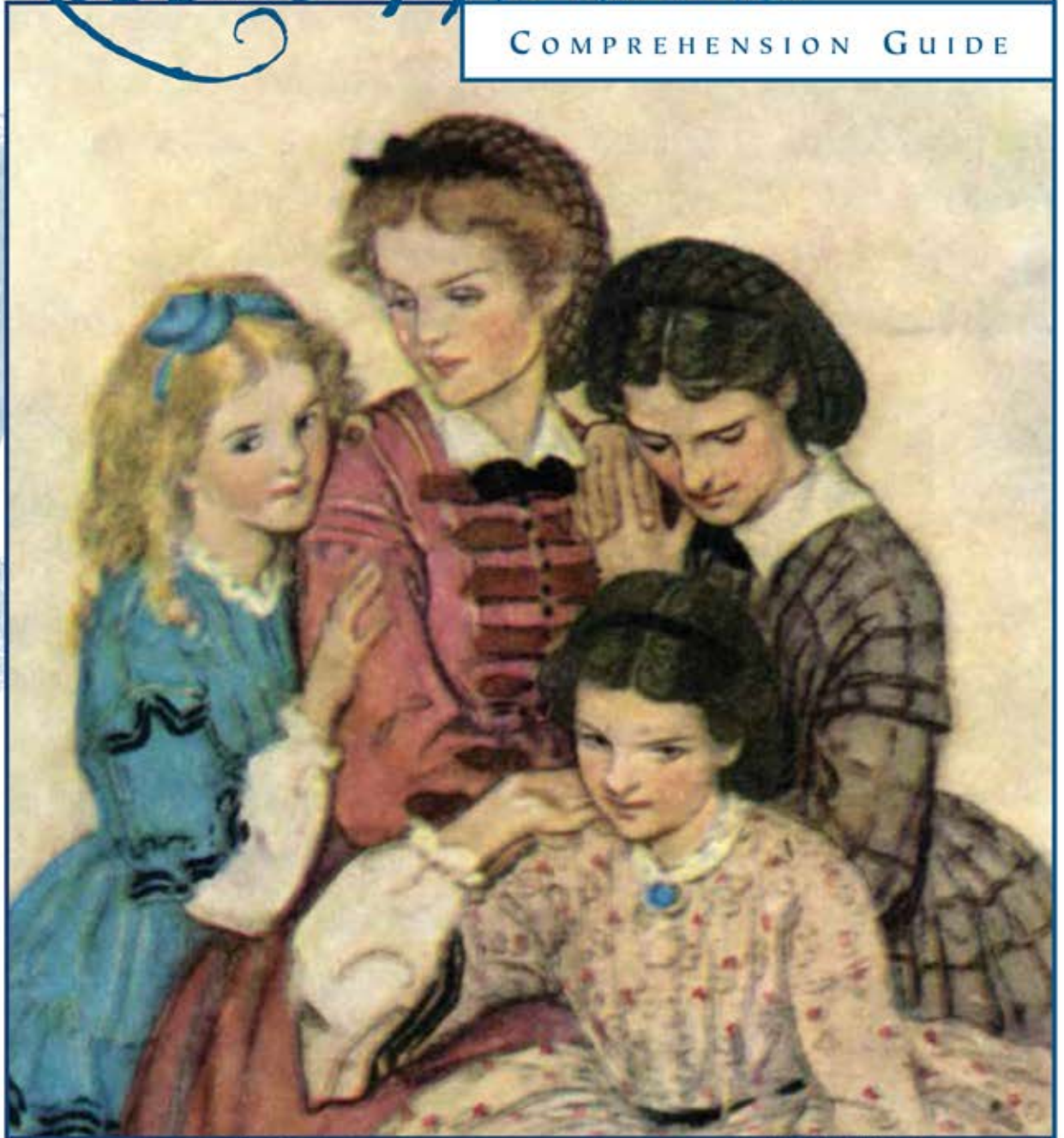


Little Women

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



LITTLE WOMEN
Part 1: Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy

Comprehension Guide
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LITTLE WOMEN

How to use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand, and enjoy the first part of *Little Women*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a book? Certainly, it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training, he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will be teaching children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in a classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education we recommend reading *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* or *The Case for Classical Christian Education*, both by Douglas Wilson.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows: The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic Biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, nonfiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. The students' answers should be in complete sentences, and they should restate the question in their answer.

Example:

Question: What did Hannah give to the girls as a treat?

Answer: Hannah gave the girls coffee as a treat.

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely, and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write. After the grammar stage, students enter the dialectic stage, where they develop an interest in logic, analysis and critical thinking. *Little Women* is a good book to start transitioning students into this stage. Please note that the projects in this guide are only suggestions to help add to the enjoyment of reading this book. Take time before beginning this guide to identify which projects and even what portions of the worksheets you intend for them to complete. For example, inspired by Amy March's horrible vocabulary, there are vocabulary lists throughout the guide. You may decide you do not want to require your students to look up all of these words. Or if a group of children are working through *Little Women* in a book group, you may choose to skip or combine worksheets to keep the group moving at a good pace.

You may wonder how to grade the student's work in this guide. Keep it simple. Unless otherwise indicated you should assume that each question is worth ten points.

See page 85 to learn how you can receive comprehension questions and projects for the second part of Little Women for FREE!

LITTLE WOMEN

Chapter One

1. Copy the first line of *Little Women* and commit it to memory. Try to capture the feeling when you say it.

2. What was going on in America during this time?

3. Why didn't they have a Father?

4. Describe the room they were in.

5. Who was "Little Tranquility" and why did the name suit her so well?

6. Where was Marmee before she came home and what did she have with her?

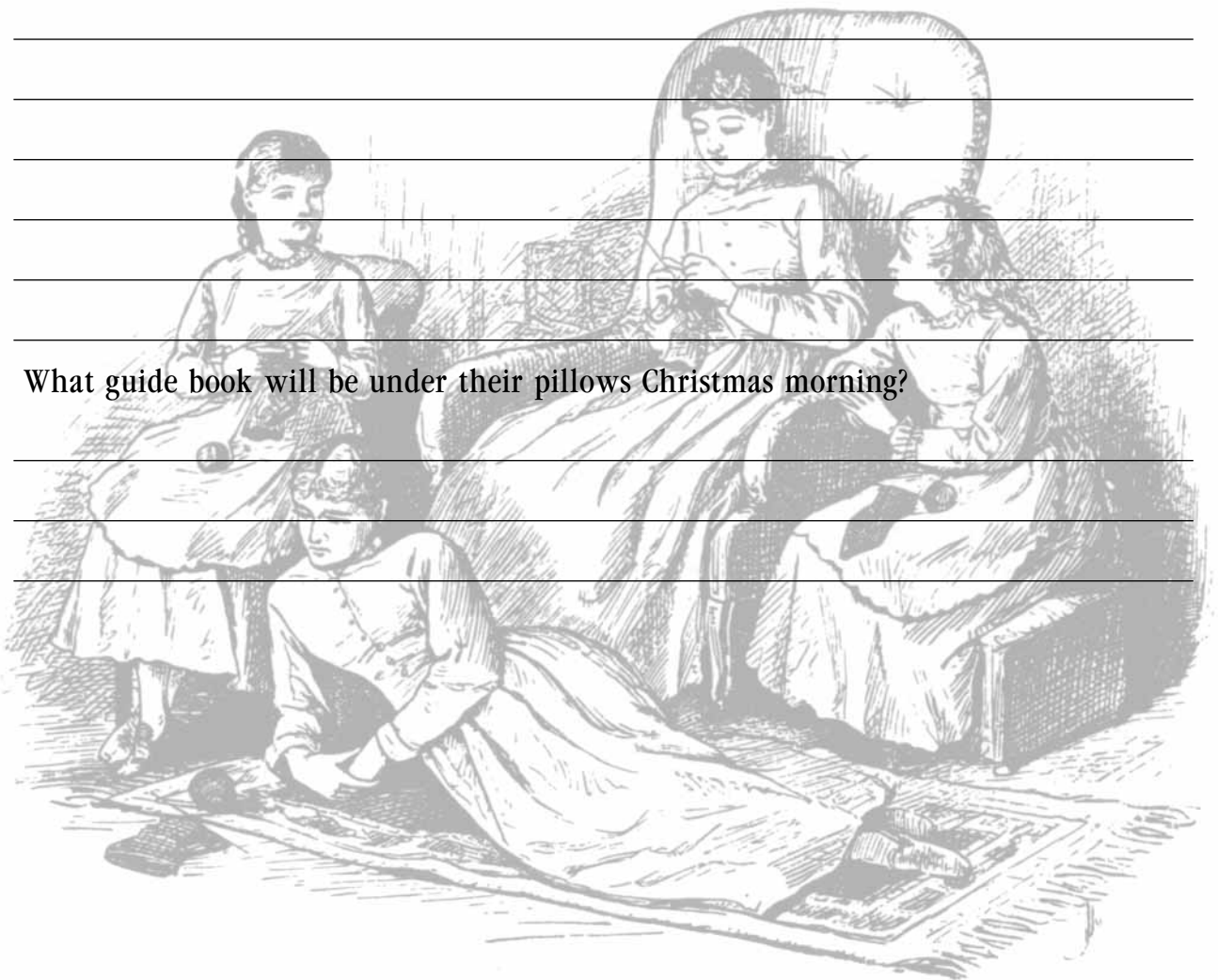
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Chapter One, Page 2

7. Who called them “Little Women” and when were they called this?

8. Copy the words of encouragement and wisdom Marmee gave her daughters after they read the letter.

9. What guide book will be under their pillows Christmas morning?



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Project—Bundles

It would be very helpful in understanding the themes and references in Little Women if you take time now to read Pilgrim's Progress or Dangerous Journey (an excellent retelling of Pilgrim's Progress for younger audiences).

Then act out the book like the girls did:

Mrs. March broke the silence that followed Jo's words, by saying in her cheery voice, "Do you remember how you used to play *Pilgrim's Progress* when you were little things? Nothing delighted you more than to have me tie my piece-bags on your backs for burdens, give you hats and sticks and rolls of paper, and let you travel through the house from the cellar, which was the City of Destruction, up, up, to the housetop, where you had all the lovely things you could collect to make a Celestial City."

"What fun it was, especially going by the lions, fighting Apollyon, and passing through the valley where the hobgoblins were," said Jo.

"I liked the place where the bundles fell off and tumbled downstairs," said Meg.



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Project—Biscuits or Hardtack

While the March girls and Hannah were making biscuits, the soldiers in the U.S. Army would be making and eating hardtack. Choose from the recipes below to get a “taste” of the story.

Biscuit Ingredients

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more
for dusting

1 tbs. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

2 tbs. vegetable shortening, cut into
1/2” squares

8 tbs. (1 stick) cold unsalted butter,
cut into 1/8” slices

1-1/4 cups low fat buttermilk

Directions

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.

Add shortening to flour mixture and break up the chunks with fingertips into small, pea-sized pieces. Working in batches, add butter flattening each slice with floured fingertips into nickel-sized pieces. Continue until all butter is incorporated.

Add buttermilk and blend quickly with a fork until a rough dough is formed. Transfer dough to a floured working surface. Knead the dough lightly until it is smooth. Pat the dough out to a thickness of about 1/2 inch. Cut into 1-1/2 inch rounds with a floured biscuit cutter, dip-ping cutter back into flour after each cut. Place on a ungreased baking sheet and bake at 450 degrees for 12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Hardtack Ingredients

3 cups white flour

3 tbs. salt

1 cup water

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, mix flour and salt. Add water and stir until it thick-ens into dough. Knead dough in the bowl, adding more flour if necessary to make it very dry. Roll dough into rectangle. Cut dough into squares. Punch 16 holes through each piece. Place squares on ungreased bak-ing sheets. Bake 30 minutes until lightly browned. Let cool before storing in a closed container.

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Chapter Two

Use a dictionary to define the following words:

agitation

gilded

lattice

sire

anon

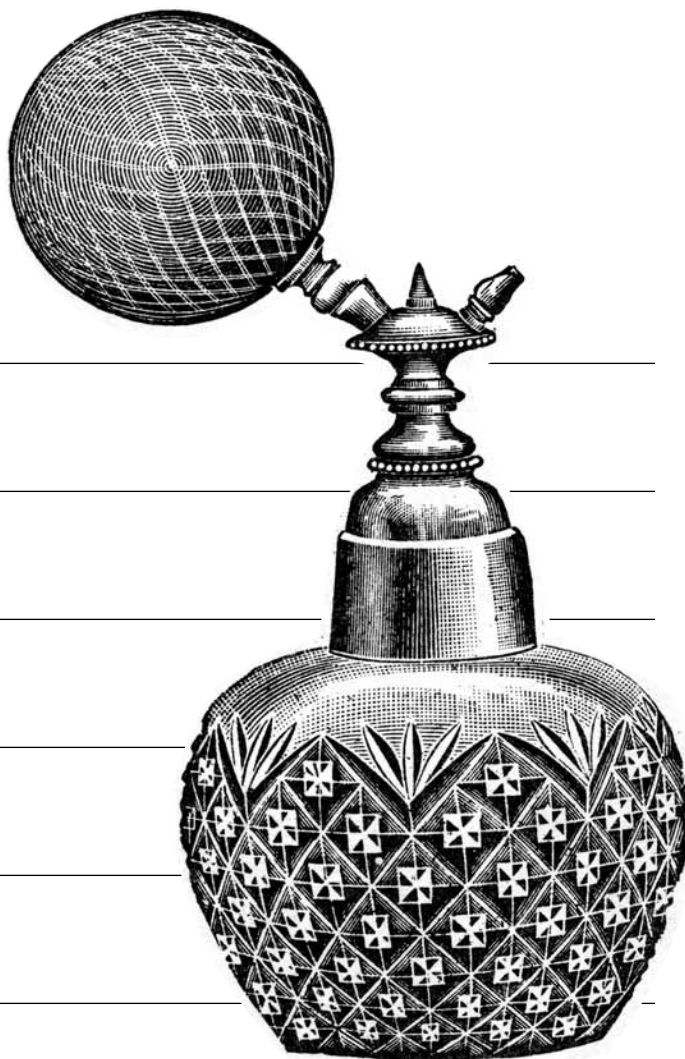
propriety

gesticulate

frolic

1. What book did the girls get for Christmas? What color book did each girl receive?

2. Who was Hannah?



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Chapter Two, Page 2

3. What did Beth put on Marmee's handkerchiefs? What were the responses to her work?

4. How did Amy try to show she wasn't going to be selfish?

5. Who were the people they helped?

6. What were the events that took up their Christmas Day?

7. What were Jo's prize theater possessions?

8. What did the March family have for dinner and where did they get it?

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Project—Christmas Feast

White Cake/Buttercream Icing

Ingredients

2-1/2 cups cake flour
2-1/2 tsp. baking powder
2/3 cup butter
1-1/2 cups sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. almond extract
2/3 cup milk
4 egg whites
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. cream of tartar

Buttercream icing:

6 tbs. softened butter
4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tbs. vanilla

Directions

Adjust oven racks to the middle position and preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans.

In a medium bowl, sift together flour and baking powder. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter until light. Add sugar and continue to beat until fluffy.

Mix in vanilla and almond extract. Add 1/2 of flour mixture to butter mixture. Beat well to combine then add milk. Beat until smooth. Add remaining flour mixture, beating until smooth, scraping down sides.

In a separate bowl with clean beaters, beat egg whites until foamy. Add the salt and cream of tartar. Fold the egg whites and flour mixture together.

Pour the batter into the prepared cake pans. Bake at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Cool the layers in the pan for ten minutes on a wire rack; turn layers out onto racks to cool completely.

To make the buttercream icing, cream butter and sugar. Add the salt and vanilla. Mix until fluffy. If the icing is too thick, add a few drops of milk; if it is too thin, add a little sugar. Frost cakes with buttercream icing. Decorate if desired.

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Project—Christmas Feast, Page 2

Fruit Compote

Ingredients

1/2 cup apple juice

1/4 cup fresh orange juice

1 Granny Smith apple, cut into
1/2-inch pieces

1/2 cup seedless red grapes, halved

2 navel oranges, peeled and sectioned,
with membranes removed

chopped nuts, shredded coconut, or whipped
cream (optional)

*(Feel free to substitute fruit that fits your
family's tastes.)*

Directions

Combine orange juice and apple juice in a bowl. Gently stir in all the fruit and chill the compote, covered, until ready to serve. Before serving, if desired, garnish with chopped nuts, shredded coconut or whipped cream.

Bon-Bons

Ingredients

3 tbs. butter, softened

4 tbs. cream cheese, softened

1-3/4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1/2 pound chocolate morsels

Directions

In a medium-size bowl, cream together butter and cream cheese. Slowly add sugar, beating until the mixture is light. Mix in vanilla. Chill mixture in refrigerator for about an hour or until firm.

After chilled, form bonbons by pinching off bite-size pieces of mixture and rolling them into balls. Set the bonbons in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with foil or parchment paper. Refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours or until firm.

Melt chocolate morsels according to package directions. Dip each bonbon into chocolate using a toothpick until it is covered completely. Set the bonbon on a piece of waxed paper, remove toothpick and allow chocolate to harden. To store, arrange in a single layer in an airtight container and refrigerate.

And don't forget to serve the pink and white ice cream!

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Chapter Three

Use a dictionary to define the following words:

garret

blithely

toilettes

petulantly

snood

forlornly

demeanor

sentimental

1. What was Jo doing in the garret? Who was her “friend”?

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Chapter Three, Page 3

7. Explain the meaning of the following phrases:

"Dark as Egypt"

"Hannah bated rain as much as a cat does"

8. What happened to Meg's glove when Jo had it?



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Project—Fashion Page

*Color this example
of a dress from 1862*





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