

Callie's Rules, by Naomi Zucker

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Rules

1. In Chapter 1, Callie turns her list of things she's learned into a list she calls Callie's Rules. What do her rules tell you about Callie?
2. In Chapter 17, Mrs. Thigpen tells Callie that it's good "not to follow blindly when others tell you what to do." Can you find any examples of characters in the book who are blindly following others?
3. Sometimes Callie decides not to follow rules that she thinks are stupid. Find some examples in the book and decide for yourself whether what Callie did was right or wrong.
4. Mrs. Thigpen also says that some rules are neither right nor wrong, but simply rules that we have to follow. Do you agree or disagree with Mrs. Thigpen? Give some examples.
5. When the town council passes some rules that Callie thinks are wrong, she finds a way to respond to the rules without breaking them. Do you think she did the right thing? What else could she have done?

Fears

1. Callie is sometimes afraid of what other people think of her. Can you find examples? Is it a good thing or bad to worry about other people's opinions of you?
2. Why does Alyce choose Valeri as a friend over Callie? What is Alyce afraid of?
3. Most people have something they are afraid of, even if they don't show it. What do you think Mrs. Van Dine might be afraid of? What is the town council afraid of?
4. What does Callie's play say about fear? What does it tell you about Callie?
5. At the end of the book, how has Callie faced some of her fears?

Free Speech

1. Mrs. Van Dine says she's worried about the safety of children's minds. What kinds of ideas do you think children need to be protected from? Should children be allowed to learn about what Mrs. Van Dine calls "pagan superstitions," "devil-worshipping rituals"? Would learning about these things harm children?
2. Callie's mother wants to encourage kids to let their imaginations run free. Is she right? Can kids' imaginations lead them into trouble?
3. Is Callie's petition an example of free speech? Was the town council right not to allow her to submit it?
4. Mr. Nolan said he couldn't allow Jack to start a Young Democrats club at school because then the school would have to allow every other political club. Was he right to do this?
5. What is Callie's play saying about free speech? Think about your answers to all the other free speech questions and decide whether you agree with Callie.