Talk About It

A book club is a good way to talk about books with others. Here are some questions you might want to discuss after you have read *Keeping Secrets*. If you don’t have a book club, there are lots of online resources to help you start one. I would love to hear from you.

1. What surprised you most about South Africa as shown in this book?

2. Sindi points out several things her American friends would say or do. What differences do you see between the South African worldview and the American worldview Sindi has been briefly exposed to?

3. Sindi is afraid people will find out her father has HIV. How would you feel if you lived next door to someone with HIV? Would you respond any differently if the person had cancer?

4. Why do you think Sindi’s parents aren’t willing to talk about HIV even within the family?

5. In the Prologue Sindi says, “It hurts to fall, but you get up; you keep skating.” In what ways is Sindi hurt by the things that are happening in her life? Why isn’t continuing to go through the motions of normal life enough to solve those problems?

6. How is Solly hurt by his father’s illness and death? In your culture, how do boys learn how to be men?

7. Why do you think Solly understands Sindi’s love of skating better than other family members? How difficult do you think it was for him to sell his skates? Why do you think he did?

8. How does her skating define who Sindi is? How does NOT skating affect her image of herself? Why doesn’t Sindi want her family to know when she watches skating on TV?

9. Why does Sindi buy her mother a cheap vase for Christmas?

10. In order to hide the family’s secret, Sindi cuts herself off from friendships. How do you think the different characters would have reacted if they found out? Why?

11. In Chapter 21 Jabu ridicules Sindi’s suggestion that she should be tested. Why do you think she reacts so strongly?

12. Why do you think Jabu gets involved with someone like Makatso?

13. Makatso jokes about HIV. In what ways do young adults you know take risks while denying that anything bad will happen to them?

14. Which characters model living positively with HIV? In what ways? Can you think of other difficulties where these ways of coping might be helpful?

15. What is MakaLerato’s advice to Jabu (pp. 163-4)? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

16. Several churches are mentioned: Wonderful Words of Life in Tembisa; the Khumalo’s mostly-white former church in Kempton Park; the small Baptist chapel on the ridge in KwaZulu; and Uncle Njabulo’s Apostolic congregation by the river. How do they differ? Which would you most like to attend and why?

17. How is leprosy (Hanson’s Disease) in biblical times similar to HIV today? How are they different? How do you think Jesus would treat someone with HIV if he lived in your community today? Why would that encourage someone living with HIV?