

## Discussion Questions

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### **LISTENING TO THE RAIN**

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### **About the Book**

During her freshman year of high school, Ally Griffin is determined to find her thing, a talent that will let her gain praise and recognition. Her cousins, Billy and James, have found theirs in sports and music, but Ally has yet to discover something that will make people cheer just for her.

At her best friend's suggestion, Ally tries ballet. When that doesn't turn out the way she hopes, she signs up to sing in the school talent show. Thanks to support from James, Ally's performance goes well, and she thinks she has found her thing at last.

But when James gets into an accident, Ally's whole world is turned upside down. As she tries to be there for her cousin, Ally wrestles with why God allows bad things to happen and whether she should keep doing her thing at all.

TITLE: Listening to the Rain

Discussion:

Question 1: Why does Ally have so much trouble finding her thing?

Answer 1: She doesn't stick with one thing long enough to be good at it, and she is too focused on people's reactions, rather than what God wants and she enjoys.

Question 2: One of Ally's favorite parts of the day is when she and her family pray together. Why do you think this is so special to her?

Answer 2: Praying with those you love helps you feel connected to them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Also, praying with someone older or who has been a Christian longer than you can help you learn to relate to God in new ways.

Question 3: Ally's parents and brother died in a car accident when she was a baby. Does she feel like she missed out on a lot because of that? Why or why not?

Answer 3: No, she doesn't. Ally would have liked to know her parents and brother, but she still has a loving family. A family does not have to be parents with their biological children. A family is a group of people who love and are there for each other.

Question 4: Ally experiences stage fright when it is her turn to perform in the talent show. How did she deal with her stage fright the second time she went on stage, and what other strategies could she have used?

Answer 4: Ally deals with her stage fright by looking at James and singing for him until she gets more comfortable. She could have also recognized that the opinions of the people in the audience don't matter as much as God's opinion of her and how she feels about herself. In addition to that, she could have taken deep breaths and tried to channel her nervous energy into enthusiasm for her performance.

Question 5: Do Ally's reasons for asking Lee to let her sing in church the first time honor God? Why or why not?

Answer 5: No, Ally's reasons don't honor God. She wants to bring recognition and praise to herself, rather than Him.

Question 6: While Ally is waiting for James to wake up after his accident, she prays over and over for God to heal him. After a while, she starts to doubt that He is listening. How can you keep praying even when you feel discouraged?

Answer 6: You have to remember that God is always faithful. No matter how you are feeling, remind yourself that He is with you, and He always hears your prayers.

Question 7: After James becomes deaf, Ally struggles to understand why God allowed it to happen. How do you trust God when bad things happen in your life?

Answer 7: You have to remember that God never promised that He would deliver you from all of life's storms. He promised that He will be with you no matter what and that He will work all things for the good of those who love Him.

Question 8: Ally and her family face challenges communicating after James becomes deaf. What are some methods they use to overcome these challenges?

Answer 8: They make sure James is looking at them before speaking, repeat things when needed, and write what they want to say on paper or a white board. Eventually, they learn American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with him more easily.

Question 9: How is Ally's reason for singing in church at the end of the book different than when she did it the first time?

Answer 9 At the end of the book, Ally is focused on singing for the Lord and bringing Him glory, rather than herself.

Question 10: What good things does God bring out of James becoming deaf?

Answer 10: God uses James becoming deaf to teach Ally to use her talents for Him, rather than herself. He also leads James to become a pastor for the deaf, Missy to become an interpreter, and Ally to become an audiologist.

