



The Giver

by Lois Lowry

A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant

Sample Pages

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eBook ISBN 978-1-934538-42-5

*Jonas, with strange pale eyes,
is apprehensive
about the approaching Ceremony of Twelve
when
the Committee of Elders
will announce to the well-ordered community
his Assignment,
his future.*

*Gabriel, the newchild with pale eyes
like Jonas,
sleeps fretfully,
knowing that all is not well.*

The Giver,
*with pale eyes
like Jonas,
awaits
crushed by the burden of the memories,
which Jonas must now hold. . .*



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Chapter Summaries

1

- It is almost December, and Jonas is beginning to be frightened, but he thinks he is using the wrong word. *Frightened* is the way he had felt a year ago when he had twice seen a jet flying overhead, something that is against the rules of the community.
 - Occasionally Jonas has ridden his bicycle with the other children to the riverbank to watch supplies being delivered by cargo planes, which always take off to the west, away from the community. The aircraft a year ago had been different.
 - A voice though the speakers had ordered all citizens to go into the nearest building and stay there. Obediently, Jonas had dropped his bicycle and had gone inside his family dwelling. The silence of the community had been frightening.
 - Within minutes the voice from the speakers had announced that a Pilot-in-Training had made a wrong turn. The pilot, the voice had said, would be released.
 - To be released from the community is a final decision, a terrible punishment, and a statement of failure. Children are scolded for using the term lightly.
 - Fear is not what Jonas is feeling about the approaching December.
 - Unlike his friend Asher, who talks too fast and mixes thing up, Jonas is careful about language. He remembers the morning Asher came to class late and stood to make the required public apology. He had been “distracted” when he stopped to watch salmon being separated at the hatchery. The Instructor had used Asher’s mistake as a language lesson.
 - Like all the Elevens, Jonas has waited a long time for this special December. Finally he decides that *apprehensive* is the word for what he is feeling.
-
- At the end of their evening meal, Jonas’s family begins the telling of feelings, a community ritual. Jonas’s sister, Lily, a Seven, speaks first.
 - Lily had felt angry that afternoon when her Childcare group was at a play area with a group of Sevens who were visiting from another community. They did not obey the rules, and one boy kept going to the front of the line. She was so angry that she had made a fist.
 - Lily admits that she has felt strange and stupid while visiting other communities. Father suggests that the child who broke the rules could have felt the same way. Lily is sorry for making the fist.
 - As a Nurturer, Jonas’s father is responsible for the physical and emotional needs of newchildren. He is concerned about a little male who isn’t growing as he should or sleeping soundly. The committee is talking about releasing him.
 - Release of newchildren is always sad because they haven’t had a chance to enjoy life, and they have done nothing wrong. Release of the elderly, which celebrates a well and fully lived life, is the only other occasion of release that is not a punishment.
 - Father is thinking of asking the committee for permission to bring the child home at night. Jonas has heard his father complain about the night-crew Nurturers, most of whom have not been given spouses because they lack the capacity to connect to others.
 - Mother agrees that the newchild may stay with them. Lily suggests that maybe they can keep him, but Mother reminds Lily of the rules—two children—one male, one female—to each family.
-
- Mother, who holds a prominent position at the Department of Justice, is worried about someone who has broken the rules and has been brought before her for a second time. She feels frustration, anger, and guilt that she has not made a difference in his life. A third transgression means he has to be released.
 - Jonas, Lily, and Father all comfort Mother.
 - Jonas confesses his apprehension about the coming December Ceremony of Twelve.
 - Mother asks Lily to leave and get into her bedclothes so she and Father can talk privately with Jonas. Lily obediently complies.

Vocabulary Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in story order. Some words may appear on more than one page)

Set One

Chapter 1—Chapter 4

(27 words)

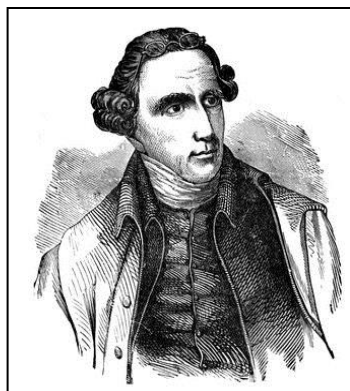
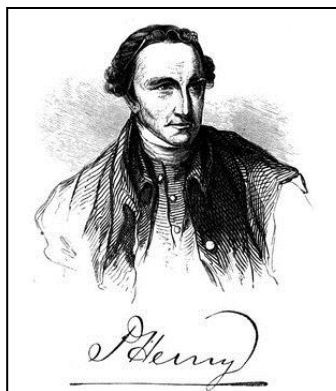
- intrigued** Aroused the interest or curiosity of by unusual, new, or otherwise fascinating or compelling qualities; appealed strongly to; captivated; engrossed; riveted. (p. 1)
- ironic** Contrary to what was expected or intended; contradictory; comical; humorous. (p. 2)
- grim** Stern; not open to appeasement or compromise; harsh; frightful; horrible; hideous. (p. 2)
- palpable** Clear; apparent; capable of being touched or felt; easily perceived; obvious. (p. 3)
- unison** The act or instance of speaking the same words simultaneously by two or more speakers; an instance of agreement; harmony; accord. (p. 4)
- apprehensive** Uneasy or fearful about something that might happen; uneasy; uncertain; worried. (p. 4)
- wheedle** To persuade or attempt to persuade by use of flattery or artful deception; charmed; enticed; coaxed. (p. 5)
- nurturing** Feeding and protecting; rearing, upbringing, training, education, etc.; helping to grow or develop; cultivating; (p. 7)
- prominent** Leading, important, or well-known; standing out so as to be seen easily; distinguished; celebrated. (p. 8)
- transgression** A violation of a law, a command, or a duty; to exceed the established bounds or limits; a sin; violation; disobedience. (p. 9)
- awed** Overwhelmed with a feeling of admiration, reverence, fear, etc.; amazed. (p. 10)
- adherence** The state of holding firmly or closely to; the property of sticking fast to, as by glue or suction; the act of carrying out a plan, scheme, or operation without deviation. (p. 12)
- fret** To feel or express worry, annoyance, discontent, or the like; to cause corrosion; to upset oneself; brood. (p. 14)
- aptitude** Talent; ability; an inherent ability for learning a certain thing; readiness or quickness in learning. (p. 15)
- chastise** To criticize severely; to punish, especially by corporal punishment; rebuke. (p. 20)
- petulantly** In a manner that shows sudden, impatient, irritation, especially over some small annoyance; irritably; impatiently. (p. 22)
- droning** Making a dull, continued, low, monotonous sound; humming; buzzing; speaking in a monotonous tone. (p. 22)
- hoarded** Hidden, as funds or supplies, stored, or carefully guarded for future use; cached; gathered. (p. 23)
- remorse** Deep and painful regret for wrongdoing; compunction; contrition. (p. 23)
- nondescript** Of no recognizable, definite, or particular type or kind; undistinguished; uninteresting; colorless; commonplace. (p. 24)
- mystified** Confused or puzzled; perplexed. (p. 24)
- reflective** Given to, marked by, or concerned with meditation or contemplation; thoughtful. (p. 25)
- tabulated** Put or arranged into a systematic or condensed form such as columns or rows; ordered; grouped; classified; charter; catalogued. (p. 28)
- serene** Calm, peaceful, or tranquil; undisturbed; at peace; untroubled. (p. 29)
- fragile** Delicate; easily broken, damaged, or destroyed; lacking physical or emotional strength; lacking substance; flimsy. (p. 30)
- primly** In a way that is formally precise or proper; stiffly neat. (p. 31)
- chortled** Expressed with a gleeful chuckle; laughed; cackled. (p. 33)

Dictionary Digs

Set One Chapter 1—Chapter 4

Use a dictionary to answer the following questions about selected words from Chapters 1 through 4 of Jonas's story. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. The word **droning** refers to (A) the type of insect, especially the male, (B) a monotonous, dull sound, (C) music that involves voices but no instruments.
- _____ 2. Which word can be substituted for **wheedle** in the following sentence without changing its meaning?
*Ralph managed to **wheedle** his father into a loan for a new car.*
 (A) charm, (B) badger, (C) entreat
- _____ 3. A **synonym** for **mystified** is (A) cognizant, (B) befuddled, (C) apparent.
- _____ 4. In which of the following illustrations does Patrick Henry have a **grim** look about him?
 (A) (B) (C)



- _____ 5. The word **aptitude** refers to a person's (A) attitude towards authority, (B) willingness to follow rules, (C) ability to learn a certain thing.
- _____ 6. An **antonym** of **nondescript** is (A) conspicuous, (B) serene, (C) undistinguished.
- _____ 7. Which of the following phrases is **not** a good example of the correct use of **fragile**?
 (A) a **fragile** excuse, (B) a **fragile** journey into the unknown, (C) a **fragile** ceramic bowl
- _____ 8. The **best** example of something that might cause a person to be **intrigued** is (A) the chance to invest in a new product that could sell millions, (B) accidentally reconnecting with an old friend from the past, (C) achieving a goal once thought to be unreachable.
- _____ 9. If *Janine tossed her head **petulantly***, she was probably (A) sad and disappointed, (B) happy and excited, (C) irritated and impatient.
- _____ 10. Which word can be substituted for **serene** in the following sentence so that it is changed to an **opposite** meaning?
*We stood on the cliff's edge and surveyed the **serene** sea that lay before us.*
 (A) tranquil, (B) turbulent, (C) placid
- _____ 11. Which of the following is **not** a correct definition of **nurturing**? (A) feeding, protecting, and encouraging, such as one's child, (B) supporting and directing during a period of development or learning, (C) working as part of a group to solve a common problem.
- _____ 12. A child who repeatedly *engages in **transgression*** has a habit of (A) breaking the rules, (B) wanting to be perfect, (C) joking around to get attention.
- _____ 13. A **synonym** for **chortled** is (A) clambered, (B) chuckled, (C) conserved.

Short Answer Questions

1

1. Why had seeing an aircraft flying over his community been a frightening experience for Jonas?
2. What had Jonas's friend Asher been required to do when he was late for class?
3. What was the ritual that Jonas's family followed at the conclusion of their evening meal?
4. What explanation did Jonas's father give to explain why the child visiting Lily's Childcare group of Sevens did not follow the rules?
5. Describe the work that Jonas's father did as a Nurturer.
6. Why was Jonas's father worried about the newchild he was nurturing?
7. Under what two conditions was release from the community not a punishment?
8. Why wouldn't Jonas's family be allowed to keep the troubled newchild that Father wanted to bring home to stay with the them at night?
9. What position did Jonas's mother hold?
10. What was the name of the December event that Jonas was worried about?

2

1. How many new children were in the group presented at the yearly December ceremonies?
2. What rule has Jonas's father broken?
3. What was one of the few rules that was not taken very seriously and was almost always broken in the community?
4. Explain how Lily had come into Jonas's family.
5. How were rules changed in the community?
6. Why was the Ceremony of Twelve the most important of all Ceremonies?
7. Explain why Jonas's father had expected to be given the Assignment as Nurturer at his own Ceremony of Twelve.
8. How did life change for Elevens after the Ceremony of Twelve?
9. What was Lily's comfort object and when did she get it?
10. Though Jonas's parents had reassured him about the event, why was the boy's mind still on the December Ceremony?

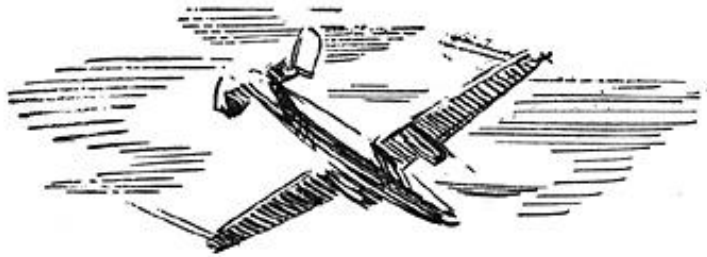
3

1. What did Jonas and the newchild that his father brought home have in common?
2. What kind of transportation did Jonas's father use?
3. What was the name of the newchild's comfort object?
4. Why did Mother discourage Lily when she expressed a wish to be a Birthmother?
5. When did children in the community begin their volunteer hours?
6. What was the newchild's name?
7. What public announcement, specifically directed at Jonas, had been made the month before?
8. Why were Jonas and Asher playing catch with an apple?
9. What had happened as Jonas watched the apple?
10. What kind of clothing did Jonas wear?

Chapter 1
Pages 1-10

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. The day the unidentified aircraft flew over the community, all citizens had been ordered over a speaker to go into the nearest building.



- _____ 2. Members of the community often used the word “released” as a joke.
- _____ 3. Whenever a student was late for school, he or she had to make a standard apology to the class.
- _____ 4. During the telling of feelings ritual that took place after the evening meal, each family member told of a feeling he or she had during the day.
- _____ 5. Jonas’s little sister was angry because a boy from another community didn’t obey the rules during a visit.
- _____ 6. People from different communities were not allowed to visit or have contact with each other.
- _____ 7. Jonas’s father was a Nurturer, which made him responsible for the physical and emotional needs of newchildren.
- _____ 8. The community rules allowed each family to have as many children as they could afford.
- _____ 9. Jonas’s mother held a prominent position at the Department of Justice.
- _____ 10. Jonas was happily looking forward to “The Ceremony of Twelve,” which would take place in December.

Chapter 2
Pages 11-19

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Were the community's newchildren named by their parents?
- _____ 2. Did families receive their newchildren at a public ceremony?
- _____ 3. Did children receive their bicycles when they were Nines?



- _____ 4. When a very important rule had to be changed, did it have to go through The Receiver?
- _____ 5. Was Jonas able to choose what profession he would pursue before he attended the Ceremony of Twelve?
- _____ 6. Had Jonas's father chosen to be a Nurturer?
- _____ 7. If a person did not like the assignment given to him by the Elders, could it be changed quickly by a committee?
- _____ 8. Did people in the community tend to lose track of their age after the Ceremony of Twelve?
- _____ 9. Would Jonas have a lot of time for playing after he received his assignment at the Ceremony of Twelve?
- _____ 10. Were children given a stuffed toy as a comfort object when they were born?

Chapter 3
Pages 20-25

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Almost every citizen in the community had (A) blond hair, (B) large ears, (C) dark eyes.
- _____ 2. Jonas and the newchild that his father brought home were alike in that they both (A) were short, (B) had light colored eyes, (C) were once orphans.
- _____ 3. What kind of transportation did Father have? (A) a bicycle, (B) a truck, (C) a motorcycle.
- _____ 4. The newchild's comfort object was called (A) hippo, (B) bear, (C) elephant.
- _____ 5. After they gave birth three times, Birthmothers were required to (A) leave the community, (B) work as Nurturers, (C) work as Laborers.
- _____ 6. When children were an Eight, they (A) started their assignment training, (B) started their volunteer hours, (C) left home for a six-month training camp.
- _____ 7. When children broke a rule, the deed was (A) corrected by their parents, (B) punished by an Elder, (C) announced to everyone by a Speaker.
- _____ 8. As Jonas looked at the apple that he and Asher were playing catch with, it seemed to (A) change in mid-air, (B) be alive, (C) have a strange odor.
- _____ 9. Because Jonas had taken the apple from the recreation area (A) his parents had to punish him, (B) an announcement was made over the speaker, (C) he was required to make a public apology.
- _____ 10. The newchild's name was (A) Lily, (B) Ashley, (C) Gabriel.



Whole Book Test

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. The Ceremony of Twelves was the time when (A) young people were allowed to leave the community if they wished, (B) assignments for lifelong professions were given, (C) every person over the age of nine was given a new bicycle.
- _____ 2. Which of the following was an important part of the community? (A) love, (B) color (C) rules.
- _____ 3. How were birthdays celebrated in the community? (A) in groups each December, (B) individually, (C) in the family unit.
- _____ 4. What family ritual took place after the afternoon meal? (A) Telling of Dreams, (B) Telling of Feelings, (C) Telling of Wishes.
- _____ 5. The family's morning ritual was (A) Telling of Dreams, (B) Telling of Feelings, (C) Telling of Wishes.
- _____ 6. Jonas's father was a Nurturer, which meant he (A) took care of plants, (B) taught in the university, (C) took care of babies.
- _____ 7. Jonas's mother held a prominent position at (A) the Department of Elders, (B) the Department of Justice, (C) The Department of Agriculture.
- _____ 8. How were couples in the community paired? (A) The Committee of Elders matched them. (B) Couples fell in love. (C) Parents made matches for their children.
- _____ 9. How many children were allowed in each family? (A) as many as the family could afford, (B) three, (C) two.
- _____ 10. How did children come into the community? (A) Each female gave birth to two. (B) They were born to specially chosen Birthmothers, (C) They were brought from Elsewhere.
- _____ 11. Which assignment was **not** considered desirable? (A) Recreation Director, (B) Caretaker of the Old, (C) Birthmother.



Think, Write, Create

Chapter Activities

Chapter 1

In Jonas's world, late students were required to stand before their class and make a public apology with an explanation for the tardiness. The class answered with a standard acceptance of the apology.

- What problem(s) are created by school tardiness? Do you think they are important enough to warrant making tardiness a punishable infraction? Why or why not?
- What are the tardiness rules at your school? Do you agree with them? Explain your position.
- Would you be willing to accept the apology/explanation procedure that was practiced at Jonas's school as a rule at your own school? Elaborate to explain your answer.

One definition of the word **ritual** is *a routine faithfully followed, often in a pretentious or elaborate manner*. At their morning meals, Jonas's family engaged in the telling of dreams. The telling of feelings was reserved for the evening meal.

- Are there any rituals that your family follows at meal times? For example, do you have particular food(s) on particular days of the week? Does each person sit at the same place every time?
- Does your family talk about anything in particular at mealtimes? Elaborate.
- What is your opinion of the family's ritual of telling of dreams and feelings? Would you enjoy being required to share these things with your family every morning and evening? Why or why not?

Jonas's father was a Nurturer and his mother held a prominent position at the Department of Justice.

- What duties were Jonas's parents required to perform in their respective jobs? What important decisions were they charged with making because of their professions?
- In our society, what job title would be attached to a person who does the same type of work as Jonas's father?
- How would the position that Jonas's mother held translate into our world? What name do you think would be given to the job?

Chapter 2

For the citizens of Jonas's society, age wasn't important after Twelve, and most lost track of how old they were as time passed.

- How is age always important in our society?
- Give examples of how a person's life is affected by age. (Driver's license at age 16, for example.) Do you think our rules and laws about age need improvement? Explain.
- How does our attitude toward a person's age compare with that of Jonas's society? Which do you think is better? Add details and examples to your answer.

In Jonas's world, parents and children were brought together through a structured set of rules.

- Explain how the family-building system worked in Jonas's community.
- In your opinion, was any part of the community's system a good idea? Explain your position.
- What part(s) of the plan would you characterize as "seriously flawed"?

Think, Write, Create

Whole Book Activities

The community required the morning ritual of dream-telling beginning with Threes. In one family session, both Lily and Jonas's mother related the frightening dreams they had experienced the night before. Jonas's father had had no dreams, but Jonas had dreamed vividly—a disturbing dream about Fiona that took place in the House of the Old. (see Chapter 5)

- What is oneirology?
 - Do some research to find information about what happens during dreaming. Does sleeping always involve dreaming?
 - Are people the only beings that dream? Add details to your answer.
 - In the community's carefully controlled environment, people still dreamed. Why do you think this was so?
 - Use the facts you have gathered about the community to form a theory as to why dream-telling was a required ritual. How did this activity fit into the creation of "sameness"?
 - Explain the irony in the fact that Jonas could have been eliminated as the new Receiver if one Elder had had a *dream* of uncertainty. How was this rule ironic when viewed along side the committee's meticulous, fact-driven control over the community?
 - What is the difference between a "waking" dream—daydream, desires, plans—and a "sleeping" dream? Do you suppose the people of the community experienced both types? Support your answer with facts from the story.
-

The author gives some insight into a child's experience growing up within the community by mentioning ball games, races, riding bicycles, and building toy vehicles or bridges with construction sets. School attendance was mandatory. As Eights, children were required to begin their volunteer hours, which allowed them to explore their interests.

- Think of your favorite games. Which ones would probably be allowed in the community? Which one would most likely be banned? Explain the rationale behind your choices.
 - Do you think *requiring* young people to work as volunteers, beginning at the age of eight, would be a good idea for us? Why or why not?
 - Many young people in our society work as volunteers by *choice*. Explain why our system is *better than* or *inferior to* that of the community.
 - A law requiring children to attend school was enacted in Massachusetts in 1647—long before there was a United States. Today, each state sets individual age standards for compulsory attendance, beginning at the ages of five to eight and continuing through the ages of sixteen to eighteen.
 - (1) Explain how *compulsory* education is an important factor for a successful society.
 - (2) What are the consequences in those countries that do not require all their children, including girls, to be educated?
 - (3) Do you think all U.S. youngsters should be required to graduate from high school? Should college be free for those who wish to attend? Add details to your answers.
 - (4) Explain why the community's system of combining education and profession at the age of twelve worked. Do you think this method would be successful for us? Add examples to explain your answer.
 - What important decisions do you and your family have to make that Jonas and his parents did not face? What advantages can you find for both systems? Which do you think creates a better foundation for a happy, productive life? Explain your position.
-

Comfort Collections

The community's Newchildren were given comfort objects when they were born. When each child became an Eight, such things were no longer necessary, and the object was taken away.

As infants, most children in our society willingly and firmly attach themselves to toys or objects, such as blankets. In many cases, the relationship lasts well past the age of eight.

We tend to carry the idea of comfort objects with us as we get older and grow into adulthood, although we prefer to think of them as "prized possessions" for the sake of perceived maturity. At times, some of us manage to surround ourselves with mountains of cluttered comfort.

Use your power of observation to gather data about humans and comfort objects. Enter your findings in the spaces below. When you have finished write a composition about **Comfort Collections**. Include photos, if possible.

As a child, what was your comfort object? What happened to it? Do you still have it?



As you got older, how did your comfort objects change in type, number, etc? How are they displayed or stored?



Think of several adults that you know well. What are their comfort objects? Are they proudly displayed? Are they used on a regular basis? Are they a mountain of clutter?



What conclusion(s) can you reach about getting older and the need for comfort objects?

