

Maximo and the Big C Discussion Guide

Maximo and the Big C is a story about strength and bravery in the face of fear and adversity. To help bring this story to life for people impacted by a cancer diagnosis, we have developed two discussion guides for you to use when reading the book with your friends and loved ones. The first guide consists of questions for children, while the second guide includes questions that are more appropriate for adolescent and adult readers.

The purpose of this guide is to serve as a starting point for dialogue about cancer. Dialogue challenges assumptions, breaks down barriers, and brings people together through the sharing of personal experiences. We invite you to use and adapt this discussion guide to meet your needs. Let's start the conversation!

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Discussion guide created by our MAX team of advocates, led by Viji Venkatesh with support from Priya Cibi and Michael Root.



Questions for children:

1. Can you think of some words to describe Maximo's parents? Why do you think these words describe them?
2. How different was Maximo from the others? Did it matter to his family?
3. What was it that Maximo longed to do?
4. Even though he was afraid, Maximo didn't give up trying. Can you think of a time you didn't give up?
5. Is it OK to feel afraid? If yes, why? If no, why not?
6. When Maximo realized that the baby sparrow was in great danger, what was he thinking? Have you ever experienced anything like that, where you just didn't know what to do?
7. How is it, that despite his physical limitations, Maximo could help the baby bird?
8. What things are important to remember to face any challenge in life?
9. Do you think we need to be perfect in every way to help others?
10. What did you learn from Maximo?



Questions for adolescents and adults:

1. What kind of a world was Maximo born into? How were the birds around him? Did you find Maximo comparing himself to them?

In our daily lives, how can we draw a parallel with Maximo's world?

2. Maximo received all the love and support he needed and yet for a long time he could not overcome his insecurities so that he could fly. Why?

How important is the role of parents, extended family, friends and community in helping someone with challenges feel accepted and loved? Is it the only factor required?

3. Why do you think Maximo's parents were worried when they saw that one of the eggs was small? Did they foresee any difficulties for their child?

What are some of the challenges that the 'differently abled' or those with physical or emotional difficulties face on a day-to-day basis?

4. What kind of thoughts did Maximo have when he had to start flying or take that first step? Do you think these thoughts played a significant role in his ability to fly? Why?



5. What kind of insight or understanding did Maximo have about himself?
How do you think this insight helped him in the long run?
6. What was the dilemma that raged inside Maximo when he realized that the baby sparrow was in grave danger?

Have you ever experienced anything like that, where you felt torn inside or when you realized you were the only one around to help someone in need?
What did you do then?

7. What is it that suddenly allowed Maximo to dare to fly? What is an important lesson you can learn from that?
8. Maximo proved that there are some forces stronger than physical strength or abilities that help one face challenges in life. What are they?

Have you ever experienced these forces? How?

9. “It takes just one to make a difference...” This was true for Maximo...

Can you draw a parallel with events in history or from your own life where you have seen this happen?

10. What thoughts and reflections does this story leave you with?

Did any part touch you in particular? Why?

