

Book Club Discussion Questions Are You There God, It's Me, Margaret by Judy Blume

1. Describe Margaret's personality. What are her strengths? What do the thoughts and feelings she expresses to God tell you about her? Give specific examples from the text. What are some of the things she learns over the course of the book?
2. How does the move from New York to New Jersey change Margaret's life? What is different for her in New Jersey? What will she miss about New York? What is she worried about when the book opens? Have you ever had to move or change schools? If so, what was that experience like?
3. Why do you think Margaret is so interested in religion? Why does she talk to God, even though her parents don't practice a religion? Why does she choose to do her school project on religions, and how does she go about it? Why does she look only at Judaism and Christianity?
4. Margaret emphasizes her desire to be "normal" over and over again. For example, she tells God, "I just want to be normal." Later she says, "I will wait to find out from you if I am normal or not." Why do you think she feels this desire so strongly? What do you think she learns about being normal? How does society tend to define normal? How do you define normal?
5. What is Margaret's mother like? How does she like to spend her time? What is her family history? Name some instances in which she's helpful to Margaret. When do the two of them disagree? How do they handle the situation when they do?
6. Margaret's father is initially excited about mowing the lawn. Why does he feel that way? Why does that change? What is his relationship with Margaret like? Give examples from the text. What conflicts does he have with Margaret's mother, and how does that impact Margaret?
7. In what ways do Margaret's parents play stereotypical gender roles? How do Margaret and her friends buy into these stereotypes about how girls should act and look? How and why do some of the boys at school emphasize stereotypical expectations about female bodies? Do you think these stereotypes still exist now? Do you see them in your life and school? Explain your answers.
8. Grandma is a key figure in Margaret's life. Describe their relationship and why Margaret likes being with her grandmother. How does Margaret feel about visiting her? Talk about Margaret's time at her grandmother's temple. What is her grandmother's attitude toward Margaret and religion? How does Margaret react?
9. How do Margaret's parents feel about Grandma? Why are they surprised when she first shows up in New Jersey? In that scene, explain why Margaret says, "This was fun!" when she sees her parents' reaction. What kind of information can you glean from witnessing family dynamics?

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10. Nancy has a strong personality. How does she welcome Margaret to the neighborhood? Why does she start a club, and what does it entail? Why does Margaret say, "Nancy had a great way of making me feel like a dope"?

11. When does Nancy lie, and why does she do it? How does Margaret find out about the lie? How does she react to it? Have you ever gotten caught in a lie? What did you learn from the situation?

12. Why is it so important to the girls to get their periods sooner rather than later? Why do Margaret and Janie buy bras?

13. Nancy is especially harsh when it comes to Laura Danker. Why do you think that is? What does she say about Laura? Why do the girls envy Laura? Describe Margaret's encounter with Laura in the library, and what Margaret learns from it.

14. Why does Margaret believe Nancy when she says Laura meets Evan and Moose behind the A&P? Why does she confront Moose about it? How does she feel about him? He tells her, "Next time, don't believe it unless you see it!" What does he mean by that? Do you think this experience changes how Margaret feels about Nancy?

15. Talk about Mr. Benedict and whether you think he's an effective teacher. Explain your answers. How do you think he figures out the names to put on the social studies test? How do you think he reacts to Margaret's letter about religion?

16. Before Margaret's Ohio grandparents announced their visit, Margaret expected to go to Florida. How does Margaret feel when her mother cancels the trip? Why does her mother make Margaret explain it to Grandma? Discuss the decisions that Margaret's mother made and their effect on Margaret. How could Margaret or her mother have handled the situation differently?

17. Why is there so much tension around the Ohio grandparents' visit? Why haven't they visited in fourteen years? How does Margaret's mother prepare for their visit? How does Margaret's father feel about Margaret's grandparents and their pending arrival?

18. Why does Grandmother Hutchins insist that Margaret is a Christian? Why does she care? How does that assertion make her appear similar to Margaret's other grandmother? How are the two different? Why do the Ohio grandparents shorten their visit with Margaret's family?

Discussion questions by publisher