

**Reading Group Guide for**  
***Mattie's Pledge***  
**by Jan Drexler**

*(Spoiler alert—these questions assume you've already read the book)*

1. At the beginning of the book, Mattie's head is full of dreams for the future. But sometimes those dreams are in conflict with each other. Have you ever felt that way, holding onto conflicting desires? Can you tell the group what happened as you chose one over the other?
2. When Mattie and Jacob see each other for the first time after many years, their childhood friendship is still intact. Who do you think had thought more about their relationship during the intervening years?
3. The families traveling together to Indiana had one thing in common: they were leaving their homes and had no hope that they would ever return. Have you ever moved a long distance in your life? If you've been able to return to visit friends and your favorite haunts, what was that like?
4. Naomi, Mattie's sister, has a slight physical deformity—a cast eye. But we, as readers, don't find out about it until chapter 4. Why do you think Mattie never mentions this feature of Naomi's?
5. From the first time Mattie sees Cole Bates, she is drawn to him. Why do you think he holds this fascination for her?
6. Jacob and Henry, Mattie's younger brothers, were both affected by the death of little Hansli years ago. We find out that Jacob avoided Henry after Hansli's death because the other boy reminded him too much of his brother. Have you ever experienced something like this? How do you think Jacob's rejection made Henry feel?
7. As long as Mattie could remember, she dreamed of seeing the land on the other side of the western mountains. They had been the barrier between her life in Brothers Valley and her dreams. But once she saw what was on the other side of those mountains, she was disappointed. Have you ever longed for something, only to find out, once you achieved your goal, that it wasn't anything like you had anticipated?
8. Jacob feels helpless as he watches Mattie's attraction to Cole grow. Have you ever watched someone you love travel down a path that you know will be disastrous for them? How did you respond?
9. At one point as the family is traveling inside the wagon on a rainy day, Annalise entertains the children by telling them the story of how their family came to America a hundred years earlier. Do you know your family's story? Is it important to keep those memories alive? What do you think you can do to help your family learn about your history?
10. Once the travelers reach Ohio, Mattie sees a farm that captures her imagination. Without knowing it, she had been longing for a home, even as her dreams pulled her toward the horizon. With so many conflicting desires, do you think Mattie will ever learn to be content with what God provides for her?

11. Sometimes we find that God gives us what our heart desires, even if it isn't what is best for us. When Mattie had her chance to go west with Cole Bates, the reality of what was happening helped her discover what her true desires were. Have you ever had dreams that you later realized were not part of God's plans for your life? What did you do to bring your desires in line with his?
12. What do you think will happen with Naomi and Davey in the next book?

