



# THE BOOK OF LONGINGS

by Sue Monk Kidd

## READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Ana wants to give the women of her time a voice.

How important do you think it is for us to hear the voices of women from history?

Do you think that fiction is an effective way of giving voice to those who lived hundreds of years before us?

2. Sue Monk Kidd interweaves a story familiar to many readers, that of Jesus of Nazareth, with her fictional narrative about Ana.

How does this mixture work for you?

What other novels have you read where famous historical figures were woven into the plot?

3. Ana is an educated woman at a time when many women were illiterate.

Do you think it's possible for stories to be shared by those without literacy skills?

Can they be passed down through generations? How?

Do you think that Ana would have made different decisions throughout the novel if she had not had access to writing tools and an education?



4. Ana's father enables her to be educated.

Why do you think he does this for his daughter, when it's generally thought unnecessary or unwise to educate women?

When do you think he first began to doubt the wisdom of letting her learn to read?

5. Ana's mother is not supportive of her daughter's rebellion.

Would you judge her a poor mother, or do you think her attitudes are an inevitable product of her upbringing and her position as a woman of the time?

6. Ana becomes friends with three extraordinary women in the course of the novel: Yaltha, Tabitha and Diodora.

How do these very different women help Ana in her decisions and through difficult times?

Do you think female friendship is always important for a woman?

7. Did you find the depiction of Jesus in the novel surprising, especially the human aspects of his life like his job and his relationship with his siblings?
8. If you know the Gospels well, how did your awareness of Jesus's eventual fate affect your involvement with the novel?
9. If you were to make a prayer bowl like Ana's, what would you write in it?
10. If you were going to write a novel based on the life of a famous figure from the past, who would it be and why?

