



The Ruby Float

A Tale of Hope

Read-Along

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Rick Nau

Illustrated By Sukwan Myers



Contents

3	Using The Study Guide
4	Dreams Of A Raft
6	Why Hank Didn't Come To Breakfast
8	A Time Of Sadness
10	The Silhouette
12	A Message Of Hope
13	Nate's Plan
15	Nate and Sam Build The Raft
17	The Test Voyage Goes Awry
19	Adrift At Sea
21	They Set Sail For The Island
24	Shipwrecked
26	Not Alone
28	A Wonderful Discovery
30	The Most Important Question In The World
32	A Very Puzzling Answer
36	The Breath Of God
39	The New Journey Begins
41	The Tragic Farewell
43	The Letter
46	Devastation
48	The Strange Cloud
49	A Time Of Great Happiness
51	The Return Home
55	God's Plan For Man
60	Thank You
61	About The Author
62	More From Dancing Pen Books
64	The Next Tale Of Hope
66	Copyright Information

Using The Study Guide

The purpose of the study guide is to use the story of the ruby float as a way of drawing the attention of the listener (you and your children) to the Scriptures. Every lesson is tied to a specific episode and contains questions which relate certain incidents or thoughts in the story to passages in the Bible. For instance, when the children are shipwrecked on an island, the study guide points to the shipwreck of the apostle Paul on the island of Malta. When the children are supportive of each other, the study guide refers to Bible passages stressing the importance of unity.

Most of the questions are followed with suggested answers. The few that are not are easily answered and usually refer to something that's happened in the story. There are also those where the listener is asked to guess about something that will be revealed later in the story.

If you are using the Read-Along book as you listen to the episodes, you'll find it a useful companion to the study guide. Since it provides the exact dialogue for each episode, you can easily refer to it when going through the study guide.

However you use the study guide, keep in mind that it's meant to expand you're children's knowledge of the Bible and instill in them an eagerness to read it.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Welcome & Episode One

Dreams Of A Raft



1. What are the names of the characters to whom you've been introduced so far?
2. Read aloud the poem that Daph and Josh tell at the beginning of the episode.

*A boy and girl went to the sea
In deep and dark despair,
When something dancing on the waves
Sent sparkles through the air.
They plucked it from the water's edge,
A sphere of deepest red,
And found within amazing words
That chased away their dread.
So come with them as they do raft
Across the bounding main,
In search of One who promises
To heal them of their pain.*

3. Who do you think is the One who promises to heal the boy and girl of their pain? When you've finished hearing the story, come back to this question and answer it again.

4. How do our storytellers get along?

The story begins with a bit of an argument. Daph tells Josh that they're not supposed to argue. In the book, which is told by their grandfather, they quarrel a lot. Let's take a look at what the Bible has to say about this subject.

2 Timothy 2:23-24: But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient.

Proverbs 17:14: The beginning of strife is like releasing water; therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.

Proverbs 15:18: A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.

Proverbs 17:19: He who loves transgression loves strife.

Proverbs 20:3: It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.

5. What does Nate like to collect?

6. What does Nate and Sam's grandfather promise to build them one day?

7. Who doesn't show up for breakfast on Sunday morning?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Two

Why Hank Didn't Come To Breakfast



1. Daph and Josh tell us that something is missing from the town where Nate and Sam live. Can you guess what it is?
2. Why does Nate first think that his grandfather is ignoring him?
3. As a young boy Hank longed to be loved. Sometimes his heart was broken. Have you ever experienced similar emotions?

All of us have had feelings similar to Hank's. God seeks to be our comforter in such times.

Psalm 34:18: The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Psalm 147:3: He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

4. How much do Hank and Harriet love each other?

The book tells us that they are so much in love that you could not

Episode 2 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

find in their town, or in any other town or city of the world, two people who loved each other more than they. See what the Bible says about the kind of love that should exist between a husband and wife.

Ephesians 5:22, 25-28: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 5:33: Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

5. Why don't we find out what happened to Harriet in this episode?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Three

A Time Of Sadness



1. How do Hank, Nate and Samantha react to the sad news about Harriet?

Everyone's terribly depressed, though Hank tries to hide his sadness. Nate longs for a joy and happiness that is not fleeting, but will last forever. Samantha, the toughest of the three, doesn't break down until she see her brother's tears.

2. Have you had to go through sad times? Whom do you turn to for comfort and support?

You may notice that the characters in Jesse's story seem to have no one to turn to. This is a clue as to what is missing from their town.

But for those who know Christ the situation is different.

Isaiah 41:10: 'Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Episode 3 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Psalm 34:17: The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

Nahum 1:7: The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.

Peter 5:6-7: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

John 14:1: “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” (Jesus comforting his disciples.)

3. If Samantha had not shown courage, our story may have turned out much differently. What gives you courage when you face fear-some obstacles?

Psalm 23:4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Four

The Silhouette



1. What does predicament mean?
2. What does Daph think her heart is like after quarreling with her brother?
3. Jesse says that Nate is tenacious, meaning he does not give up when faced with a problem. How is he similar to the widow Jesus tells us of in Luke 18?

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge

Episode 4 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

4. Guess what kind of message is inside the float? Would you be willing to break it to find the answer?

5. Why does Nate think it's not a “hurrying kind of message?”

6. God compares His children to jars of clay. What does He store in these jars?

The word and spirit of Christ dwells in earthen vessels. This is a hint as to what is inside the float.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7: For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Five

A Message Of Hope



1. Nate and Samantha need a light to read the note in the ruby float. Can you think of some other truths you need to shed light on to understand?

2. Do Samantha and Nate know who the Alpha and Omega is?

3. Do you know who the Alpha and Omega is?

4. Compare the words Sam and Nate find in the float to these:

Revelation 1:8: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 22:13: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

5. What promise does the float contain?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Six

Nate's Plan



1. What causes Nate and Sam to be united as a team?
2. See how the apostle Peter responded to the same promise Nate and Sam found in the float.

John 6:67-68: Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

3. Why don't Nate and Sam tell their grandfather about the message in the float?
4. What is Nate's plan?
5. Why don't Sam and Nate tell their grandfather or their parents about the plan? Do you think they should have?
6. Why do you think the float might have washed up on the shore of Nate and Sam's country?

Episode 6 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

These verses might give us some insight:

1 John 4:10: In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Ephesians 1:3-4: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

7. What does God promise to those who seek after Him?

Jeremiah 29:13: And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Proverbs 8:17: I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.

Lamentations 3:25: The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him.

Matthew 7:7: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Seven

Nate and Sam Build The Raft



1. How well do Samantha and Nate work together as they engage on their raft-building project?

Daph and Josh tell us they are united in spirit. They work hard together and are supportive of each other.

2. See what the Bible says about how we should get along together.

Psalm 133:1: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Romans 12:10: Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.

1 Peter 3:8: Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.

Romans 15:5: Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus.

Episode 7 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

John 17:20-21: “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

3. What do Nate and Sam plan to do once they’ve finished the raft?

Do a test voyage, then meet with their parents.

4. What secret about the raft does Nate keep from his sister?

5. What happens after the secret is revealed.

6. What does hard work always yield in the end?

Proverbs 22:29: Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before unknown men.

Proverbs 24:27: Prepare your outside work, make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house.

Psalms 104:23: Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

Psalms 102:25: Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Eight

The Test Voyage Goes Awry



1. What letters do Nate and Same stitch onto the sail? What do the letters stand for?
2. What does Sam make for the portholes?
3. What does Nate intend to say in the speech he is planning to give to his parents?
4. What does Nate discover once he reaches the open sea?
5. Can you think of any voyages in the Bible that have gone awry?

Paul's voyage to Rome: *Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." (Excerpt from Acts 27.)*

Jonah's voyage to Spain: *But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea*

Episode 8 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. (Excerpt from Jonah 1.)

Jesus and his disciples on the Sea of Galilee: And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” (Matthew 8:24-25.)

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Nine

Adrift At Sea



1. What do Samantha and Nate do in the midst of the storm?

They read and re-read the words inside the ruby float, hoping the Alpha and Omega will save them.

2. What do you do when there is a storm in your life?

God asks us to turn to Him in prayer.

Psalm 145:18-19: The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.

1 John 5:14: Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

John 14:13: And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Episode 9 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

John 15:7: If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

3. What is the first thing Samantha suggests after the storm is over?

She suggests thanking the Alpha and Omega. So it is that we should not forget to thank God after He has answered our prayers.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Psalms 69:30: I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

Psalms 100:4: Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

4. Who does Nate blame for the predicament they're in?

5. How does Sam respond to this?

6. What's the difference between reading something and putting what you've read into action.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Ten

They Set Sail For The Island



1. What dreadful thought does Nate keep from his sister?

If they miss the island they will be lost at sea.

How would you feel if you were in the same dire situation?

Further investigate the stories of Jonah, Paul and the disciples mentioned in the questions at the end of Episode 8.

2. How does Samantha counter her brother's loneliness and fear?

She reacts with compassion, offering to help Nate with the very difficult task of sailing the raft. Her bright and cheerful attitude, coming from her confidence in the Alpha and Omega, also helps to cheer him up. Take a moment to think about compassion and its importance to God.

Psalm 145:8: The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.

Episode 10 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Matthew 14:14: And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. (Jesus feeds the five thousand.)

3. Think of a time when you have been lonely or fearful. Did you have confidence in God?

Here are some verses that give us great confidence in God:

Psalms 34:4: I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Psalms 71:5: For You are my hope, O Lord GOD; You are my trust from my youth.

Psalms 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Jeremiah 17:7: Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.

Psalms 23:4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 27:1: The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

4. What aspect of Nate and Samantha's relationship is vital to their reaching the island safely?

Teamwork.

Episode 10 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

1 Corinthians 1:10: Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Galatians 6:2: Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Eleven

Shipwrecked



1. By now you might have read of the shipwreck of the apostle Paul described in exciting detail in Acts 27 (see Episode Eight of the Study Guide). How is it similar to that of Samantha and Nate?

This excerpt (Acts 27:39-44) shows several striking similarities.

When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

2. Why was Paul so confident that everyone would survive the shipwreck?

Acts 27:21-26 provides us with the answer.

But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island.”

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Twelve

Not Alone



1. What does the mysterious stranger do for Samantha and Nate?

Prepares them breakfast.

2. What mysterious person suddenly appears to the disciples in John 21?

John 21:4-6: But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

3. In John 21 who was the first to recognize this person? Why do you think he was the first?

It was John.

John 21:7: Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!”

4. Were the disciples excited about this discovery?

To say yes is an understatement. Read this:

John 21:7: Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

5. What did Jesus do for the disciples?

He made them breakfast.

John 21:9-14: Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.” Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, “Come and eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

6. How are Nate and Sam able to tell where the stranger came from?

7. Where does the trail lead them?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Thirteen

A Wonderful Discovery



1. Do you recognize the song the man is singing?

It is the hymn “Praise To The Lord, The Almighty,” by Joachim Neander (1650-1680). Here are the first two stanzas:

*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.*

*Praise to the Lord, Who over all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires ever have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?*

2. What does the Bible say about praising the Lord by singing?

God loves to hear His people sing. The verses referring to this are so numerous that they would cover many pages.

Episode 13 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Isaiah 42:10: Sing to the LORD a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them!

Psalms 95:1: Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

1 Chronicles 16:9: Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works!

Psalms 7:17: I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

3. Do you have a favorite praise song? Why's it your favorite?
4. What does the man look like?
5. What is the man making when Nate and Sam first discover him?
6. Does he know that they are spying on him?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Fourteen

The Most Important Question In The World



1. What does the old man answer when Nate and Sam ask him whether he's the Alpha and Omega?
2. The old man says that the Alpha and Omega has many names. Can you identify the Bible verse which uses the names he mentions?

Isaiah 9:6: For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

3. Who is the Child mentioned above?

It is Jesus, who is also called the Alpha and Omega.

4. Can you think of any other names for Jesus?

John 8:12: Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the

light of life.”

1 John 1:29: Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Revelation 17:14: He is Lord of lords and King of kings.

John 6:51: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

1 John 4:14: And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

5. Do you recognize the hymn the old man is singing while he’s working in the glassworks?

It is the hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” written by Martin Luther (1483-1546), a leader of the Protestant Reformation. Here are the first two stanzas.

*A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.*

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Fifteen

A Very Puzzling Answer



1. How did the old man first learn about the Alpha and Omega?

The old man's mother taught him about God.

2. What does the Bible say about parents teaching their children about the Lord?

Deuteronomy 11:18-19: Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Psalms 34:11: Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Proverbs 22:6: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Episode 15 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Ephesians 6:4: And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

3. Who does the old man say made everything that is in existence?

John 1:1-3: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

4. The old man's mother told him that God loved him like a son, even more than His own life. Can you think of any Scripture verses that support this?

1 John 3:16: By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Isaiah 53:5: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

1 John 3:1: How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

5. Though the Bible may be long and sometimes difficult to read, it is very important. What are some reasons for its importance?

Episode 15 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Psalms 119:9-16: How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.

6. What words do Nate and Sam discover in the old man's Bible that are almost like those inside their float?

John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

7. Even though Nate and Samantha's grandmother is close to death, Nate says they should trust the Alpha and Omega. What does the Bible say about trusting the Lord?

Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on

Episode 15 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Psalm 5:11: But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You.

Psalm 18:2: The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Sixteen

The Breath Of God



1. How do the children feel about reading the Bible?

They are filled with the same excitement that Jeremiah had when he wrote: *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).”* This means that when we read the Bible we give God an opportunity to speak to us personally.

2. Daph and Josh refer to the words in the Bible as the breath of God. What do they mean by this?

Through His word God is breathing a new life into the children, one that is eternal and filled with everlasting hope and joy.

Job 33:4: The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV): All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the

man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Romans 10:17: So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

3. Can you recall the words in the ruby float revealed at the end of Episode 5?

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Resurrection and the Life. Whosoever believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

What do they mean?

Whosoever believes in Jesus Christ will live forever.

4. What does “whosoever” mean and to whom do you think it refers?

If you believe in Christ, then it refers to you.

5. Do you think Nate and Samantha also understand the meaning of the words in the ruby float? If you’re not sure, listen to the episode again.

6. The old man suggested that the children start their adventure through the Bible by reading the book of John. If you haven’t read it yourself, don’t delay. To get a taste of what amazing and wonderful things it teaches about the Alpha and Omega, take a look at the following chapters and verses:

Chapter 3: verses 3, 16, 17 and 35.

Episode 16 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Chapter 4: verses 13 & 14.

Chapter 6: verse 47.

Chapter 10: verse 11.

Chapter 14: verse 6.

Chapter 18: verse 36.

Chapter 19: verse 30.

Chapter 20: verse 31.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Seventeen

The New Journey Begins



1. In what way are Nate and Samantha on a new journey?

They are on a never-ending journey through the kingdom of God, a walk of faith that cannot be made except by those who have been newly created.

John 3:3-5: Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 Peter 1:23: . . . having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

Episode 17 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

2. Why do Nate and Samantha want to be baptized?

When the children learn of the baptism of Christ and His disciples, they also want to be baptized. This is to symbolize their death to this world and their rebirth to the eternal world of Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:4: Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

3. What is significant about their meal with the old man?

It is the children's first celebration of the Lord's Supper. A reading of Luke 22:14-23 will provide a deeper insight into the meaning of this monumental event.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Eighteen

The Tragic Farewell



1. What is making the thundering noise that startles Nate and Sam in the morning?
2. What is the warship doing?
3. Is it a rescue ship?
4. Where has it come from?
5. Where does the old man take the children?
6. What does he tell them to do while they're there?

To keep watch and pray.

1 Peter 3:12: For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil.

Episode 18 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

Matthew 21:22: And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

7. What book does he give them before he leaves?
8. Why does he tell them not to cry?

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Nineteen

The Letter



1. Where does the man go when he leaves his home?

To a land that does not believe in God.

2. What does his mother do for him after he leaves?

She prays for him continually, asking God to change his heart.

3. What does he do with all of the letters she sends him?

He tears them up, unread.

4. What does he find when he returns home?

His mother has died, but has left him copies of all the letters she has ever written to him.

5. Who does the man call out to when he visits his mother's grave?

The Alpha and Omega.

6. What does he ask of the Alpha and Omega?

Forgiveness.

7. What words does he find written on his mother's gravestone?

John 11: 25-26: I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

8. What does the man do next?

His heart changed, he returns to the godless land he left and spreads the Gospel.

9. Why is he exiled to the island?

His enemies imprison him on the island in an attempt to silence the Gospel.

10. One of the twelve apostles was exiled to an island. Do you know who and why? Here's a clue: Jesus named this disciple and his brother Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17).

The Roman Emperor Domitian imprisoned John on the island of Patmos in the year A.D. 95. Patmos is a tiny island in the Aegean Sea near present day Turkey. Though John was an old man of about ninety with only a cave for a home, Christ chose to reveal to him the dramatic details of His second coming. John recorded this prophesy in the Book of Revelations. John also wrote the Gospel of John, First

John, Second John and Third John.

Revelation 1:9: I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

11. Is it unusual for a person to be persecuted because of his faith? Has this ever happened to you? What does the Bible say about this?

2 Timothy 3:12: Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Matthew 5:10-12: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

12. Despite persecution, what did the disciple mentioned in question 10 call himself?

On numerous occasions he refers to himself as the one whom Jesus loved (John 13:23, John 20:2, John 21:7, John 21:20).

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Twenty

Devastation



1. As a young man David often had to hide from his enemies. He knew that the Lord was his only hiding place and trusted in Him for protection. Two psalms which he wrote (see Psalm 32:7 and Psalm 56:3) refer to this. Take a moment to read and reflect upon them. Do they remind you of a song?

“You Are My Hiding Place,” by Michael Ledner.

The song begins:

*You are my hiding place,
You always fill my heart with songs of deliverance.
Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.*

Also read Psalm 91:1: *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

2. In this chapter Samantha and Nate are kept safe from a blazing inferno. Can you think of a much more miraculous Bible story where

someone was saved from fire? If your memory is hazy, take a look at Daniel 9.

This is the famous story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed Nego. Here's an excerpt (Daniel 9:24-25):

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

3. When Jesus taught us how to pray did He say we should ask to be delivered from evil?

Yes. See the Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4.

4. Read Psalm 34? Does it assure us that God will answer this prayer?

This Psalm and others provide great comfort to those in distress.

Psalm 34:4: I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 34:7: The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Twenty-One

The Strange Cloud



1. What do you think is causing the strange cloud that the helmsman sees?

No one on the ship knows. Do you?

2. The children of Israel followed a strange cloud while they were in the wilderness. What do you know about this cloud?

Exodus 13:21-22: And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.

Nehemiah 9:19: Yet in Your manifold mercies you did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day, to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way they should go.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Twenty-Two

A Time Of Great Happiness



1. According to Josh, why is the whole island covered in fog?
2. What is the sound that Sam and Nate hear coming out of the fog?
3. Whom does Sam grab onto when she starts to fall?
4. Whom do Sam and Nate immediately begin to tell their rescuers about?

The Alpha and Omega.

5. Have their rescuers ever seen a Bible before?
6. How did the old man show his love for Sam and Nate?

He sacrificed his life for theirs.

*1 John 3: 16: By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.
And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Episode 22 · The Ruby Float · Questions For Thought And Discussion

John 15: 13: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Questions For Thought & Discussion

Episode Twenty-Three

The Return Home



1. What does Sam read to her grandfather on the way home?

The book of John, the same book she and Nate started with while on the island.

2. What does Nate spend his time doing?

He runs about the ship, showing everyone the ruby float and telling them what message it contains.

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Resurrection and the Life. Whosoever believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. From John 11: 25-26; Revelation 1:8; Revelation 22:13

3. What does he say the message means?

Exactly what it says.

4. How do many of those on the ship respond to the message?

They believe and are baptized.

5. What do Nate and Sam teach the sailors?

How to sing the hymns that the old man taught them.

6. What do they call out to the ships they pass on the way home?

“We bring you good news, glad tidings of great joy.”

Luke 2: 10-11: Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

7. What kind of running do Sam and Nate do on their way to their grandmother’s house?

8. Now that you know the whole story, tell us what has been missing from Samantha and Nate’s town?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has been missing.

9. How close is your answer to the guess you made at the end of Episode 2?

10. In what way does the Bible verse given at the beginning of the book help explain what Daph and Josh’s story is about?

Matthew 4:16 says: *“The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light; and to those who were sitting in the land of the shadow of*

death, upon them a light dawned.”

The people of Nate and Samantha’s town are those who dwelled in darkness and the shadow of death. The dawning light is the Gospel of Jesus Christ brought back to the people by the children.

These passages give more insight into the meaning of Matthew 4:16:

Luke 1:77-79: “To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

John 8:12: Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 9:5: “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

11. The last two lines of the prologue read: “In search of One who promises to heal them of their pain.” Who is this One?

It is Jesus.

Isaiah 53:5: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

12. At the end of the print version of the book, Daph asks, “Is it really true that we can live forever?” How would you answer her?

13. What do Nate and Samantha believe?

They not only believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true, but have also placed their faith in Jesus for their salvation, the one who the Gospel proclaims to be the Son of God.

14. Do you believe as they do?

15. Daph and Josh's story is called a tale of hope. What is the greatest tale of hope ever written?

It is not a work of fiction, not a tale of make-believe conceived of by a mortal mind, but the divinely inspired Word of God, a book of truth that spells out God's plan for man, from the very beginning to the very end. It is The Bible.

How much of God's plan can you remember? Compare your recollection to the outline that follows.

God's Plan For Man

Paradise

God Creates a Perfect World for a Perfect Man and Woman

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:27)

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. (Genesis 1:31)

The Warning

The Father's Loving Call for Us to Obey Him

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

Temptation

Satan Calls Us to Disobey God

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5)

Man's Choice

Sin

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

Sin's Terrible Consequences

Spiritual and Physical Death

Though Adam and Eve lived for many years, their spiritual death was immediate.

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:17-19)

... through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned . . . (Romans 5:12)

... although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:5)

The Return of Hope

God's Plan for the Redemption of Man

God in His love immediately sets in motion His plan of redemption.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The Promise Fulfilled

Christ Dies for Our Sins

. . . who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

The Free Gift of Salvation

Spiritual Rebirth, Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life:
The Choice is Ours

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace . . . (Ephesians 1:7)

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32)

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

The Nature of Our Salvation

We are Saved by Grace, Not Works

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

The Leading of The Holy Spirit

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
(Romans 8:14)*

*And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into
your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" (Galatians 4:6)*

*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of
God. (Romans 8:16)*

*. . . clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not
with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but
on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2 Corinthians 3:3)*

Thank You

Thank you taking the time to work through the study guide for the Ruby Float. If you enjoyed it, please consider leaving a review on the Dancing Pen website. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

Sign up for Rick's mailing list to receive updates about his books:

Contact

Connect with Rick online:

Facebook | Twitter | Dancing Pen Books | Google+

About The Author



Rick lives in Southern California with his wonderful wife, Bettina. He enjoys helping her tend the hummingbird garden and defending her from the exotic creatures that lurk in the shade of the honey-suckle bushes. When he's not out and about in wilds of the backyard, you're likely to find him reading and writing, especially in winter, when the fire's blazing in the hearth and the rain's coming down in sheets outside the window.

His first publication, *Daph*, a story set during the polio epidemics of the 1950s, was awarded Best Short Story Of The Year by *Writer's Digest*. He has written two novels—*The Ruby Float* and *Theodora's Children*—part of a series called *Tales Of Hope*. The third in the series, *Desert Gold*, is now in work.

You can connect with Rick at Dancing Pen Books, Twitter, Facebook, and Google+.

More From Dancing Pen Books

Join Daph and Josh under the tree at Shady Point as their grandfather tells them the story of:

s

The Ruby Float (Print & eBook)

We've all been there—our hearts broken, our lives shattered, our hopes and dreams dashed. Many things can do it—a serious illness, the death of a loved one, a disappointment in life, a divorce, the loss of a job, a rejection. When we're young the loss is amplified. In a small world everything looks bigger, more immediate, more frightening.

In *The Ruby Float* two children are heartbroken when they discover their grandmother is dying. Desperately wanting to help, they search for a mysterious person who they believe can save her. With only a few clues to guide them, they embark on a perilous journey, sailing a small, homebuilt raft across a broad expanse of ocean. What they discover changes not only their hearts, but the heart of an entire nation.

If you're eight or eighty, you'll thoroughly enjoy *The Ruby Float*. Parents will take special delight in reading it aloud to their children, who'll love the many beautiful illustrations by artist Sukwan Myers.

More About The Ruby Float

More From Dancing Pen Books



The Ruby Float

A Tale of Hope

Rick Nau

Illustrated By Sukwan Myers

The Next Tale Of Hope

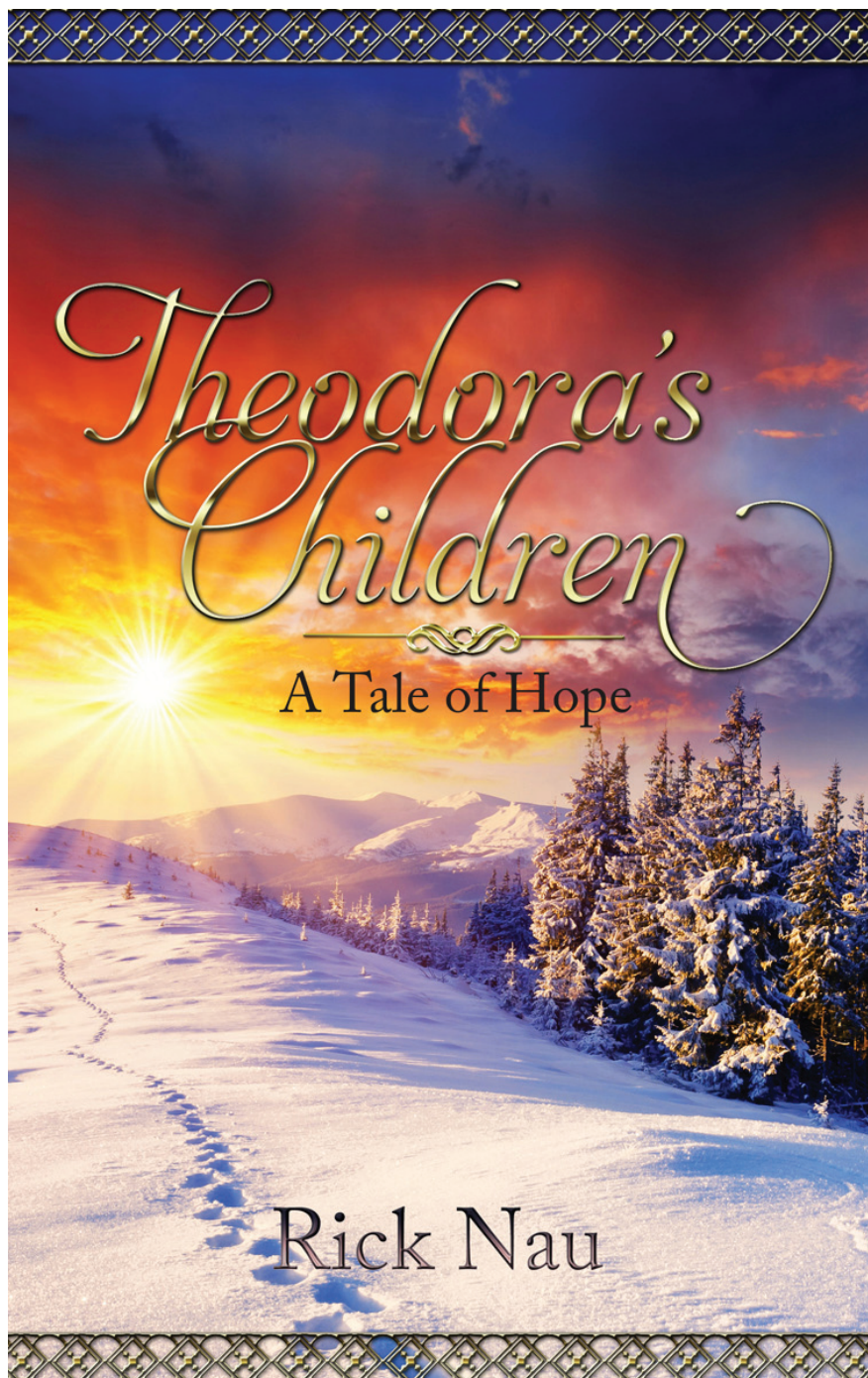
Join Daph and Josh under the tree at Shady Point as their grandfather tells them the story of:

Theodora's Children

Gretchen is a young girl who suffers from a dreadful loneliness. Though she is extremely rich, having virtually everything under the sun that any boy or girl could ever want, she has no friends—not one, not a single one.

Then, one day, during a terrible disaster, someone mysterious enters her life, someone who will cause it to change forever.

More About Theodora's Children



Copyright Information

Study Guide For The Ruby Float: *A Tale Of Hope-Read-Along*

Copyright © 2017 by Rick Nau

Scripture taken from the New King James Version of the Bible. Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover by Design by Insight

Published by Dancing Pen Books

www.dancingpenbooks.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author, except as provided by USA copyright law.