

**KIDS BOOK CLUB**

*December 2019 Selection*

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***Bailey's Story: A Dog's Purpose Puppy Tale* by W. Bruce Cameron**

When Bailey meets eight-year-old Ethan, he quickly figures out his purpose: to play with the boy, to explore the Farm during summers with the boy, and to tidy the boy's dishes by licking them clean (only when Mom isn't watching). But Bailey soon learns that life isn't always so simple—that sometimes bad things happen—and that there can be no greater purpose than to protect the boy he loves.

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. BAILEY'S STORY is narrated by Bailey, the dog, himself. Were you surprised when you realized who was telling this story? Why or why not? What sorts of things does Bailey notice that a human narrator might not notice?
2. How does Bailey come to “know the boy very well” (p. 13) in the early chapters of the book? If you could “speak dog” and explain things more thoroughly to Bailey, what might you try to clarify so he could better understand Ethan's activities with his dad, his need to go to school, the “game” of “Dog Door,” and the experience of the “Dog House”?
3. In Chapter 6, Ethan and Bailey make a dangerous friend named Todd, who tries to keep Bailey for his own. What kind of kid is Todd? Would you call Todd a “bully”? What advice should you give Ethan about spending time with Todd? Are there reasons readers should feel bad for Todd? Explain your answers.
4. What is “The Farm”? Do you think you would like to spend the summer at “The Farm”? Why is “The Farm” wonderful for Bailey? For Ethan? What kinds of freedom do Ethan and Bailey have at “The Farm” that they do not have at home? What happens when summer ends?



5. How does Bailey behave at moments in the story when he is lonely, frustrated or uncertain? How are his behaviors treated by Ethan and his parents? Describe a moment in your own life when you felt unsure or worried. What did you say and do? Compare and contrast your human actions to Bailey's animal response to similar emotions.
6. In Chapter 12, Ethan is left alone at "The Farm" for the first time. Describe what happens when Ethan decides to ride Flare out for a picnic. Do you think Ethan should have made this choice? Why or why not? How does Bailey help when Ethan gets into trouble? Does he understand he is helping? What would Bailey say is his most important job in life?
7. In Chapters 14, 15 and 16, readers experience Ethan's high school life through Bailey's eyes. How do Ethan's main interests change? Does Bailey's understanding of his job as "Ethan's boy" change during these years? Why or why not?
8. What warning signs that Todd is becoming more dangerous does Bailey observe but not understand? Do you think Ethan behaves well toward Todd in these chapters, and during their fight at the end of Chapter 17? Explain your answer.
9. How does Bailey become a hero in Chapters 18 and 19? What terrible thing happens to Ethan as these events unfold? Does your family have an emergency plan in case there is a fire or other dangerous event at your house? Describe this plan—or have the conversation today!
10. After the fire, Ethan's life is dramatically changed. How does Bailey understand the changes in Ethan? What happens when Bailey and Ethan return to "The Farm" after the accident? What reunion does Bailey help make happen? How does Bailey help Ethan remember what he can still do?
11. After reading BAILEY'S STORY, how might you describe a pet dog's most important purpose in one sentence?

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**Recommendations:**

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- You might also enjoy [\*Ellie's Story\*](#)