

11. Overall, how does Jonathan's perspective change from the beginning to the end of the story? In what ways does he see himself and the world differently?

12. Cornelius tells Jonathan that everyone has unique talents and abilities that make them special and he helps Jonathan discover his. Take some time on your own (or with the group if you feel comfortable) to explore what your special talents and abilities are. What makes you "You"? They are usually the things that come naturally to you, things that you love to do, or things that you deeply care about. For instance, maybe you love animals, maybe you are a good listener, a good teacher, or maybe you are good at making other people laugh. Once you discover these things, think about how you might, now or in the future, use your talents to help others.

Some additional questions for adults to ponder:

Jonathan's journey is a metaphor for our own journeys out of darkness and into the light. Whether you have faced a fear, overcome a major obstacle in life, or embarked on your own spiritual journey, you can probably recognize or identify with some of Jonathan's challenges or discoveries. What part of the story stood out for you most, or resonated with you on some level? Why?

When Jonathan and Ariella jump off the cliff together, what does that represent and why is it an important turning point for the main character?

Jonathan's walk along the labyrinth after leaving Mapichu Village is filled with symbolism. What is going on for Jonathan here?

At the Pond of Reflection, Jonathan learns that his inner world influences his outer world. Why is that important for the character? Can you think of examples of how this shows up in your own life and how it can be helpful to understand this principle? Were there any other of Cornelius's teachings that resonated with you? Why?

The Great Shadow that threatens to destroy the Land of Light could represent almost anything that might prevent us personally or globally from living a peaceful, joyful, conscious, and authentic existence. What do you see as some of those "Great Shadow" elements that exist for you in your personal growth and/or for us as a society?