Literature Circle Questions

Use the questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli

1. When Stargirl arrives at Mica High School, people notice her. Name three ways in which her appearance or behavior differs from that of other students.

2. By December first of the year, Stargirl has become the most popular person in school. Describe what other students do to show admirations for her.

3. Think about the setting of the story, which takes place in an Arizona desert community. Identify passages that help you “see” the plants, animals, terrain, and climate in Leo’s town.

4. Archie is a mentor and friend to Leo and other kids in the neighborhoods. Cite examples from the book that show how Archie helps one of the main characters.

5. Identify a character in the story who shows courage. Explain how the character is brave.

6. What does Archie mean when he says, “When Stargirl cries, she does not shed tears, but light”?

7. What questions would you ask Leo if you interviewed him as an adult?

8. Stargirl notices and cares about bad things that happen to other people but often seems to be unaware of bad things that happen to herself. If she were to visit your school today, what would she notice? What would she ignore? Give reasons for your answers.

9. Over the course of the book, Leo changes. Compare and contrast Leo’s appreciation of “little things” in life at the beginning of the novel and at the end.

10. When Archie and Leo drive out to the desert, Archie write a single word on a scrap of paper and stuffs it in a hole. What do you think is written on the paper?

11. Create a new scene for the book in which the two discuss Archie’s message.

12. When Leo returns to Arizona after living in the East, someone else is living in Archie’s house. Where, in your opinion, is Archie? How does that fit with Archie’s view of the universe?

13. Toward the end of the book, Leo chooses membership in his peer group over his affection for Stargirl. What is your opinion of Leo’s choice? Why?
14. Do you think Leo’s life is improved for having been involved with Stargirl? What makes you say that?

Note: The following questions are keyed to Bloom’s Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-6; Application 7-8; Analysis 9; Synthesis; 10-11; Evaluation 12-13.

Activities

1. Stargirl and Leo have fun playing a “greeting card” game: After reading an advertisement on a bulletin board (“Odd Jobs-Ask for Mike”), they decide what that person most needs and create a card, such as a Keep-your-chin up card. Carefully observe a stranger for 10 minutes. Create a greeting card that he or she needs.

2. Stargirl won the state’s public speaking contest. Prepare a short speech for an oratorical contest on a topic such as Have the Courage to Be Yourself. Outline your speech on note cards. Visualize yourself winning the contest. Then deliver your speech to the group.

3. Create a time line of major events in Leo’s life, including his age at the time and short description of the milestone. Project the time line into Leo’s future, after the book has ended. Present your work to your group and discuss.