

"A WRINKLE IN TIME"

BY:

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BOOK SUMMARY:

Meg Murry's father has been gone for more than a year, and no one knows where he is. Meg takes out her anxiety at school, while at home she is comforted by her younger brother, Charles Wallace. When Mrs. Whatsit shows up, things begin to change. Soon, Meg, Charles Wallace, and their new friend Calvin are on their way to find and save Mr. Murry. Their unusual mode of travel is called tessering and is facilitated by Mrs. Whatsit, Mrs. Who, and Mrs. Which—three very extraordinary characters. From a mountain peak on the planet of Uriel, the children see the Dark Thing and learn that it is this evil which is holding their father captive. After a brief visit to the Happy Medium on another planet, the three women take the children to Camazotz to rescue their father. There, they encounter evil face to face in the form of IT. Although they find Mr. Murry, Charles Wallace is lost to IT. In a desperate effort to escape, Mr. Murry tesserers Meg and Calvin away from Camazotz. Meg barely survives the journey, but is saved by the warmth of Aunt Beast on the planet Ixchel. However, once she recovers, she returns to face IT and rescue her little brother. Meg finally succeeds using both her impatient nature and her powerful love—the one thing that IT cannot fight.¹

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:

“A Wrinkle in Time” is a good book to use when you get to the science fiction and fantasy section in your reading book. There are parts in it where you will need to discuss with your students as you will with most books. Some of the themes are *Love can win over evil; You have to fight evil; The power of love; The power of evil; Acceptance; Differences are good; Faith; Using your faults to help you, etc.* Some of the topics presented can be taken from a Decision Theology perspective and this will have to be brought up in class.

Overall, I think handled the right way, this could be an enjoyable book for you and your students.

ABOUT THE UNIT:

There is a worksheet containing vocabulary words, questions and a journal topic for each chapter. At the end there are five discussion questions and a list of possible activities that can be used along the way. This is by no means the best or only way to use this book, but it may give you and your students a starting point.

¹Scholastic Literature Guide, pg. 3

Chapter 1: "Mrs. Whatsit"

Vocabulary:

wraithlike (p.3)

delinquent (p.4)

luxuriously (p.5)

vulnerable (p.7)

preliminaries (p.9)

prodigious (p.10)

exclusive (p. 10, 13)

indignantly (p.16)

agility (p.19)

Questions:

- 1) What is the mood on the first two pages of the story?
- 2) How does Meg view herself?
- 3) What do others think of Meg?
- 4) What is uncanny about Charles Wallace?
- 5) Who shows up at the Murry house in the middle of the night?
- 6) Why isn't Mrs. Murry surprised when Mrs. Whatsit showed up at the house?
- 7) What supposed Mrs. Murry at the end of Chapter 1?

Journal Entry 1:

Before you start to read "A Wrinkle in Time", look at the cover of the book, read the title and make a prediction on what ~~they~~ think the story will be about.

you

Chapter 2: "Mrs. Who"

Vocabulary:

unceremoniously (p.21)

avid (p.24)

belligerent (p.25)

antagonistic (p.25)

inadvertently (p.28)

disillusion (p.30)

compulsion (p.31)

preconditioned (p.31)

dilapidated (p.32)

Questions:

- 1) How would you describe Meg's attitude in school?
- 2) Where do Meg and Charles Wallace go after school?
- 3) Who did they meet along the way?
- 4) Why do Charles Wallace and Calvin get along right away?
- 5) What is a "sport"?
- 6) Who do they find at Mrs. Whatsit's house?

Journal Entry 2:

What do you think a tesseract is? Explain your reasoning. What happens in a tesseract?

Chapter 3 "Mrs. Which"

Vocabulary:

decipher (p.41)

essence (p.44)

dubiously (p.44)

morass (p. 47)

tangible (p.48)

Questions:

- 1) Why does no one know where Mr. Murry is?
- 2) What do you think it means when Mrs. Murry says that Charles is different? How is he different?
- 3) Why is Mrs. Murry upset?
- 4) Who appears to the children outside?
- 5) Who is the last of Mrs. Whatsit's friends to appear?

Journal Entry 3:

Explain the phrase: "I'll just have to accept it without understanding it." How does this apply especially to us as Christians?

Chapter 4: "The Black Thing"

Vocabulary:

corporeal (p.54)

verbalize (p.57)

ephemeral (p.58)

metamorphose (p.61)

infinity (p.62)

plateau (p.62)

materialize (p.69)

Questions:

- 1) Where did the three Mrs.'s take Meg, Charles and Calvin?
- 2) Describe what this place looks like.
- 3) Why does Mrs. Who quote all the time?
- 4) What does it mean to "tesser" or to "wrinkle"?
- 5) Why do the three Mrs.'s tesser?
- 6) How do you know the search for Mr. Murry will be difficult?
- 7) Why did Mrs. Whatsit say, "Not to me, Calvin. Never to me. Stand up." after she metamorphosed?
- 8) What did the children see that frightened them?

Journal Entry 4:

Describe and draw a picture of Mrs. Whatsit after she metamorphoses.

Chapter 5: "The Tesseract"

Vocabulary:

illuminating (p. 75)

dissolution (p.76)

substantial (p.77)

turban (p.81)

reverberated (p.82)

Questions:

- 1) Where did Mrs. Which say Meg's father is?
- 2) Where do the children have to go to help Mr. Murry?
- 3) Explain the best you can what the fifth dimension is.
- 4) How old is Mrs. Whatsit? Is that young or old for her?
- 5) How do Meg's experiences with math help her understand what is going on?
- 6) Why won't Mrs. Murry be worried about Meg and Charles Wallace?
- 7) What did the Happy Medium show them?
- 8) How does Meg feel about her father? How do you know this?
- 9) Where was the Dark Thing? How long had it been there? What affect does it have on the place?

Journal Entry 5:

Calvin says the Dark Thing is evil. What do you think the Dark Thing is? Why? Define what you think evil is.

Chapter 6: "The Happy Medium"

Vocabulary:

- myopic (p.92)
- precipitously (p.95)
- propitious (p.96)
- talisman (p.96)
- resilience (p. 96)
- aberration (p.101)

Questions:

- 1) What did the Medium show that could fight the darkness?
- 2) Why did Mrs. Whatsit give up her life as a star?
- 3) Why did Meg reach out and take hold of Calvin's hand?
- 4) What gifts did Mrs. Whatsit give the children?
- 5) What does Mrs. Who give them each?
- 6) What does Mrs. Which give them?
- 7) Describe what life is like on Camazotz.
- 8) What is the CENTRAL Central Intelligence?
- 9) What feeling do you have at the end of the chapter?

Journal Entry 6:

Predict what you think the children will find at CENTRAL Central Intelligence. Who or what might be there?

Chapter 7: "The Man with Red Eyes"

Vocabulary:

nondescript (p.110)

bravado (p.112)

hypnotize (p.115)

Questions:

- 1) Why didn't Meg and Calvin let Charles Wallace go in alone?
- 2) What could happen to people who were different on Camazotz? What do you think this is?
- 3) Who did the children meet on the inside that scared them? Describe this man. (p.114)
- 4) What would happen if you looked into this man's eyes?
- 5) How did Meg keep Charles from staying under the man's spell the first time?
- 6) What were Charles Wallace's reasons for opening his mind to IT a second time?
- 7) Describe how Charles changed after he did this.

Journal Entry 7:

Find 5 examples of fantasy and five examples of reality either in this chapter or a previous chapter. Explain why you put certain things under fantasy or reality.

Chapter 8: "The Transparent Column"

Vocabulary:

hysterical (p.127)

marionette (p. 132)

pedantic (p.133)

annihilate (p.133)

Questions:

- 1) Who did Charles Wallace say was the real enemy? Why did he think that?
- 2) What was Meg's response to this?
- 3) How did Calvin attempt to free Charles Wallace from IT's spell? Did it work?
- 4) How was Charles Wallace able to open the wall?
- 5) How do you feel about Charles Wallace's statement, "Differences create problems."?
- 6) What did Meg mean when she said, "Maybe if you aren't unhappy sometimes, you don't know how to be happy."?
- 7) Whom did they see inside the transparent column?

Journal Entry 8:

Copy chart in journal and fill in how life on earth is different than on Camazotz..

CAMAZOTZ

EARTH

1. All the houses are square and gray.
2. All the plants are dull.
3. Everyone is afraid.
4. People don't make any of their own decisions.
5. People follow a special procedure for all they do
6. Everyone eats synthetic food.
7. No one suffers illness.
8. IT controls everything.

Chapter 9: "It"

Vocabulary:

intoning (p.151)

inexorable (p.151)

omnipotent (p.151)

miasma (p.152)

Questions:

- 1) How does Calvin reach Charles Wallace?
- 2) How do Mrs. Who's glasses help Meg?
- 3) What is the result of Mr. Murry's talking to Charles Wallace?
- 4) Where does Charles Wallace take Meg, Calvin and Mr. Murry?
- 5) What is IT?
- 6) How does Mr. Murry try to help Meg fight against IT?
- 7) Why was the periodic table of elements not able to work?
- 8) What is Mr. Murry forced to do?

Journal Entry 9:

What do you think will happen to Mr. Murry, Meg and Calvin? Will they get back to Camazotz to fight IT and save Charles Wallace?

Chapter 10: "Absolute Zero"

Vocabulary:

atrophied (p.158)

disintegration (p.160)

Questions:

- 1) What is wrong with Meg?
- 2) What experiment was Meg's father and his fellow workers trying to perform?
- 3) What went wrong with this experiment? Why?
- 4) Why is Meg so angry when she comes to and sees where she is?
- 5) What appeared to them there?
- 6) What did these creatures do?

Journal Entry 10:

How would you have reacted if you were Meg and found out that your father left behind your little brother or sister.

Chapter 11: "Aunt Beast"

Vocabulary:

trepidation (p.170)

pungent (p.172)

opaque (p.174)

despondency (p.181)

Questions:

- 1) How did the creatures treat their unexpected visitors?
- 2) Why does Meg realize that the beasts are good?
- 3) Why is Meg unable to explain light to Aunt Beast?
- 4) Who appears at the end of the chapter?

Journal Entry 11:

How would you describe seeing to someone who has never been able to see anything? What kinds of words could you use and what kinds could you not use? Give examples and tell what you may do.

Chapter 12: "The Foolish and the Weak"

Vocabulary:

indignation (p.190)

reiterating (p.198)

miasma (p.199)

Questions:

- 1) Explain what you think Mrs. Whatsit meant by, "We want nothing from you that you do without grace, or that you do without understanding."?
- 2) Why is Meg the one that has to return to Camazotz to rescue Charles Wallace?
- 3) How does Mrs. Whatsit compare life to a sonnet?
- 4) What was it that Meg had that IT did not?
- 5) How is Meg's love evident in her actions?
- 6) How does the story end?

Journal Entry 12:

Answer the following questions:

1. What did you like best about this story?
2. What did you like least about this story?
3. What will you remember about "A Wrinkle in Time"?

- Discussion Questions:

1. What was the most important part of the story to you? Why?
2. Whom do you think is the strongest character in this story? Why?
3. Which character do you think you are most like in the story? Why?
4. What are the main themes of this book?
5. How could we take this book and apply it to our lives as Christians?

ACTIVITIES:

1) *Tessering*

- Provide students with a sheet of typing paper and a ruler. Ask them to:
 - place a dot 2 inches from the left side and 1 inch from the top of the paper
 - place a dot 2 inches from the left side of the paper and 1 inch from the bottom
 - draw a line connecting the two dots and fold the paper under along this line
 - place a dot 2 inches from the right side and 1 inch from the top of the paper
 - place a dot 2 inches from the right side and 1 inch from the bottom of the paper
 - draw a line connecting these two dots
 - make a “wrinkle” by bringing the line on the left side to the line on the right side and creasing the paper
- ask students to explain what the wrinkle in the paper does to the lines
- ask students to think about how this paper could relate to a wrinkle in time. Jot down ideas on paper.

2) *Debate*

Divide students into two groups and have them debate opposite sides of the following:

-“The world would be better if everyone was alike.”

3) Make a list of five events ^{you} they feel were the most important to the story. Have the students then illustrate each event in a colorful way. The lists and illustrations should be somewhat different. Have them compare their ideas to the rest of the classes.

4) Madeleine L'Engle needs help imagining a new world for her latest book. Have the students write a brief description of the world, and then draw a picture of it and what the inhabitants and vegetation, etc, may look like.

5) *The Sonnet*

Mrs. Whatsit compares the children's lives to a sonnet in Chapter 12.

A sonnet is:

- a very strict form of poetry
- a poem which has 14 lines
- written in iambic pentameter
- ended in every line by a rigid rhyme pattern

Have the students write a sonnet about the story.

6) *Character Sheet:*

Have the students keep a record of the different characters in the story using the following page.

Or-

Have the students choose two characters and produce "Character Mug Sheets" on them. These will list any information the book has on he or she, and the students personal thoughts about the character.

Character Chart: Complete the entire chart below.

Character	Human or Alien	Description	Good or Evil
Meg			
Charles Wallace			
Calvin			
Mr. Murry			
Mrs. Murry			
Mrs. Whatsit			
Mrs. Which			
Mrs. Who			
The Black Thing			
Happy Medium			
The Man with Red Eyes			
Aunt Beast			
It			