

Discussion Questions

for

Interrupted

These questions are designed to enhance your group's discussion of *Interrupted* by Isabella Alden.

1. To support her family, Claire sought a position as a salaried choir singer at the local churches. Were you surprised to learn that—at the time this book was written in 1885—churches paid good singers to join their choirs? What other historical facts in the story interested or surprised you?
2. Although she was in need of money, Claire declined a position as a paid singer at a church where she could not worship because the church's doctrine was different than hers. Do you think Claire was right to refuse the job? If you were in Claire's position, would you take a paying job to support your family, knowing the employer's values were contrary to your own?
3. Mrs. Foster, who runs the academy where Claire is employed, is described by the author as a "fisher of souls." What do you think the author meant by that description? What does a person have to do to become a fisher of souls? Do fishers of souls have a place in today's world?
4. When Claire asks Alice Ansted if she was a Christian, Alice doesn't know how to answer the question. Alice always assumed that if she attended church, she was a Christian. Do you agree with Alice's definition of a Christian? If not, what is your definition? How do you think it is possible for Alice to join a church and attend regular services and not know whether or not she is a Christian?
5. Alice Ansted was concerned about her brother Louis's drinking but Mrs. Ansted denied it was a problem. Alice begged Claire to convince Mrs. Ansted to let Louis leave town and get away from harmful influences. Was Claire right to do as Alice asked? Did Claire handle the conversation with Mrs. Ansted correctly? What could she have said differently? Were you surprised by Mrs. Ansted's reaction to Claire's warnings? If you were in Mrs. Ansted's position, would you have resented Claire's interference?
6. How did Claire grow and change over the course of the book? In what ways was her faith challenged and strengthened?
7. Which character did you find most interesting? Why?

8. Which character do you think was the most pivotal to the story? Why do you think so?
9. There were five important men in Claire’s life: her father, Harry Matthews, Bud, Louis Ansted, and Harold Chessney. How would you describe each man? How did they differ in their relationships with Claire? Which man appealed to you most? Why?
10. Which character did you dislike the most? Explain why.
11. Harold Chessney thought Mrs. Ansted’s conscience would not allow her to admit she helped ruin Louis’s life. Do you agree with Harold’s assessment? In your experience, what are some ways that people deal with guilt and feelings of blame?

Add your own questions here:
