

Questions to use in a book group to discuss

“Finley’s Tale – Book I: In the Beginning”

For Fun . . . For Real . . . From God . . .

November 30, First Sunday in Advent (page 1)

For Fun – How did you get your name or nickname?

For Real – What for you is the best part of meeting someone new?

From God – Read Isaiah 40:1. What does it mean to you that God knows your name?

December 1, Monday (page 6)

For Fun – Whom do you look up to and why?

For Real – Who might be listening to (and reporting) the goings on at your gatherings?

From God – Read Luke 10:38-42 and tell why it is important to stop and sit with Jesus.

December 2, Tuesday (page 10)

For Fun – What is the best part of going to church?

For Real – What discord or racket at your church makes it harder to worship?

From God – Read Matthew 11:12-19. Every church has a message – how are people responding?

December 4, Thursday (page 11)

For Fun – How does it feel when someone asks you for advice?

For Real – Why is it so important to keep confidentiality?

From God – Read Proverbs 11:9. Why is the truth so valuable (and so tempting)?

December 5, Friday (page 13)

For Fun – Has anyone ever taken advantage of you?

For Real – Why is it important to talk over things that bother us?

From God – Read Matthew 6:42. What was the purpose for which Jesus said this?

December 7, Second Sunday in Advent (page 16)

For Fun – How do the extras of Christmas fit into your budget?

For Real – Why is it important that children know about Jesus' birth?

From God – Read Luke 2:10-11. How can anyone have the joy of Christmas despite their circumstances?

December 10, Wednesday (page 20)

For Fun – What did the Ladies do about the “un-embraceable” behaviour of Tonya Lorenzo?

For Real – What leadership qualities do you most admire?

From God – In the list of loving behaviours written in Romans 12:9-21, which one stands out to you?

December 12, Friday (page 25)

For Fun – What Christmas custom do you cheerfully practice?

For Real – What do our Advent preparations teach us about ourselves?

From God – Read Luke 3:4-6. How do we make ready our hearts to celebrate God's salvation?

December 13, Saturday (page 27)

For Fun – What makes the church “light up” in your community?

For Real – Is it better if the church takes a low profile, serving quietly, or not?

From God – How do Matthew 5:16 and 6:1 talk about lighting and parading?

December 14, Third Sunday in Advent/Rose Sunday (page 29)

For Fun – Which do you prefer singing or listening?

For Real – How does beauty draw our focus heavenward?

From God – In Philippians 4:8-9 where does Paul turn our attention?

December 18, Thursday (page 34)

For Fun – When people leave a church do you think they miss it?

For Real – What are good reasons to find another church, if any?

From God – In Romans 16, how does Paul greet the people he misses?

December 19, Friday (page 37)

For Fun – Have you ever written down a Christmas wish list?

For Real – Do you ever have trouble affording everything?

From God – How can you see that Proverbs 22:4 is true?

December 21, Fourth Sunday in Advent (page 39)

For Fun – What is the best part of getting old?

For Real – Do all our seniors enjoy great respect?

From God – What grace is promised in Proverbs 16:31?

December 22, Monday (page 42)

For Fun – What exactly is humorous about Alice the inspector?

For Real – Are tiny details important?

From God – Read Psalm 130:3-4. Why is grace so important to humans?

December 24, Christmas Eve (page 44)

For Fun – Why is it important for many at Christmas to attend a worship service?

For Real – Besides music and electrical work, what gifts do people bring to the Lord?

From God – Read Luke 2:1-20. How is it that the Nativity connects with so many people?

December 25, The Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Day (page 49)

For Fun – What are your favourite Christmas foods?

For Real – What about Christians leads to admitting sins and wanting forgiveness?

From God – What is your favourite Christmas carol?

December 28, First Sunday after Christmas (page 53)

For Fun – What is the best part of a snow day (or holiday) for you?

For Real – How does it feel to you when the weather limits what we can do?

From God – What does Job 37:5-7 say about God and the weather?

December 31, Wednesday (page 55)

For Fun – How do you spend your New Year’s Eve or Day?

For Real – What food, person, place, or thing helps you ring out the old and ring in the new?

From God – Psalm 65:11 is often quoted as the year changes; what does it say to you?

January 2, Friday (page 57)

For Fun – For those who spend Advent preparing, why do they want Christmas to last past December 25?

For Real – Why do some people “turn the page” so quickly after a holiday?

From God – No matter what time you get up, what does Psalm 139:18 declare?

January 4, Second Sunday after Christmas (page 60)

For Fun – How does it feel to discover a gift in a child?

For Real – How does it feel to have a secret you want to keep? To tell?

From God – What wise caution is in Proverbs 11:13?

January 6, Epiphany, Tuesday (page 61)

For Fun – What gives something a “heritage,” a quality worth preserving and passing on?

For Real – How do married partners help one another?

From God – According to Psalm 119:162, how is God’s Word treasured?

January 8, Thursday (page 63)

For Fun – Where are you frugal in your life?

For Real – Have you ever made it a game or challenge to get a bargain?

From God – When we save time or money what does it get used for? Consider 2 Corinthians 9:7.

January 11, The Baptism of Our Lord (page 64)

For Fun – Why do babies move us so?

For Real – What recipe do you cherish?

From God – According to 1 John 4:16-17, why should we say, “I love you” to those we love?

January 17, Saturday (page 67)

For Fun – How do people spur one another on to lead healthy lifestyles?

For Real – How do churches help youth by encouraging them to play?

From God – In what good directions does 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 send us?

January 18, Second Sunday after the Epiphany (page 71)

For Fun – How does our personal appearance add to our confidence?

For Real – How was Simon Thompson overly confident?

From God – How does Dorcas’ story in Acts 9:36-42 inspire confidence?

January 21, Wednesday (page 75)

For Fun – How does remembering at a funeral help us mourn?

For Real – How does the hope of the resurrection change our mourning?

From God – What does 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 say about our hope?

January 24, Saturday (page 76)

For Fun – Can a verse of the Bible be overused?

For Real – What church event have you particularly enjoyed?

From God – How can the leaders of an event keep it special for many people? See 2 Chronicles 35:2-8.

January 25, Third Sunday after the Epiphany (page 80)

For Fun – How do our bodies remind us that we are God’s creatures?

For Real – How are they connected to our souls?

From God – What does 1 Thessalonians 5:23 say about the soul and body together?

January 29, Thursday (page 82)

For Fun – How do Lewis and Clark approach their problem?

For Real – How does the copy machine repairman tackle his task?

From God – What do Ecclesiastes 9:10 and Colossians 3:22-24 say about what we find to do?

January 31, Saturday (page 83)

For Fun – Do you have a favourite ballad or story?

For Real – How is being around Christians at an event a first step toward hearing God’s Word?

From God – Based on Romans 12:15-17, how does certain behaviour help people meet Christ?

February 1, Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany (page 83)

For Fun – What kind of pizza is your favourite?

For Real – Do you notice how people sacrifice what they want to do to help others?

From God – Does knowing our ancestors help us know ourselves? See Isaiah 51:1 for clues.

February 2, Monday, Presentation of Our Lord and the Purification of Mary (page 89)

For Fun – Is title-tattle ever toxic?

For Real – How do you show concern for someone without judging them?

From God – Why is it better, as it has been said, “to talk to God about someone” than “to talk to someone about God?”

February 6, Friday (page 91)

For Fun – What is your favourite kind of cheese?

For Real – How was growing up with your siblings, if any?

From God – Psalm 127:3-5 gives what blessing to whom?

February 7, Saturday (page 93)

For Fun – Do you have (or remember) a toy from your childhood?

For Real – What do you remember about any mission or charity presentation from your childhood?

From God – What kinds of exercise does 2 John 4-6 recommend?

February 8, Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (page 94)

For Fun – What, in your opinion, are the ingredients for a good holiday?

For Real – Is Aia selfish to want to plan her own Valentine’s activities?

From God – How do church events help us tune in to the words of Romans 15:1-7?

February 9, Monday (page 97)

For Fun – Do you pray after receiving good news?

For Real – Do you pray after hearing bad news?

From God – How does Romans 12:12 apply?

February 11, Wednesday (page 98)

For Fun – How can fortune telling create unnecessary drama?

For Real – Can businesses become more important than love, or is this just Luminista’s excuse?

From God – How does Philippians 4:6 teach us to face the future?

February 14, Saturday, St. Valentine’s Day (page 100)

For Fun – What do you like better, an exciting evening out or a quiet evening in?

For Real – Is Valentine’s Day for hoping to be loved or to love?

From God – What does 1 John 4:19 say about love?

February 15, The Transfiguration of Our Lord (page 101)

For Fun – How does an event committee help a pastor focus on his true job?

For Real – Is a big gift of money a blessing or a distraction?

From God – Does money speed things up or slow things down in a church? See Acts 2:42-27 and 3:32.

February 17, Shrove Tuesday (page 103)

For Fun – What is your favourite Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras, Fat Tuesday) indulgence?

For Real – What, if anything, have you given up for Lent?

From God – Is it possible, instead of giving something up, to add something to your Lenten observance? What might it be?

February 18, Ash Wednesday (page 107)

For Fun – What risks was Pastor Clement taking in his meeting with Yolanda?

For Real – What could he have done differently?

From God – How does the Lord's Prayer help us with our personal boundaries?

February 19, Thursday (page 109)

For Fun –How does it help us to know the stories of past church members?

For Real – Do you know any such stories?

From God – How does Galatians 5:1 help us share in the fight for freedom?

February 20, Friday (page 111)

For Fun – Why is it important to keep a secret?

For Real – If you feel the need to tell a secret, how important is it how you tell it?

From God – What do Proverbs 10:19-20 say about keeping secrets?

February 22, Third Sunday in Lent (page 114)

For Fun – What issues could arise when sharing a facility with another faith?

For Real – What are the drawbacks and benefits of such an arrangement?

From God – Is there wisdom in Matthew 7:3-5 in dealing with those of other faiths?

February 24, Tuesday, St. Mathias, Apostle (page 117)

For Fun – How could the Historical Society goals conflict with Pastor Osterhagen's?

For Real – When could historical discoveries become a spiritual blessing to St. Peter's (like Lent)?

From God – How are the mice hampered in their ability to appreciate human customs? How are we? Does Proverbs 18:13 help?

February 26, Thursday (page 119)

For Fun – What benefits are there to shopping at thrift stores?

For Real – How do they help us get to know others?

From God – What does 1 Timothy 6:6-8 teach us about the value of things?

March 1, Second Sunday in Lent (page 121)

For Fun – When have you lost something you need?

For Real – What nicknames have you received?

From God – Why does it feel so good to publicly announce good news? See Isaiah 40:9 & 52:7.

March 2, Monday (page 123)

For Fun – What special impression or memory do you have of Lent?

For Real – Why is life-long learning a noble goal?

From God – How does Matthew 6:5-6 help explain the meaning of Lent?

March 8, Third Sunday in Lent (page 126)

For Fun – When have you tried an unusual food, foreign to you?

For Real – Why is food a good way to bridge gaps between people?

From God – Tell a surprise you have had about someone, delightful or otherwise. How did, in Jesus' words, "the truth. . .set you free?" [John 8:32]

March 11, Wednesday (page 128)

For Fun – Why is it hard to stop a problem like the one created by Mylo's good intentions?

For Real – Why is it good to listen to a person who has complaints?

From God – Is it amazing to you that according to Matthew 27:12-14 Jesus suffered silently?

March 16, Monday (page 131)

For Fun – Who is one of your heroes or inspiration?

For Real – Is it always important whether the saint actually lived? Why or why not?

From God – How do Revelation 14:12 & 19:7-9 indicate that the hardships that saints endure are worthwhile?

March 17, Tuesday, St. Patrick's Day (page 135)

For Fun – How do you make a holiday special?

For Real – If you have seen one, what is your favourite part of a parade?

From God – What name in Matthew 28:19 was St. Patrick's to use often?

March 20, Friday (page 137)

For Fun – How does dancing fit into our community life?

For Real – Is there room to teach Christians better physical fitness?

From God – Is getting together socially a waste of time?

March 21, Saturday (page 139)

For Fun – What does Matthew 6:19-21 say about vandalism and crime at church?

For Real – Why do we get attached to earthly things?

From God – What does Psalm 119:11 say that guards the Church against vandals?

March 22, Fifth Sunday in Lent (page 141)

For Fun – What would you pull out of the fridge on a day of emergencies?

For Real – How has an emergency disrupted your everyday life?

From God – What does Matthew 24:42 tell us to be ready for?

March 25, The Annunciation of Our Lord (page 141)

For Fun – What food “sticks to your ribs?”

For Real – How do you know when you reach a limit to volunteering and peacemaking?

From God – Which persons does Jesus bless in Matthew 5:9?

March 28, Saturday (page 144)

For Fun – Does your church have any unsolved mysteries?

For Real – Why does Clement not rejoice at finding his glasses?

From God – What does St. Paul call a mystery in Colossians 1:26-27?

March 29, Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion (page 145)

For Fun – Which complaints about the worship space stand out to you?

For Real – Why would you miss worshiping in your regular place?

From God – What makes a place a Christian place of worship, according to John 4:21-24?

March 30, Monday (page 149)

For Fun – How will Easter be doubly special at Historic St. Peter’s this year?

For Real – Can you compare the feelings during Holy Week of HSP parishioners and of the disciples of Jesus?

From God – How have you seen that “Joy comes in the morning,” as Psalm 30:5 says?

April 2, Holy (Maundy) Thursday (page 150)

For Fun – How do the Barbershop and Paulette distract one another?

For Real – “Typographical errors make an important difference”-- do you agree or disagree?

From God – How does Isaiah 53:6 give hope to all, though “none is righteous? [Romans 3:10]”

April 3, Good Friday (page 152)

For Fun – How do you feel that the mice appreciate what happened on Good Friday long ago?

For Real – How do you feel about bringing your child to your job?

From God – Why is the Good Friday service called the Service of Darkness? [See Luke 23:44-46]

April 4, Holy Saturday (page 153)

For Fun – Do you think Easter decorations can go up before Holy Saturday?

For Real – What is your experience with Easter eggs?

From God – How do Christian preparations tell the importance of what happened the day Jesus rose from the dead?

April 5, The Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Sunday (page 154)

For Fun – Who was most surprised by Geraldine’s figurines?

For Real – Why do church holidays bring out the worst in people?

From God – According to Romans 8:1, why should Christians be more careful with criticism?

April 6, Monday (page 156)

For Fun – Do you enjoy church flowers, or look right past them?

For Real – Have you picked the hymns/songs for your funeral?

From God – Why does a church carefully choose the service music?

April 8, Wednesday (page 158)

For Fun – What were the ways the persons and mice were blessed by song?

For Real – How did singing help slaves and other oppressed people?

From God – What is one of your favourite hymns or songs?

April 10, Friday (page 161)

For Fun – How do Aia and Clement plan to relax?

For Real – Is there a way to find rest from old hurts that resurface?

From God – What good does recreation do us, in the light of Matthew 11:28?

April 12, Second Sunday of Easter (page 166)

For Fun – Why is it easy to take church musicians for granted?

For Real – Why do some people not trust churches?

From God – How does Psalm 150 show the value of musicians?

April 13, Monday (page 169)

For Fun – How is sleep a blessing from God? [Psalm 4:8]

For Real – What risk does Proverbs 6:10-11 say is in sleep?

From God – How is wakefulness a metaphor for faith in Romans 13:11?

April 17, Friday (page 171)

For Fun – Like Gretchen, what animals have you seen in the wild?

For Real – Have you got any pets?

From God – In Genesis 1:26 how are animals and humankind brought together?

April 18, Saturday (page 173)

For Fun – What help can Pastor Osterhagen offer this couple before they marry?

For Real – How important is love in a blended family?

From God – What do you think of a wedding during the Sunday service?

April 19, Third Sunday of Easter (page 175)

For Fun – What do you think – was Aia overreacting?

For Real – Why do we need (sometimes) to take a break from negative thoughts or talk?

From God – The Easter triumph turned the church into what, according to 2 Corinthians 2:14-15?

April 22, Wednesday (page 177)

For Fun – Why do you think Cricket embraced yodelling so fervently?

For Real – Are there kinds of music that are inappropriate for church?

From God – Can Psalm 98:6 mean that any noise can be directed in praise to God?

April 26, Fourth Sunday of Easter (page 178)

For Fun – What do you think of attending one of the many events that take place on Sunday, instead of going to church?

For Real – Why are these event opportunities for sharing the Gospel with someone new?

From God – How does God’s Word help the opportunity along?

May 1, Friday, St. Philip & St. James, Apostles (page 180)

For Fun – Why do people take awhile to catch on to slang or colloquial English?

For Real – What are your favourite phrases you don’t take literally? E.g. “I don’t care!”

From God – What does Proverbs 25:11 say about the right word at the right time?

May 3, Fifth Sunday of Easter (page 183)

For Fun – What is the joy of obtaining a new outfit?

For Real – Why is your clothing such an important factor in how you feel about yourself?

From God – How can Philippians 4:4-9 help us when we need to unwind after a stressful day?

May 4, Monday (page 187)

For Fun – Who is your favourite mouse?

For Real – What is your favourite pastime?

From God: How does hearing or knowing others’ favourite things help us know them and how God made them?

May 7, Thursday (page 190)

For Fun – Why is it important to visit other people?

For Real – What risks does visiting involve?

From God – In Matthew 25:34-40 whom does Jesus say we treat right when we help the lowly?

Saturday, May 9

For Real – What do you do when faced with a situation too hard to figure out?

For Next Time – Why does *Finley's Tale* lack a natural ending, besides the fact that he ran out of paper?

For Never Being Alone – Who is your most memorable character in the book?