

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *GOOD GRACES*

1. Let's talk about the time and setting of the book. Does it resonate with you? If so, share some memories of those good old days.
2. Children are not allowed the same freedom today as they were back in the fifties and sixties. As in all things, there are positives and negatives. Can you think of a few?
3. Much of what Sally and Troo learn is gleaned from eavesdropping and gossip. Communication between adults and children has dramatically changed over the past fifty years. Discuss how it was back then versus now.
4. Adults seem to think traumatized Sally suffers from over-imagination, cured with weekly doses of cod liver oil. How does their treatment of her differ from how victimized children are cared for today?
5. How much of Sally's devotion to Troo is based on love for her sister versus her deep sense of responsibility to her daddy? How do you think Troo sees Sally?
6. The Catholic Church plays an important role in the neighborhood. Do you think religion still plays as vital a part in our lives as it used to? Why or why not?
7. Sally has a pretty good grasp of the racial, sexual and class structures in the neighborhood. Growing up, were you aware of prejudices? How did they affect your views at the time?
8. Why do you think Sally depends on Ethel so much? What does she get out of the relationship?
9. Family dynamics are complicated, but none more so than the relationship between sisters. Can you describe your experience with your sister or sisters?
10. So much mental illness went undiagnosed during these times. Name a few characters who might have been a lot better off had they been born now rather than then.
11. What do you think of Helen as a mother? Do you find her strong/disinterested/ a product of her era?
12. Near the end of the book, the girls commit an act that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Discuss how you feel about how they handled the situation. What would you have done in their shoes?
13. After Sally visits Sampson at the zoo, he doesn't seem to recognize her. Sally is surprised that she isn't really bothered that much by his cool reception. Why do you think this is? How had Sally changed since the beginning of the book, and if you read it, since *Whistling in the Dark*?
14. What do you suppose happens to the main characters after the story ends?