

SECRETS: The Truth Will Out

A novel by Verity Lucia

Conversation Starter Worksheet

Choose any or all of these questions to begin fruitful discussions within your group.

† Suggested questions for teen book clubs or youth ministries are in red.

Chapter 1-2:

Do you ever feel tempted to lie so as not to create waves?

Is a relationship healthy if you have to lie to maintain peace?

Elise is lonely. What are some healthy ways to cope with loneliness?

Do you think Elise is confident? Why or why not?

† At the end of the chapter, Elise remembers her mom telling her to be “safe.” What does her mom mean? Can sex outside of marriage ever be “safe?” Why or why not?

Chapter 3:

How does Elise feel when she leaves Nikki’s house? Why? How do you think Elise wishes Nikki would have responded to her?

How did Elise feel when she discovered that she was pregnant?

Chapter 4:

How do you think Finn felt when Elise told him she was pregnant?

Chapter 5:

† When Elise’s grandmother informs her that the insurance company encourages her to take their “backup policy,” she is referring to assisted suicide or euthanasia. Is assisted suicide ever morally acceptable? Why or why not?

Chapter 6:

Elise experienced the memory of the abortionist’s (Janice’s) own abortion. Do you think the fact that Janice had an abortion contributed to her becoming an abortionist? Why or why not?

Chapter 7:

In this chapter, Elise expresses that her mother doesn’t understand her. Do you ever feel misunderstood by your parents/guardians?

On the website, Noah shares with Elise the Bible quote from Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know well the plans I have in mind for you—oracle of the LORD—plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.” What does this quote mean? Do you believe these words found in the Bible as they apply to your own life?

Chapter 8:

Reflect on the Bible verse Elise heard in Mass that includes the line, “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” What do you think a heavenly paradise might be like? Do you think it’s worth striving for?

† In his homily, the priest says, “Love is a sacrifice.” What does this mean? How might viewing love as a sacrifice change your relationships with others and Christ?

How does the world define love? How is that different from the Biblical understanding of love?

After reflecting upon the meaning of love, would you say that Finn and Elise love each other? Why or why not?

Who does Jesus love? Is someone who has committed/participated in/or received an abortion loved by God? Why or why not?

Do you think Elise was protected or guided by her guardian angel when confronted by the threatening men at the rest stop? Do you believe you have ever experienced the protection of your guardian angel?

Chapter 9:

How would you describe Elise's relationship with her mother? What factors would you say contribute to the challenges of this relationship?

What was Nikki's response when Elise confessed to her that she was pregnant? Do you think she reacted as a friend should in the circumstance? Why or why not?

Chapter 10:

How do you think Elise felt when she found out that Nikki blamed Elise for her father's stolen money?

How do you think Elise felt when she realized she had nowhere to sleep that night?

Was it right or wrong for Elise to share the video of Nikki being tackled on social media?

Chapter 11:

How did Clare's response to Elise regarding the pregnancy differ from Nikki's?

When Elise put on Clare's sunglasses, she saw angels and demons. How do you think you would react if you were able to see angels and demons around you? How might your life change if you lived daily believing that angels and demons are real and you are truly in a spiritual battle?

Chapter 12:

Clare explained sin to Elise. What is sin?

Name the ten commandments that God gave us as a guide to holiness.

Is the devil real? What evidence do we have of the reality of evil?

What did Clare say or do that made the demons flee?

Chapter 13:

How does Elise's home life compare to Clare's? How might a person's home life shape how open they may be to having children later in life?

† Watch the Baby Olivia video at www.BabyOlivia.com. What do you think about it? Is a developing child in the womb “just a clump of cells?”

Elise keeps saying she wants to “put everything back to the way it was before.” After becoming pregnant, is it ever possible for things to return to how they were before? Why or why not?

† Look up Saint John Paul II's Theology of the Body. If available, read aloud from Christopher West's Theology of the Body for Beginners on pages 33 to 34 the section “The Interconnection of Sex and the Whole of Life.” Discuss. If unavailable, watch Father Mike Schmitz's video from Ascension Presents entitled “[Why God Gave Us Bodies](#).” Discuss.

† Look up “fetal microchimerism.” Discuss.

Celia, the Christian counselor Elise meets with at the St. Anne's rectory with Clare, had an abortion when she was younger. Discuss the idea of the church acting as a “hospital for sinners” rather than a “museum for saints.”

Celia relates the story of her own abortion to Elise and Clare. How is the reality of a chemical abortion different from how the mainstream media portrays it? Visit www.AbortionTestimonies.com to learn more about the realities of abortion from real women who have experienced them firsthand.

† How might society change if every person believed that human life is sacred?

Chapter 14:

In what ways can “darkness serve to enhance light’s true beauty,” as Elise says?

Chapter 15:

Was there ever a time in your life when you could identify with Elise’s feeling of hopelessness?

How did Elise’s attempts at maintaining a “perfect image” contribute to her feelings of worthlessness?

Chapter 16:

How did seeing the ultrasound and hearing the heartbeat change Elise’s perception of her pregnancy? How/why?

How do you think Elise felt after seeing the images of her baby on the ultrasound?

Chapter 17:

How can feelings of shame and unworthiness contribute to a sinful lifestyle?

Chapter 18:

Despite the obstacles in Elise’s path, she bravely chose life for her child. What contributed to Elise’s change in perspective and gave her the confidence to go against her mother and peers’ negative influences?

Chapter 19:

Why did Elise’s mother lie to her about her father’s absence all those years?

Chapter 21:

† What could you do to help a friend in need choose life for their unborn child?

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*Love and prayers,
Verity Lucia*