

Talking about *Peter Pan*

by J. M. Barrie · the free ebook lives at youngreaderguide.org/books/peter-pan/

Warming up

Easy openers. Anyone at the table can answer these, including the youngest.

1. Flying, sword-fighting pirates, or no bedtime ever. Which part of Neverland would actually be the best part?
2. Be honest: if Peter appeared at your window tonight, would you go?

The real conversation

Pick two or three, not all of them. Parents answer too, honestly.

1. Peter forgets his own adventures almost as soon as they happen; Wendy remembers everything. Which would you rather be: the one who has the adventures, or the one who keeps them?
2. Hook, fearless in a sword fight, is terrified of a ticking clock. The book keeps hinting that what grown-ups really fear is time. Do you believe that about the grown-ups you know?
3. The Darling parents keep the nursery window open the whole time the children are gone. What does the open window say that they never say out loud?
4. Tinker Bell is jealous, spiteful, and would die for Peter; the book says fairies are so small they only have room for one feeling at a time. Are people like that sometimes too? Which feeling fills you up when it comes?
5. Peter wants a mother for the Lost Boys, but runs from anyone actually mothering him. What is he afraid would happen?

The big one

Save it for last.

Wendy chooses to go home and grow up; Peter stays, and stays, and stays. The book thinks Wendy chose right, but it aches about it. What's one thing about being exactly the age you are now that you'd keep forever if you could? And what are you glad you'll outgrow?

Do it *together*

Map your Neverland. Barrie says every child's Neverland is different: Wendy's had a pet wolf, John's had a lagoon with flamingos flying over it. Each of you draws the island your own mind would make: it needs one hideout, one lagoon, one danger, and one thing nobody else's island would have. Compare maps when you're done; no two alike is the whole point.