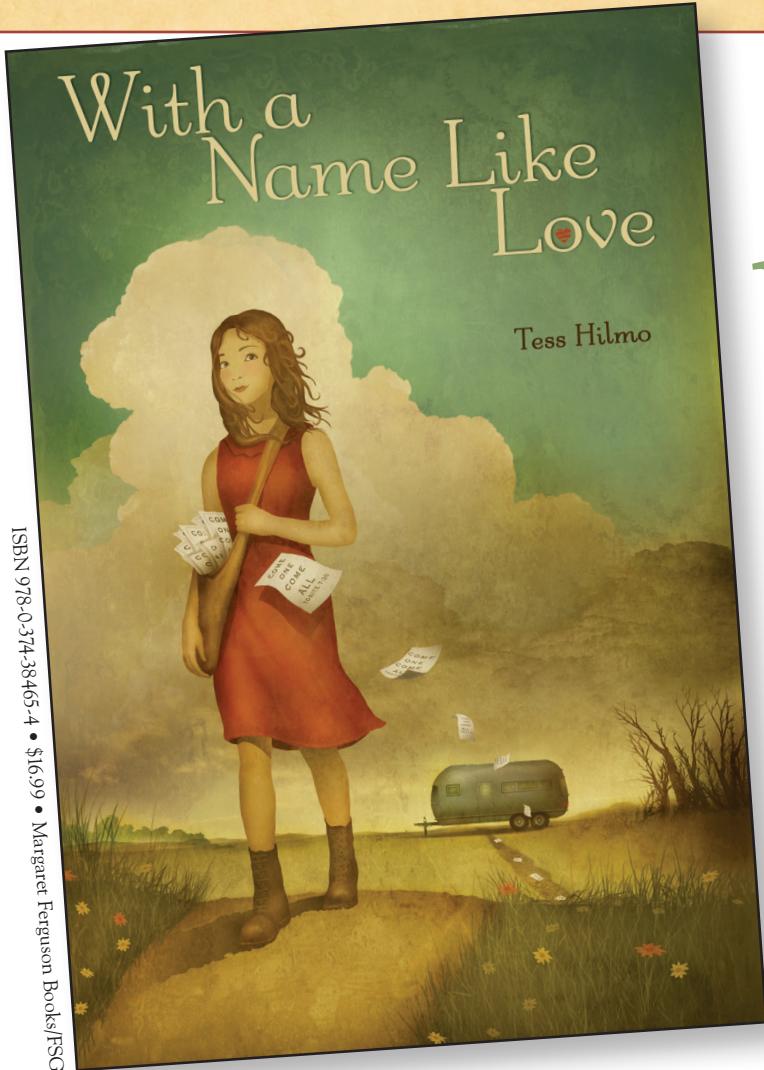


DISCUSSION GUIDE



With a Name Like Love

by
Tess Hilmo

WHEN OLLIE'S DADDY, the Reverend Everlasting Love, pulls their travel trailer into Binder, Arkansas, to lead a three-day revival, Ollie is certain that this town will be like all the others they visit. But on their first day in town, Ollie meets Jimmy Koppel, whose mother is in jail for murdering his father. Jimmy insists that his mother is innocent, and Ollie believes him. Still, even if Ollie convinces her daddy to stay on in Binder, how can two kids free a grown woman who has signed a confession? Ollie's longing for a friend and her daddy's penchant for searching out lost souls prove to be a formidable force in this tiny town where everyone seems bent on judging and jailing without a trial.

1957 rural Arkansas comes vividly to life in this heartwarming novel about friendship, truth, frogs, and the power of love.

★ “A story about home, justice and love, beautifully told.” —KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review

“[An] affectionate portrait of a close-knit family of modest means, struggling to do good in the world and right by each other.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Before Reading

The characters in *With a Name Like Love* are united—and at times divided—because of their points of view. Olivene, in particular, tries to understand the diverse perspectives of those around her. Explore the idea of perspective by investigating the old saying, “Never judge someone until you have traveled a mile in his shoes.” Collect a variety of shoes from hiking boots to high heels. Select a shoe from the collection and envision the life of the shoe’s owner: what the owner would look like and act like. Write a short narrative describing a day in the life of the shoe’s owner.

Print the “Before and After” worksheet (page 5). Before you read the novel, mark each statement in the “before” column with a plus sign if you agree with the statement, or a minus sign if you disagree. After you read the novel, you will return to this sheet to record if your opinions have changed or remain the same.

Discussion Questions

- Ollie’s family travels from town to town without a house to call home. Discuss the pros and cons of this kind of lifestyle. Would this work for your family?
- Early in the novel, Ollie says “Everyone’s got some goodness in them.” Do you think this is true?
- Ollie has four sisters: Martha, Gwen, Camille, and Ellen. How would you describe each one?
- What do the townspeople think about Jimmy? Why does Ollie want to befriend him?
- Compare Mrs. Mahoney with Mrs. Carter.
- Discuss the role that Jimmy’s frogs play in his life and in the story.
- When you first meet Virginia Koppel, do you think she could have murdered her husband? Why would she confess to doing so?
- Who do you think set fire to the Loves’ campsite?
- Why does Mrs. Mahoney invite the Loves to stay with her? How do Ollie and her sisters feel about living in a house?
- How does Ollie feel about the possibility of staying on in Binder? How does her daddy feel about it and about having a church of his own?
- Describe the incident when the Loves open the church doors for the first day of services. How did this make you feel? What do you think about the way Reverend Love handled it? Did Sheriff Burton and Ray’s actions surprise you?
- How does Ollie use Ray’s superstitious nature to her advantage?
- Discuss the concept of truth—Ray’s truth; Virginia’s truth; the truth about why Mrs. Carter’s business is suffering.
- How do you feel about the way the story ends?

Activities

- Revisit the “Before and After” worksheet and mark each statement with either a + or a – in the “after” column to indicate how you feel about each statement after reading the novel. Select one statement about which you feel strongly or a statement that reflects a change in your opinion. Write a short essay about what event from the story strengthened your opinion about a statement or caused you to change your opinion.
- Maintain a Dialectical Journal (page 4) as you read *With a Name Like Love*. Select a quote from each chapter that strikes you as interesting or important. Copy the quote into your dialectical journal, record the page number of the quote, and explain why you chose each quote.
- Many people in Binder, Arkansas have been quick to judge Jimmy Koppel. Ollie senses that there is more to Jimmy than the townspeople of Binder would have her believe. As Ollie pursues a friendship with Jimmy, she discovers new information that reshapes her perception of him. Pair up, especially with a person you don’t know well. Talk with your partner for ten minutes and discover at least three things about him/her that you didn’t know before. Write a brief narrative describing what you thought you knew about your partner based on your original assessment of him/her and how the new information from your conversation has changed your perception of him/her.
- The people Reverend Love and his family meet in Binder have strong convictions about innocence or guilt, kindness or cruelty, and belief or doubt. Choose two characters from the novel that represent a pair of contrasting positions. Create a poem for two voices using the perspectives of characters with opposing viewpoints. For example, you could choose “kindness or cruelty” and use the characters of Mrs. Mahoney and Mrs. Carter as the voices in your poem. Write your poem with alternating lines for each character. Find a partner to read your poem aloud with you. Each partner should read the lines of one character.
- There are many ways to become a hero. Some people risk danger, some stand up for their beliefs, and some people right the wrongs that they perceive. There are many heroes and heroines in *With a Name Like Love*. Pick one of the characters and write a short essay on why you think he or she is a hero. Be sure to reference specific examples from the story to support your thesis.
- Look closely at the book cover illustration for *With a Name Like Love*. Create your own new cover for the book illustrating a particular event from the story or a character other than Ollie. Display the covers in the classroom or library.

Tess Hilmo has always loved Southern Gospel music. An amateur composer, she wrote a song called “Lead Me On” that is patterned after those old Spirituals. That song was the genesis of *With a Name Like Love*, her first novel, and is featured in the book. Tess Hilmo lives with her family in Utah. To learn more about her life and work, visit her website: www.TessHilmo.com.

This curriculum guide was created by Leigh Courtney, Ph.D. She teaches first and second grade in the Global Education program at a public elementary school in San Diego, California. She holds both master’s and doctoral degrees in education, with an emphasis on curriculum and instruction.

Name _____

Dialectical Journal for *With a Name Like Love*

Quote	Page number	Why you found this quote interesting or important

Before and After

Record your opinion of each statement in the center column before and then after you read *With a Name Like Love*.

Mark each statement with a + if you agree or a – if you disagree with the statement.

Before		After
	Education occurs only in the classroom.	
	Everyone has prejudices about things and people.	
	Home means living in one place.	
	People seem different on the outside, but deep down they're all the same.	
	Even a broken life is better than no life at all.	
	People should mind their own business and not get involved in the troubles of others.	
	There are more advantages to living in a small town than in a big city.	
	Protecting a friend is an act of courage.	