

FINDING GOD IN NARNIA

Thomas McCarty

INTRODUCTION

1. Relevance (Why read *Narnia*?)

Francis Bacon is widely quoted as saying, “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ...” This wonderful series, equally enjoyable and meaningful to “children” of all ages, most definitely falls into the latter.

Time book critic and author Lev Grossman expressed it so well in his article, “Why Narnia still matters,” written on the 50th anniversary of Lewis’ death in 2013.¹ Grossman said, in part:

[T]he fact that Narnia is a world with a living, present God in it, and a world with evil and suffering in it — didn’t cause me to give up on Lewis. It made me want to talk back to him, through my own novels, as [British author Sir Philip] Pullman does, and any number of other writers besides. It’s a sign of Lewis’ greatness that, although he’s been dead for a half a century, people still need to talk to him: to ask him questions, to air their grievances, to share his sense of wonder, and to tell him stories the way he told us stories. If there’s any Deeper Magic in this fallen, Aslan-less world, that is it.

2. Outline (10 weeks)

Week 1: Introduction: How to read *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Week 2: “The Lion was breathing out.” (*The Magician’s Nephew*, p. 702)

Week 3: “The Fool has come. Bind him fast.” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, p. 180)

Week 4: “Deeper Magic from before the dawn of time.” (*The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, title of Chapter 15)

Week 5: “The doom is nearer now: it is at the door; it has lifted the latch.” (*The Horse and His Boy*, p. 307)

Week 6: “Every year you grow, you will find me bigger.” (*Prince Caspian*, p. 380)

Week 7: “There I have another name; You must learn to know Me by that name.” (*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, p. 541)

Week 8: “You would not have called to Me unless I had been calling to you.” (*The Silver Chair*, p. 558)

Week 9: “All these came in at the door on Aslan’s right.” (*The Last Battle*, p. 751)

Week 10: “The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended; this is the morning.” (*The Last Battle*, p. 767)

¹ Interestingly, Lewis died the same day as President Kennedy and British writer Aldous Huxley. For an excellent and, yes, extremely humorous book about a series of fictitious conversations among these three, read *Between Heaven and Hell*, authored by Peter Kreeft.

² Page references are taken from the 2004 HarperCollins edition of the *Chronicles*...See more information below.

3. Structure of Class (65 Min.)

WHAT	LENGTH
Arrival/Greetings/"Housekeeping"	5 min.
Talk	15 min.
"Table" discussion of talk	15 min.
"Table" sharing to whole class	15 min.
Prayer concerns	10 min.
Adjourn	5 min.
Total	65 min.

4. Texts (optional but encouraged). A limited number of the all-in-one book suggested below will be available in BB&B.

- C.S. Lewis. *The Chronicles of Narnia* (HarperCollins, 2004). NOTE: There are many editions of the series. This one, all 7 stories in one book, graced by a superlative leonine cover and with the excellent illustrations of Pauline Baynes throughout, is my favorite.
- Paul F. Ford. *Companion to Narnia, Revised Edition: A Complete Guide to the Magical World of C.S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia* (HarperCollins, 2005).

5. Order of the Series

- **Publication Order** - The books were originally published in this order:
 1. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (1950)
 2. Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia (1951)
 3. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952)
 4. The Silver Chair (1953)
 5. The Horse and His Boy (1954)
 6. The Magician's Nephew (1955)
 7. The Last Battle (1956)
- **Chronological Order** - Sometime after the death of C. S. Lewis (1963), British editions of the books began appearing that were numbered according to the order the stories take place:
 1. The Magician's Nephew
 2. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
 3. The Horse and His Boy
 4. Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia
 5. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
 6. The Silver Chair
 7. The Last Battle