

Discussion Questions for *Stepping on the Cracks*

Courtesy of:



Bullies

Gordy's father bullies his family, and Gordy was a bully too. Why do you think behavior like this sometimes runs in families? How do you think this pattern could be changed?

Margaret's problems with Gordy's bullying were solved as she got to know Gordy better. There are other ways that people solve their problems with a bully too, for example by telling an adult, ignoring the bully, or standing up to the bully. Do you think that certain solutions work best in certain situations?

War

What is your opinion of Stuart being a conscientious objector and a deserter?

In World War II, young men did not have a choice about whether or not to join the armed forces. Many were drafted, or forced to join the military. Today, participation in the military is a choice made by individual men and women, not a requirement. Do you think a draft should ever be instituted again? For what reasons?

Friends

In *Stepping on the Cracks*, Margaret's friend Elizabeth often encouraged her to take actions that she would not have taken on her own. Give some examples from the story. Can you also think of real-life examples involving people that you know?

In the story, Margaret and Elizabeth remained best friends at the end of the story, even though Margaret's family had suffered a tragedy when her brother was killed in the war. Sometimes life-changing events, such as losing a family member can affect friendships in other ways. Can you give an example from real life or from another story?

Holidays (Christmas)

How did the war affect Margaret's Christmas? Why do you think her Christmas was so different while Elizabeth's family seemed to have Christmas almost as usual?

Have you even had a holiday that was not celebrated in the usual way because of some big event? How was it different?

Family

Discuss how each member of Margaret's family was affected by the war.

Think of a big event that you hear about in the news today. What are some ways in which that event affects you, members of your family, or your friends?