



# Flickering Hope

## Discussion Guide

### About the Book:

Things finally seem to be falling into place for Sadie. Bear season is over, and her relationship with her art teacher is on the mend. Her home life is going better than ever, and even her enemy, Frankie, wants to be friends. But can Frankie be trusted? Ruth and Andrew think she's spying for her father, helping him find a way to capture Sadie's favorite bear. But Sadie suspects something else is going on with Frankie. She must decide who to trust and find out if---and how---her growing faith can get her through.

### To Discuss:

1. Do you have a favorite family tradition for Christmas or another holiday? What makes your tradition special to you?
2. Have you ever gone on a snow-hike or skiing in fresh powder? What kinds of adventures do you enjoy in the snow?
3. When Sadie and her friends share about the cabin in the woods, the adults immediately swoop in and take over, leaving the kids feeling left out. Parents have legitimate reasons to want to protect their kids, of course. What do you think should happen in situations such as these? How can adults value their kids' input, and give them opportunities to be involved in solving problems, while also keeping their kids safe?
4. Have you ever planned a special or surprise present for a friend? Have you ever received one? What might you give as a surprise gift?
5. In chapter twenty-three of *Flickering Hope*, Vivian challenges Sadie to continue to layer and draw over her mistakes instead of starting over on a new page. Vivian's point is that Sadie will develop further by working through her mistakes rather than always trying to be perfect. What about you? Do you fall into the trap of trying to be perfect, only to get stuck? Have you ever grown through making a mistake?
6. It turns out that Frankie has a variety of reasons for acting so explosively, and when Sadie understands better what is going on, she's able to have more compassion. Still, it's not easy to determine why someone is acting a particular way when they aren't willing to share their reasons. What might an open doorway for talking look like? How could you leave a doorway open for someone?
7. Do you have a favorite scene in the book?
8. Sadie's youth group comes together to give a "miracle" to the family in the woods. What are the communities in your life? Is there a way you could organize one of those communities to give to someone in need?

Naomi Kinsman

## Extension Activities:

### Giving Time:

Listen carefully. Is there someone in your life who needs a little more time? Time is a valuable commodity because there's just only so much of it. But you could give someone time in a few ways. You could help someone complete a task in half the time by helping them with it. Or, you could watch your younger siblings for an afternoon to give one of your parents a few hours all to themselves. Or you could even help a parent carve out some creative or get-things-done time by designating a time during the day when you will not interrupt them.

### The Gift of Adventure:

Look for an experience you can give to someone you love. Instead of wrapping up something you buy at a store, try giving a picnic in the park, a scavenger hunt in a museum, or a snow (or sun) adventure, complete with a hike, a snowman (or sand castle) and hot cocoa (or lemonade.) Have the adventure now, or wrap up a description of your plans and surprise a friend or family member today!

### A New Skill:

Sadie and her friends have a blast learning how to make mosaic glass ornaments. Many times, we think that if we don't know how to do something, we shouldn't try. Probably our first efforts won't come out the way we want them to come out. Still, learning something new with friends is an excellent bonding experience. Get together with a group of friends and make a list of ten new things you can try together, such as cooking a new recipe, learning to paint ceramics, learning a new style of dance, or making origami.

Take it one step further. Once you practice a bit, set a group goal in order to give to someone with your new skill. Make origami-flower bouquets for your teachers, or paint new coffee mugs for your dads at the local ceramic painting store. By learning, creating and giving together, you're creating the best kind of community.



### About the Author:

Author of the *From Sadie's Sketchbook* series and *Spilled Ink*, the award winning Inklings Writer's Notebook, Naomi is passionate about sharing her love of writing and creativity with young writers. Naomi's background in improvisational and story theatre as well as her arts education work has convinced her that creative play is a doorway through which learners can find inspiration and transformative learning experiences. Naomi loves to play in many ways, but some of her favorites are tap-dancing, sketching, experimenting in the kitchen and tag with her Portuguese Water Dog, Turley. Naomi has a BA in Theatre Arts from Seattle Pacific University and has studied theatre with the Piven Theatre Workshop and ACT. She also has a Masters in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University.

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