

# *Operation Military Kids Read Book Club*



## ***Parvana's Journey*** *by Deborah Ellis*

### *All Sessions*

The characters in Parvana's Journey exhibit qualities and characteristics listed below. During each reading section choose a minimum of three words. Look for examples of these words in the characters actions and words in the selected chapters.

### *Journal:*

- Journal about the importance of these characteristics and qualities to each character based on their current situations and how these characteristics and qualities are a part of or lacking in your life.
  - Resilience: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change
  - Motivate: to provide with a motive
  - Motive: something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to act
  - Strength: the quality or state of being strong : capacity for exertion or endurance
  - Courage: mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty
  - Persistence: the action or fact of persisting
  - Persist: to go on resolutely or stubbornly in spite of opposition, importunity, or warning

Definitions from Merriam Webster online dictionary, [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com), 12/27/2010

### *Session 1*

**Read Chapters 1-3, pages 9-44**

### *Discuss:*

- What characteristics do you see in Parvana?
- What surprised you about Parvana's situation?
- What strengths does Parvana possess?
  - How do these strengths help her on her journey?
- In what ways is Parvana similar to you? Different?

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- Parvana loses her father but gains a companion in Hassan, do you agree with her choice to take Hassan with her? Why or why not?
- The villagers took Parvana in. When you learned villagers are talking about turning her over to the Taliban were you surprised? What were the motivations of the villagers for first supporting Parvana, and then being willing to “sell her”?

## *Session 2*

**Read Chapters 4-6, pages 45-70**

### *Discuss:*

- What has Parvana discovered about her journey companion, Hassan? How does Hassan affect Parvana’s plans?
- Parvana has now encountered a second person on her journey, how has this impacted her?
- Parvana reflects on her life in Kabul and the extreme changes she’s experienced to get her to where she is now. How do you think Parvana has handled those changes? How would you handle those changes?
- What surprised you about Parvana and Asif’s treasure hunt?
- How would you describe the relationship between Asif and Parvana?

## *Session 3*

**Read Chapters 7-9, pages 71-92**

### *Discuss:*

- How has Parvana’s transient lifestyle impacted her? Why is it difficult for her to leave after staying in one place for awhile?
- Parvana is in a situation that most adults would find very difficult, how do her actions and emotions impact her? How would things be different if an adult were involved?
- Parvana and Asif make a choice to steal based on their situation. Do you agree with their choice? Why or why not?
- What are your feelings about the man who fed Parvana, Asif, and Hassan after Parvana cleaned out his chicken coop? Do you agree with the way he treated the children? Why or why not?
- Parvana describes the changes that happen in each person when they are hungry, how does hunger affect their journey?

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## Session 4

Read Chapters 10-13, pages 93-128

### *Discuss:*

- Parvana wants someone else to do the remembering...she is in extreme circumstances, what things do adults remember in your life that you would have to take on if left with only yourself?
- How does Parvana's imagination affect her journey?
- It seems that at a moment when Parvana has had some luck things change drastically (Taliban coming to Hassan's village, Asif being a child-only to be angry and injured, throwing rocks to occupy themselves to find a mine field) how would this impact you? How does it impact Parvana?
- Leila's life is very different than anything most of us would have experienced, was it hard to believe she was eight years old and taking care of herself? Why or why not?
- Does Leila's situation make Parvana reflect differently on hers?
- The children have found a place to stay. Do you agree with their decision? What is your opinion about all of the changes they are making, why are they doing this?
- All of the children have seen many things most children never see, how does this affect them? How does reading about it affect you?

## Session 4

Read Chapters 14-17, pages 129-165

### *Discuss:*

- Parvana is convinced she must continue her journey and leave the Green Valley. Do you think this is a difficult decision? How would you handle the situation?
- Each child plays an integral part of the "family" they have created. What contributions do you see each person making?
- How does being together change each individual as opposed to when they were by themselves? What are the benefits of being together? The drawbacks?
- Just as the group has some hope and excitement the bombs take away all that they had. How does this affect their moral? How did you feel when you read about the situation?
- The group hasn't had any luck recently. What do you think is driving them to keep going? What keeps you motivated in difficult situations?

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## *Session 5*

Read Chapters 18-21, pages 166-194

### *Discuss:*

- Leila's plea to the planes bombing goes unheard. What does her simple answer to the issue of continual bombing mean to you?
- Parvana wonders if this is her life, spending days in line, living in a make-shift shelter, crowded together with strangers. In what ways is she affected by the refugee camp-how does this impact the group of children?
- How does the simple hug Parvana receives impact her?
- Parvana experiences a tragedy that leads to a great discovery. How would a situation like this make you feel?

## *Session 6*

### *Do:*

- The author's note at the end of the book states that the greatest hope for Afghani children lies in the opening of schools. Take time to investigate aid organizations or other groups that support the rebuilding of schools in Afghanistan or providing school supplies. The group could choose to put on a drive at the school for school supplies, collect change, or ask for donations in the community and send their contributions to an organization helping children in Afghanistan.
- Read *Mud City* by Deborah Ellis