

Discussion Questions Girl, Arise! by Claire Swinarski

Preliminary considerations:

1. How many sessions should we meet? That is up to your group. This can probably be done in three sessions – discussing three chapters per session. There is also enough interesting material in each chapter to merit a separate session for each one. There are no rules except to enjoy being together as Catholic women and to appreciate what each woman brings to the discussion!
2. These questions are just suggestions. Instead of using these questions, some groups may prefer to discuss what each member found interesting in a chapter. Some groups may want to develop their own study questions.
3. It would be fun and interesting for at least one person in each group to post on our Facebook page [Jefferson City Diocesan Women's Ministry](#) what you discussed so we can do some sharing diocesan-wide.

Introduction

1. The author describes herself as honest, bold, and (sometimes) *ragey* just as Jesus was. Think of 2 or 3 words that describe you.
2. What do you do that makes you proud to be a woman?
3. Have you ever wondered why women were created as more relational? Can our emotional tendencies lead us to act with and through the Holy Spirit?
4. Are you still looking for God's true calling for you; your true purpose?

Chapter 1

1. Have you ever felt frustrated or angry when “pigeon-holed” with the expectation of being a quiet, submissive woman of faith? (1-2)
2. The four hallmarks of womanhood allow us to see ourselves as real Catholic women with amazing God-given gifts: self-offering/strength in sorrow/tireless devotion to work/penetrating intuition – how do you identify with these hallmarks in your daily life? (4-5, 7-8)
3. What is *moxie*? What does it mean to be *meek*? Do these attributes complement each other? Can they exist in the same person? (4-5) Recall a time when you used one or both of these characteristics. (6-7)
4. Which of your favorite saints exhibited the characteristics of *moxie* and *meekness*?
5. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 2

1. Can you identify with the author's desire to "find the Catholics" in the real life struggles of immigration, sex trafficking, abortion, etc? (11-12)
2. Do you believe that there truly is "man's work" and "women's work" in life; in our Church? (13-14)
3. St. Paul is a prolific evangelist for Christ. His writings can leave women feeling both maligned and valued. Did the author present the dichotomies (a division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different) in Paul's teachings in a way that better helped you understand his intents? (14-17)
4. "DO SOMETHING." Every person's work is to use our unique gifts to bear witness to God's message. Discuss ways that you may be called to quietly or boldly "do something". (18-20)
5. Claire Swinarski states she is a combination of St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Joan of Arc. Which saint are you most like? Are you, too, a combination? Is there another saint you most identify with? (17-19)
6. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 3

1. The author's college experience of Mass, the faith, and Christian community changed dramatically over the years. She went from observer to tortured attendee, to relationship. What part of her transforming journey can you identify with? (22-25)
2. The realization of being *served* was an "a-ha moment" for Claire. Have you ever had anyone invite you to do something that turned out to be life-changing? If being served can have such a dramatic impact, why can the word *serve* scare us? (25)
3. Who is our ultimate example of service? What does she teach us through her life? (26)
4. How do you show that you value service? Do those around you value service? What component must service have? (27)
5. Through service, we can become more and more Christ-like. We, like Him, hear a special calling to serve the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Is that an easy task; a clear-cut task? (27-29)
6. What are the three challenges of service? (29)
7. Pray, as a blessing upon each other, the Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila. (29-30)
8. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 4

1. Using the criteria that the author sets forth, do you consider yourself a leader? Is that a daunting enterprise? (31-32)
2. How are leadership and service two sides of the same heavenly coin? (35)
3. Recall some of the women mentioned in this chapter. What common thread could you see in their amazing stories? (33-36)
4. Are you willing to embrace "focusing on what we can do" in the Church; trusting that Christ had a unique plan for the gifts of both men and women? (36-40)
5. As a leader in the Church, what should be your ultimate goals? (38-40)
6. Are women losing the feminine gifts that God gifted us with in order to be who the world expects us to be? And at what price? (38-39)
7. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 5

1. A constant truth of the Catholic Church is that abortion is wrong. It ends the life of a baby and affects the life of the mother. Discuss, through eyes of compassion, how this decision continues to be "the only option" some women feel that they have. (42-46)
2. Being pro-life requires a dedication to charitable and effective rhetoric, prayer, and action. That is the difference between being pro-birth and pro-life. Name some organizations, groups, and individuals in your community that "walk the walk" of valuing life from conception to natural death. (46-49)
3. Abortion, adoption, homelessness, veteran-care, immigration, the death penalty, and more issues fill the daily news and find harbors in our hearts. What are we called to do? How are we called to respond? (48-53)
4. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 6

1. Do you have a "connection" to your Church that makes it feel like family? (55-56)
2. Where can we find the rules, guidelines, and teachings of our Church? Why are there so many gray areas within those guidelines? (56-58)
3. Jesus is our touchstone for everything! Complete this sentence in your mind or aloud with your trusted sisters: "Jesus is real even if ____; even when ____." (59-60)

4. According to the author, why is our connection to Jesus critical to being a Catholic feminist? (60-61)
5. What can you say about Eucharist, the Bible, Confession, and our traditional prayers? (60-66)
6. Discuss the belief of "*JESUS – my Person*".
7. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 7

1. The Catholic Church teaches that artificial contraception is immoral. The author presented the reasonings behind this most difficult teaching. What are they? (67-69)
2. We are called to love and serve others through our vocation. Which vocation do you think is the most difficult? (69-77)
3. If you had the opportunity to "try on" a different vocation, what would it be?
4. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 8

1. What do you find most challenging in getting to "know your neighbor"? (81-89)
2. Is it important to gauge intent before correcting others? Why? (82-89)
3. Do we need rules and standards? How do we know when love is needed instead of the Pharisee's eye with its "rush to judgment"? (87-88)
4. This week, look at your neighbors and, mindfully, see "the face of God". (89)
5. What was the most compelling part of this chapter for you?

Chapter 9

1. Who do you see when you look in the mirror? Do you truly see yourself as a daughter of God? (94)
2. Is it always easy to recognize the devil's slap and nag? (93)
3. Every gift we possess comes from God! Our disbelief, uncertainty, or ignorance of this leads us to a lack of both self-love and a lack of humility! Can you describe a time in your life when you experienced either of these things? (95)
4. Meditate, quietly, on what you could accomplish if you embraced God's absolute love for you. Share, if you wish. (97-98)