

## Discussion Questions for Alcott's Little Women

1. In the first two chapters, the girls use John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a model for their own journey to becoming "little women." What was Alcott trying to say by using such a strongly philosophical piece of literature as the girls' model?
  2. Discuss the term "little women." What does the term say about the status of American women in the 1860s. How would you describe this novel's vision of the place of women in society? What about in the home?
  3. Is the March family realistic? What aspects of their life seem too good to be true? What trials do they face that seem familiar to you?
  4. Although Father is absent for most of the novel, his presence is felt in every scene. What influence does he have on the family?
  5. Discuss the similarities and differences among the 4 sisters. Who is the most relatable? Who is the most conforming to societal standards? Who grows the most within the novel? Who do you relate to the most?
  6. Is Jo March still an appealing heroine for 21<sup>st</sup> Century readers? Do you think her problems relate to the experiences of girls today? Are there any aspects that are unrealistic or frustrating?
  7. How important is the setting to this novel? Could the same story take place in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England or is there something particularly American about it? Could the story take place in a different country?
- Last session of the year: What was your favorite book that we read and what was your least favorite?