

[New Moon] Study guide two



Synopsis:

It's Bella's 18th Birthday, and Alice wants to throw her an extravagant Cullen Birthday party; much to Bella's dismay. During this party, Bella cuts her finger, bringing blood into a house full of vampires. This causes Jasper to lose control, and he can't hold back his thirst. The night ends in disaster.

Edward can't stand putting Bella in anymore danger, so he leaves, along with the rest of Cullens. *"Bella, we're leaving...I'm no good for you, Bella...I'm tired of pretending to be something I'm not, Bella. I am not human...You're no good for me, Bella.*

I promise that this will be the last time you'll see me. I won't come back. I won't put you through anything like this again.

You can go on with your life without any more interference from me. It will be as if I'd never existed." (p68-71)

This sends Bella into bouts of angst, pain, sorrow and turmoil. *"The waves of pain that only lapped at me before now, reared high up and washed over my head, pulling me under. I did not resurface."* (p84)

The only solace that Bella finds is in Jacob. *"I waited for the memory to hit - to open the gaping hole. But, as it so often did, Jacob's presence kept me whole."* (p214) A love triangle emerges between Jacob, Bella, and Edward. Causing Bella to be torn, divided, and in a state of conflict and confusion.

"I remember wishing that Jacob were my brother...It didn't feel brotherly when he held me like this. It just felt nice - warm and comforting and familiar. Safe. Jacob was a safe harbor...I would have to commit to this - commit as much of me there was left, every one of the broken pieces...Would it be so wrong to try to make Jacob happy? Even if the love I felt for him was no more than a weak echo of what I was capable of, even if my heart was far away, wandering grieving..." (p375)

Jacob discovers that the myths and legends of the Quileute are true, when he turns into a wolf himself. The small pack of wolves, lead by the alpha Sam, keep growing, due to the eminent danger of the Vampires in town. As legend says, wolves will evolve to protect their ancestry, land and way of life.

Bella's turmoil/pain leads her to risk/take her life. *"There had to be some way to quench it. The pain was growing more and more intolerable by the second. I glared at the cliff and the crashing waves...It was hard not to convince myself that I didn't have time to search for another way - I wanted to jump from the top...I knew that this was the stupidest, most reckless thing I had done yet. The thought made me smile. The pain already easing..."* (p356-8) This sets off a chain reaction with Edward placing his own life in the hands of the Volturi (the most powerful and 'ruling' authority of Vampire Coven's in the world.) Bella, having been saved by Jacob, endeavors to save Edward from the Volturi, with the help of Alice.

Once Bella meets the Volturi, the course is set for them and the Cullens to be enemies. Bella has violated some of the Volturi's laws and codes. (Humans must not know about Vampires) She must transform in order to be free of them.

Bella and Edward are reunited and their love is ignited again. Bella's devotion to Edward is stronger than ever, and she wishes for nothing more, than to live forever with him (as a vampire). Edward is not happy with this; but in the end makes a compromise with Bella. If she will marry him, he will transform her.

Themes:

pain
angst
sorrow
anguish
risk/safety

Biblical links:

The passion of Christ.
Jesus suffering passion
Psalms - poems of lament and sorrow
Job

Questions:

1] Have you ever felt pain like Bella does in New Moon?

•Have you ever been drawn to danger and risk, like Bella is, just so you can feel something?

2] Have you noticed that the Bible is full of similar experiences of pain?

Read some of the following passages:

Matthew 26:36-45 or Mark 14:32-41 - Garden of gethsemane
(Christ's agony/passion. Important to understand and stress the incarnation. That God become flesh; human. Being human means experiencing pain/weakness.)

Job 3; 6&7

Psalm 13

•Spend some time writing your own Psalm of Lament.

2] Who do you identify with the most in Twilight?

**•Do you identify with Jesus just as much as that person? Why?
Do you have a problem with that?**

3] Did you know that Jesus identifies with us?

•What does it mean that God became a human? What is the incarnation?

•Was it God reaching out to us; entering into our world and identifying with us?

“In Christ God is moving in the world: God has reached beyond God’s own self to identify with the part of human existence that sits farthest from God - death. God’s ecstatic reach bursts the Temple veil like a cosmic amniotic sac, announcing God is on the loose!” Kenda Creasy Dean

“God goes forth from God, God creates the world, God suffuses its history and dwells within it, redeeming the world from within. God makes an eternal gift to the world of God’s very self. Through the outpouring of God into our hearts as love, we become by grace what God is already by nature, namely, self-donating love for the other.” LaCuga

•Did you realise how passionate God’s love is for humanity?

(also refer back to sexual language found in song of songs)

“Jesus Christ does love excessively, extravagantly ‘outside the lines’...The God of Jesus Christ does choose passivity, vulnerability, and weakness as God’s means of transformation” - Kenda Creasy Dean

•Do you agree with this statement?

“Passion must *feel* like life and death - nothing less - or it is not passion.” - Kenda Creasy Dean

•Do you want this kind of passion?

4] What would it mean to identify with Christ in his (self-giving) passion?

(in life, death, and resurrection?)

Notes for leaders:

The incarnation of God; the life, death and resurrection Jesus, shows us many things about God’s love. We see a longing desperate love, that is reaching out and coming to us. A passion. And God’s passion for all creation, lead to death. This death on the cross shows us a self-giving love. A true passion. Not just a passion of gushy lovey-dovey emotion. But a passion full of suffering and pain, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” God’s passion for humanity (for us), lent itself to becoming human, and then ended in a painful self-sacrificing death. This passion is vulnerable and leads to transformation. This is what we see in the resurrection - death to life.

As Christians we are called to imitate Christ. To identify with Christ, And in some ways a big part of us identifying with Christ, is when we feel pain, and sorrow. We are one with Christ in our pain and suffering. Kenda Creasy Dean says, “passion must feel like life or death - nothing less - or it is not passion.” And this is the kind of passion that Twilight encompasses. This is the kind of passion that we long for. With Bella we want to know if there is something beyond our pain and suffering. We long to know if our faith will stand under the weight of our pain, and reach beyond to a transcendent hope and redemption. Is our God big enough? And as the resurrection shows, our vulnerability, our pain and sorrow, can lead to transformation. Death to life.

“imitating Christ entails more than moral formation; it means participating in the self-giving love of God, manifest in the life death and resurrection of Jesus in which God identified with us.” Kenda Creasy Dean.

“identity is a function of intimacy with Christ, and intimacy with Christ is the true shape of human identity....as I join in Christ’s communion, I come to know myself as one who belongs to Jesus and who is called to identify with others in his name.” - Kenda Creasy Dean

What we learn from Christ's passion and imitating him is that our passion and desire needs to reach beyond our self (beyond thinking it’s all about me) and moves out to others. And this is only because we become so full of God’s love that we cannot contain it, just as he couldn’t.

“In Christ, God is moving in the world: God has reached beyond God’s own self to identify with the part of human existence that sits farthest from God - death. God’s ecstatic reach bursts the Temple veil like a cosmic amniotic sac, announcing God is on the loose!” Kenda Creasy Dean