

Discussion Questions

1. Though Dr. Kramer may have started his work with pure intentions, it seems somewhere he crossed the line in his quest to eradicate disease. Do you think he recognized his step onto a slippery moral slope? Is this line easily crossed without realizing it, or must this step be a conscious choice? Can you cite similar examples in today's world?
2. Eugenicists ranked people according to bloodlines. Today, society commonly ranks people according to physical beauty, skill, and intelligence. How do you think God measures us? Read Exodus 4:10-12 and 1 Samuel 16:7. What do those verses say about God's criteria?
3. Kristine, having learned of Nazi plans to eliminate children with disabilities, begs Rachel to save her daughter, Amelie. What do you think of Kristine's choice? How would you act if placed in her position? How would you have responded in Rachel's position?
4. Rachel struggles with feelings of entitlement and superiority, an indoctrinated belief that her life is of more importance and inherent value than the lives of others. Before she can change, she needs to acknowledge that this is not true. What are a few defining moments in Rachel's transformation?
5. It is human nature to compare our worth to others'. Rachel was taught to believe that she is superior to others, while

Lea wrestles with feelings of insecurity and inferiority. Did you identify with either woman's struggle? How can we change our thinking and actions to see our own worth—and others'—clearly?

6. In chapter 29, when Amelie first arrives, Oma demands that Rachel, rather than Lea, care for Amelie, even though she knows how much Lea longs to help the little girl. Have you ever had to be severe with someone, knowing that in the long run it would be better for them? Or have you been in Lea's situation? In either case, how did you handle it?
7. Friederich places himself in harm's way because he can no longer participate in shedding innocent blood. Have you ever found yourself forced to compromise your beliefs, but knew of no way to withdraw without suffering hurt or persecution of some kind, either for yourself or those you love? What did you do?
8. In chapter 19, Lea says to Oma, "I'm almost afraid to be happy, especially in the midst of such madness and uncertainty—as though it might be wrong. As though *I'm* wrong." Have you ever felt guilty about being joyful amid a time of great suffering? How did you overcome this feeling of guilt?
9. Rachel is gifted and trained in theatre. Lea is gifted and trained in music. Each uses her gifts and training for higher purposes than herself. Do you recognize the natural internal and external gifts God has blessed you with and the way in which He has called you to use them at this time? If so, please describe. If not, how might you unearth these gifts?
10. During the church service Jason attends, Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "Grace is costly—it took the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, to achieve that grace. It requires just as

much from each of us. But we've come to practice cheap grace—grace that appears as a godly form but costs us nothing.” How does this fit or conflict with your view of grace? What effect does the concept of “costly grace” have on Jason?

11. What obstacles did Rachel have to overcome before she could accept the truth of Jesus Christ? What were the obstacles for Rivka? Why do you think it took them years before making such a decision?
12. Which character did you most identify with? In what ways are you similar? In what ways do you differ?
13. Despite the stringent Nazi laws confining him, Curate Bauer helps Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants at risk. He does not differentiate between those in need—an unpopular stance for the German people, including those in the Passion Village. Do you ever struggle to put aside differences with others to reach a common goal?
14. In chapter 53, Curate Bauer tells Rachel, “Sometimes taking up our cross is doing the thing in front of us, not the glamorous, high-risk thing afar off.” How might this be applicable in your own life?
15. How does saving Amelie act as a catalyst for changes in Kristine? In Rachel? In Jason? In Lea?