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The Little Book Of Big Questions



Synopsis

Finally, a book for kids that is not afraid to ask the BIG questions. The Little Book of Big Questions addresses a whole lot of questions kids often wonder about. Usually there is no simple answer. For each question, different theories and opinions are illustrated, with easy-to-grasp examples and comparisons. How did the universe begin? What happens when you die? How are humans different from animals? Do aliens exist? Why isn't life fair? How do we know what is right or wrong? How far away are the stars? Stars are too far away to measure in miles or kilometers, so astronomers use light years. A light year is the distance light travels in a year. One light year is nearly 10 million million km (or 6 million million miles) -- that's 10 with another 12 zeros behind it! Should we transplant pig hearts or chimpanzee kidneys into humans? At first I thought, "Yuk, no," and then I thought, "Hey, wait a minute. If I eat pigs, then why can't I have a pig heart? What's the difference?" Within each section a variety of related questions are asked and answers are offered. The text is conversational in tone, making the reader feel part of a discussion. This book will answer some questions, but it will also inspire children to probe more deeply, explore further and find out even more answers.

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 3-6-Loosely organized into 15 subject-oriented chapters, this book delves into basic

questions about life and death, the universe, animal intelligence, extraterrestrials, and morality. In her answers, French goes to great lengths to cover all of the most popular theories and scientific observations, but often offers her own opinions as well, particularly in her discussions about eating animals and helping the environment. The format is somewhat tedious with two-to-five "big" questions on each page. Cartoon drawings, in black and blue ink, add a little comic relief to these weighty topics, with animals making astute observations via dialogue balloons. At the end of the book, the author includes some "impossible" questions, such as "How do you explain red to a blind person

This book in no way pretends to hold definitive answers to the "big" questions; on the contrary, it deliberately presents answers representative of a number of viewpoints. Frequently, French halts her download of information to interject, "What do you think?" thereby inviting the reader to "talk back." This characteristic of the book clearly embodies Annick Press's mandate to produce "books that help start dialogue" ... Newbigging's skewed sense of humor provides much-needed comic respite from some of the bigger "big questions" ... Overall, Newbigging's cartoons essentially counterbalance French's text: where the text is serious, the illustrations introduce levity; where the text assumes a lighthearted tone, the cartoons can offer sobering insights. (Julie Chychota Canadian Materials 2002-02-15)

I have a Ph.D. in philosophy and my little boy has said, a few times, that he wants to be a philosopher like his Dad when he grows up. (No, I am not kidding.) So I looked around for philosophical books that would be accessible, and to my surprise I found this book (the only book like it I've been able to find, although I haven't looked hard). I was pleasantly surprised not just that the book exists but that it's pretty good. The text is aimed at the elementary level, and takes up just the sort of questions that fascinate kids of this age (how did the universe begin, do aliens exist, and so forth). They're not all strictly speaking philosophical questions, but they are approached philosophically, for the most part. It's written in Q & A format, with the author giving answers that appeal to a more or less conventionally scientific mindset (which would be mine). There aren't too many words per page, and there are some appropriate pictures, but it isn't really a picture book. The style is breezy and informal, which is a plus; you don't want a first book about such potentially dry stuff to be written in a dry style. If I had any complaint it would be that the book is mostly straightforward "talk." It does not try to illustrate (visually) points that could easily be illustrated, and it does not really take a creative approach to making things clear or engaging (other than the Q&A

format and the breezy style, as I said). But that's OK. I was pretty skeptical that this would keep my 4-year-old's interest, but it has. We can't read it a lot at once--just a few pages at a time--but he's game for that much. Well done to the author and editors--more, more!

A great book to encourage children to want to know more about the world they live in. Also an effective way to encourage verbal communication between adults (who may be reading the book to children or being read to by the child/children) and children. Good for increasing general knowledge and language development.

"The Little Book of Big Questions" is a book every kid should read. There are questions that everybody wonders about the human condition and the universe. 'Where did the first humans come from?' 'Do aliens exist?' 'What happens when we die?' 'Why do some people choose not to eat animals?' 'Why isn't life fair?' 'What killed the dinosaurs?' Most people respond to such questions with superstition and pseudo-facts. This book addresses such questions in a way that reflects the most recent scientific research. The explanations are entertaining and surprisingly lite. Responses are more factual than what most kids can get from their parents and a great deal more accurate than the explanations given at Sunday school. Jackie French is honest in making the distinction between those things we know, those that are likely and those that we will never understand through the scientific process. "The Little Book of Big Questions" portrays a three dimensional view of the universe. It gives great sensitivity to controversial issues and often encourages the reader to make individual conclusions. I dare write that most adults would learn much from this book. "The Little Book of Big Questions" is a book that has the power to shape a young mind in a progressive direction.

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