

DISCERNING GOD'S BEST

A Discussion Guide Packet

With All My Heart

by Heidi Gray McGill

Meet Heidi Gray McGill

Heidi Gray McGill writes Christian historical romance set on the American frontier, where faith carries her characters through hardship, found family, and second chances. She is the author of the *Discerning God's Best* series. Heidi makes her home in South Carolina, just below the Charlotte, NC, border, with her husband of 35+ years. Together they enjoy walking, hiking, kayaking, scuba diving, snorkeling, and playing with their three grandsons. Connect with her at heidigraymcgill.com.

Dear Reading Friends

Thank you for choosing *With All My Heart* for your book club. Pete, Singing Bird, Charlie, and Lizzy each carry their own quiet battles in this one, and I am grateful you would spend time walking alongside them.

Inside this packet you will find discussion questions organized into short sections, a verse to carry with you from the story, and a simple menu idea for your gathering. Pick a question or two from each section, or work through the whole guide together. There is no wrong way to do it.

If your club would enjoy a visit, I would love to join you by Zoom or in person if I am nearby. Reach out through the contact form at heidigraymcgill.com.

With gratitude,

Heidi

Icebreakers

- Have you ever had to trust God with something that felt impossible to explain to another person?
- What's one story from your own family that sounds almost too remarkable to be true?
- If you saw something you couldn't explain, who would you tell first, and would you expect them to believe you?

Discussion Questions

Choose one or two questions from each section below, or work through the whole guide as time allows. Chapter numbers are noted so you can revisit a scene together.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Charlie tells Pete he's ready to step out from under Clint's shadow and find his own path. What do you make of Charlie's need for his own adventure, so soon after gaining a stable home?

(Chapter 1)

Pete has built a quiet, solitary life on his own claim. What does his daily routine tell you about how he's carrying his grief over Singing Bird? *(Chapter 1)*

CHARACTER & GROWTH

Singing Bird chooses the name Robin as she gives her heart to God. What does the choice to take a new name say about the change happening in her? *(Chapter 24)*

Lizzy insists on proving she's as capable as any man of pioneering, even as she cares for a wounded stranger. How does her sense of purpose shift over the course of the story? *(Chapter 15)*

FAITH & SCRIPTURE

Pete tells Charlie that Christ died for us while we were still sinners, undeserving. How does that truth challenge the way Charlie has been thinking about his place in Rachel and Clint's family? *(Chapter 1)*

Scripture: Romans 5:8

Rachel tells Singing Bird that God sees no difference between people, regardless of skin color, language, or belief. Why do you think it takes Singing Bird so long to accept that truth for herself? *(Chapters 13, 16)*

Scripture: Romans 10:9–13; Genesis 1:27

THEMES & REFLECTION

Little Sun describes the being who saved him and his mother as fierce like a warrior, yet peaceful, and not something to fear. What does that image of fierce peace tell you about how God protects His people? *(Chapter 9)*

Robin's past includes two years of abuse and captivity she believes she deserved. How does the story handle her healing, and what does it teach about shame versus grace? *(Chapters 12, 24)*

PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

Lizzy stumbles onto a wounded boy and his half-starved dog in the wilderness, with no idea what she's walking into. If you found yourself in her position, would you have pressed forward or turned back? (*Chapter 15*)

Pete waited two years, unsure if Singing Bird was even alive, before an unexpected reunion. If you were waiting on something you weren't sure would ever come, how would you keep your hope alive? (*Chapter 1*)

WRAP-UP & LOOKING BACK

Charlie and Lizzy, and Pete and Robin, marry on the same day. What do you think it means for these two couples to start their new lives together, side by side? (*Chapter 26*)

Looking back over the whole story, what does the title *With All My Heart* mean to you by the final page? (*Chapter 26*)

ONE VERSE TO CARRY WITH YOU

Matthew 22:37

Open your own Bible and read it together before you begin.

Which Character Are You? A Frontier Faith Quiz

Answer each question, then tally your letters.

1. **When someone treats you unfairly, your first instinct is to**

- A. Stay quiet and let your actions speak for themselves.
- B. Speak plain truth, even if it's uncomfortable.
- C. Push forward and prove them wrong.

2. **Your idea of home is**

- A. Wherever the people who love you are.
- B. A quiet place you've built with your own two hands.
- C. Somewhere you're finally free to be fully yourself.

3. **When you're wounded, you tend to**

- A. Carry it quietly and keep moving.
- B. Talk it through with someone you trust.
- C. Throw yourself into work until it fades.

RESULTS

Mostly A's, you're like **Robin**. Steady and resilient, you carry your history with quiet grace.

Mostly B's, you're like **Pete**. Faith-led and plainspoken, you meet hard truths head-on.

Mostly C's, you're like **Lizzy**. Spirited and determined, you'd rather act than wait.



Q&A with the Author

What inspired this story?

When I finished *Desire of My Heart*, I knew I had to tell Pete's story. The mystery behind what kept him hiding needed to come into the light, and he was too rich a character to leave alone. But it was Singing Bird who captured my attention most. Like many of my English as a Second Language students, she came to the story with little knowledge of the One True God, and writing her conversion was a challenge I was excited to take on.

Who is your favorite character?

Lizzy, without question. Her fast talking, nonstop chatter, and boldness, especially the moment she's the one who asks Charlie to marry her, were an absolute joy to write.

What's the spiritual heart of this book?

Singing Bird's journey. She arrives in the story with almost no knowledge of God, and watching her move from disbelief to the moment she takes on the name Robin and asks for a new heart is the true center of *With All My Heart*. Her story is a reminder that no one is too far from God to be found by Him.

Pete's Table

A simple spread for your gathering.

- Cornbread (Pete's own words: “about the only thing I make that's edible”)
- Hearty meat stew, venison, beef, or whatever's on hand, as long as it sticks to your bones
- Sliced apples and cheese
- Fresh bread and butter
- Coffee

TRY THIS: THE HEALING SALVE

A craft from the book, not a recipe to eat.

In the story, Rachel and Singing Bird stand at the stove together making this very salve, a moment that does as much for their friendship as it does for anyone's blisters. The recipe comes from a reader, Joan Archibald, passed down from her great-great-grandmother Sarah Roper Dimmick, who carried it west by handcart in the 1800s.

Ingredients

¾ cup lard • ¾ cup mutton tallow • an egg-sized lump of sticky pine gum • an egg-sized lump of beeswax • a walnut-sized piece of pine tar • 1 tsp allspice • 2 tbsp sugar • 1 oz sulfur • 3 oz rosin • 1 oz borax

Instructions

Combine the ingredients in a pot in the order given. Do not stir. Melt together on the back of the stove.

A note for your club: this is a genuine 19th-century folk remedy, shared here as a piece of history rather than a project to recreate at home; several ingredients (sulfur, borax, pine tar) aren't things to handle casually today. It's a fun one to read aloud and talk about rather than make.

A Closing Note from Heidi

Dear Reader,

Pete and Singing Bird both had to learn that love and faith are not things we earn but things we are given, even while we are still finding our way. I hope their story reminded you that God sees you fully, and loves you all the same. Thank you for reading, and for sharing this story with your book club.

Heidi