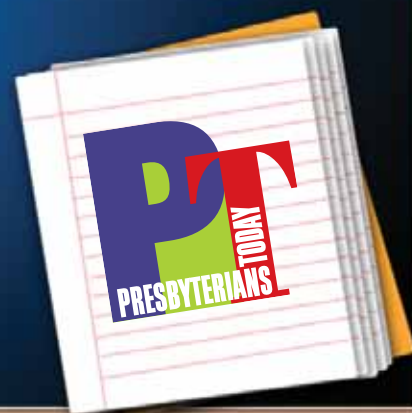


# PRESBYTERIANS TODAY STUDY GUIDE SERIES



## **Biblical Themes in Children's Literature**

Part 1 in a 10-part series

## **Prince Caspian**

by C. S. Lewis

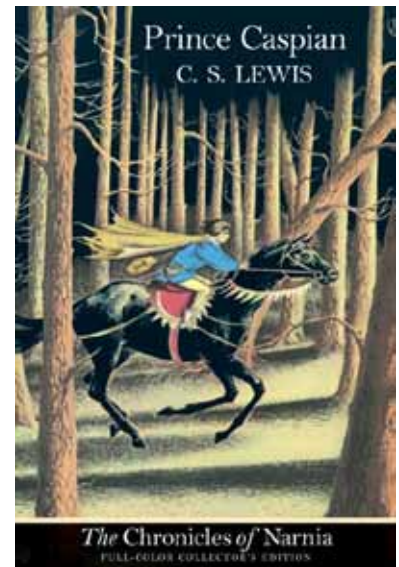
## A note to discussion leaders

*Prince Caspian* is the second installment in the classic Chronicles of Narnia, by C.S. Lewis. The Pevensie children return to Narnia and take up the struggle to assist Caspian as he reclaims Narnia in the name of Aslan, a lion who serves as the Christ figure throughout the series.

This study guide is intended for use with the book, but users may also wish to view the film *Prince Caspian*, released in theaters in May 2008. See [www.pcusa.org/today/media/films.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/today/media/films.htm) for a review of the film.

Of all the books to be examined in this series, *Prince Caspian* is the most explicitly Christian. Even so, there is a risk in mining Lewis' books for important spiritual themes, reducing them to a series of object lessons. A good story stands on its own merits and should be enjoyed on its own terms. Children and young people can tell when they are being manipulated into Finding the Meaning, as opposed to being immersed in a good story.

That said, *Prince Caspian* does have many excellent entry points for discussion and sharing. This study guide is organized by topics. Under each topic are questions to discuss and "Scriptural connections"—biblical passages that connect further with the theme. Parents, teachers or other adults using this guide with children may wish simply to tell the Bible stories to the children as a way of connecting Caspian's story with the story of our faith.



Laurence can't really love Aslan more than Jesus, even if he feels that's what he is doing. For the things he loves Aslan for doing or saying are simply the things Jesus really did and said. So that when Laurence thinks he is loving Aslan, he is really loving Jesus: and perhaps loving Him more than he ever did before.

—C.S. Lewis,  
in a 1955 letter to Laurence's mother,  
published in *Letters to Children*

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\* All page numbers refer to the HarperTrophy, 1994.

## The power of story

In chapter 4, Prince Caspian's tutor, Doctor Cornelius, tells Caspian the stories of Old Narnia and assures him that they are more than just legends—they really happened. Caspian responds, "I am glad it was all true, even if it is all over" (p. 52\*).

Later, Doctor Cornelius reveals the truth about the Black Woods. The Telmarines, who fear Aslan, remember that Aslan always came to Narnia by way of the sea, and so they have let the woods along the shoreline grow wild to keep people from entering: "Because they have quarreled with the trees they are afraid of the woods. And because they are afraid of the woods they imagine that they are full of ghosts. And the Kings and great men, hating both the sea and the wood, partly believe these stories, and partly encourage them" (p. 56).

### Questions to discuss

- What are some of your favorite stories? Are there stories you've heard that you wish were real? Why or why not?
- Jesus often taught using stories, called parables. Why do you think he taught this way?
- Is it important that we remember stories about our past? Why or why not? (Parents might share stories, photographs or clippings about the family history with their children; teachers or other group leaders might encourage participants to bring these things for show and tell.)

### Scriptural connections

- Exodus 12:1–14—The day of Passover, a day to be remembered "throughout the generations"
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–26—The Lord's Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me."

## The size of things

*Prince Caspian* deals with the theme of size in several places. In chapter 5 Prince Caspian must flee from his uncle and finds himself on the run: "He thought how large and strange the world was and felt frightened and small" (p. 65). Later, Trufflehunter points out that the beasts of Narnia are nothing like the Talking Beasts of Old Narnia; they're "poor, dumb, witless creatures," and "they're smaller, too" (p. 73).

In this book we also meet Reepicheep, one of the most beloved characters in all of the Chronicles, who is a valiant warrior despite being a tiny mouse.

And when Lucy finally meets Aslan again, she is surprised to discover that he is bigger than when she last saw him. Aslan explains, "That is because you are older . . . Every year you grow, you will find me bigger" (p. 148).

### Questions to discuss

- Why do you think Aslan would appear larger as Lucy grows older?
- Do you think the world values big things more than small ones, or vice versa? Can you give some examples?
- Do you think God values things in the same way that we do? Can you give examples of small things that are important to God?

### Scriptural connections

- Mark 12:41–44—The widow's mite
- Mark 10:13–16—"Let the little children come . . ."
- Mark 10:35–44—"Whoever wishes to become great must be a servant."

## Doubt and faith

Because Aslan has been gone so long, and Narnia has changed so dramatically over the centuries, there are many who doubt the existence of Aslan, or who wonder whether he has any power.

Caspian asks Nikabrik, a skeptic, whether he believes in Aslan. He responds, “I’ll believe in anyone or anything that’ll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything, Aslan or the White Witch, do you understand?” (p. 80).

Later, Nikabrik expresses doubts that Aslan came back to life after being killed by the White Witch on the Stone Table: “You’ll notice that we hear precious little about anything he did afterward. He just fades out of the story. How do you explain that, if he really came to life? Isn’t it much more likely that he didn’t, and that the stories say nothing more about him because there was nothing more to say?” (p. 179).

### Questions to discuss

- Do you think it was easier to be a follower of Jesus back when he still walked the earth? Is it harder now?
- How would you respond to someone like Nikabrik, who wants proof that the stories he’s heard are true?
- What evidence do you see that God is real and still working in the world?

### Scriptural connections

- Mark 8:11–12—“Why does this generation ask for a sign?”
- Acts 2:1–24—The Pentecost story: “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs . . . ”

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