

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Giver

by Lois Lowry

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Chapter 1

1. Even though *The Giver* is a work of fiction, many of Jonas' emotions have been felt by most young people. This chapter begins with Jonas feeling frightened of an airplane because it is flying over his community. Write, as a diary entry, about a time you have been frightened of something mechanical.
2. Being scolded by a teacher or coach can be an embarrassing feeling, as Jonas found out for saying something he was not supposed to. Perhaps you have had a friend who has had this unpleasant experience, or remember one from a television program. Write a short paragraph about the incident.
3. Perhaps you will agree that an apology in a classroom setting is not a usual happening. Even more unusual is that, after Asher's apology, the class in unison accepts it. Write an email, or note, to a friend telling of your thoughts about this and the idea of apologies in general.

Chapter 2

4. None of the children in this novel celebrate an individual birthday. Instead, they have the passing of the years marked for them in a "Ceremony" for those in their age group, which is attended by the whole community. Write an imaginary conversation in which you tell a friend why you would like, or not like, to have your birthday celebrated this way.
5. Jonas is to be twelve years old, after which he is considered an adult. After his Ceremony of Twelve, he will begin training for the assigned job he will do for the rest of his life. In our society, we have choices about the type of work we would like to do as an adult. Write a short newspaper column titled "Choices: What's Good and Bad About Them" with your feelings about this topic.

Response Journal

6. The ending scene in this chapter shows what seems to be a happy and ideal family of father, mother, brother, and sister. Recall a family scene you know of from personal experience or the media, which is quite unlike this one. Comparing the two, relate which seems more realistic to you.

Chapter 3

7. It is considered rude in Jonas' community to point out any individual differences, such as the fact that Jonas has pale colored eyes, and almost everyone else has dark eyes. Relate a time when someone pointed out something that was different about you, either positive or negative. How did that make you feel?
8. Much is made in this chapter about "precise speech." Make a list of words you have used, which have one meaning when you use them and another in a dictionary definition. An example of this would be "cool" to admiringly describe someone, as opposed to its real meaning which has to do with temperature.
9. Lily, Jonas' sister, is very talkative, and this slightly annoys Jonas. He does not show his annoyance. Write a paragraph about a time when you have felt annoyed with a family member but didn't show it. Were you glad or sorry afterward that you had remained silent?

Chapter 4

10. After a certain age, the children of Jonas' society are required to do volunteer work. Write a paragraph that describes the kind of volunteer work you would like to do in your community if volunteering was encouraged.

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11. We read that a small mistake made by an eleven year old boy was “a disgrace that had clouded his entire future.” Write a letter to an imaginary friend telling about your feelings at the treatment this boy received.
12. Jonas and Larissa genuinely seem to like and enjoy caring for aged men and women in the House of the Old. Relate the nicest experience you have ever had with an old person.

Chapter 5

13. There seems to be very little privacy in Jonas’ home. All the family members are required to tell their feelings about their day after dinner. They must also share their dreams at breakfast. Relate an incident in your life when you were forced to disclose something, and because of it, you felt your privacy was invaded.
14. Jonas does not question the need to begin taking pills for what his mother calls “Stirrings.” If you were Jonas, would you take pills without asking exactly what they were for, and how they were going to affect you?
15. *The Giver*, so far, has shown a full day in the life of Jonas and his family. Make a list comparing various activities in this family with a list of activities in your household over a twenty-four hour period.

Chapter 6

16. The day of Ceremonies seems to be one where each child in each age group is treated the same on what would, in our time, be considered one's individual birthday. Instead, on this day in the community, the children are told what they must do that is appropriate to their age group. They also receive a reward appropriate to their age group. Write an imaginary dialogue with an Elder questioning why the children of the community do not have individual birthdays.

Interviewer: Sir, would you explain why the Committee of Elders wants all children to conform to the rules your committee has made up?

Elder:

17. In this chapter, reference is made to an “awkward” boy, Fritz, who “infringed on the community’s sense of order and success.” Do you feel that the Elders’ criticism of Fritz was a fair one? Write your thoughts about Fritz’s plight in a letter to a friend. Explain what will happen to Fritz.
18. Talking about his community, Jonas asks, “How could anyone not fit in?” Write a newspaper article describing what you think of the way Jonas’ community works. The headline of the article would be: “Conformity—Who Needs It?” Remember to begin the article by answering who, when, how, where, and why.

Chapter 7

19. During the Ceremony of Twelve all the children are thanked for their childhood. Think about the childhood of someone you know from your own life or the media. Make a list of the qualities or activities of that person’s childhood which deserve appreciation.

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20. The Assignments described in this chapter will become the life work of the children at the Ceremony of Twelve. List four pre-teen friends or family members by imaginary names, and write what work assignment you would give them and why.
21. Jonas is dizzy with shame at being passed over in the Assignment Ceremony. He doesn't understand why this is happening to him. Relate an incident when you or someone close to you has had the experience of being passed over for something. It would be something major or simply a small incident that was bothersome.

Chapter 8

22. The children of the community are under constant observation from the day they are born, and the choice of a job for them is based on these observations. What is your reaction to a person being under surveillance for his or her whole life? Do you feel people are under any kind of surveillance in our society? Explain how a loss of privacy can affect people.
23. Jonas is selected to be "Receiver of Memory." It is a high honor and much will be expected of him. He worries that he will not be able to live up to these expectations. What advice would you give to your best friend if she or he were in Jonas' position?
24. Jonas felt both pride and fear of his assignment after the Ceremony is over. Describe an event in your life when you experienced two opposite or conflicting feelings at the same time.