

Keep the Lights Burning, Abbie Study Guide

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For the book
by Peter and
Connie Roop



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Synopsis

This is a true story about Abbie Burgess and her family. In the winter of 1856, her father, a lighthouse keeper, leaves to get badly-needed supplies and oil for the lamps. A violent winter storm begins, making it impossible for Mr. Burgess to return for four weeks. Abbie had promised her father that she would keep the lights burning on the lighthouse. She stays true to her promise, and she and her sisters care for their sick mother. When her father finally returns he is very proud of Abbie.

Word Pictures

A word picture is made by using words that create a feeling or picture in your mind. They are called imagery, similes, and metaphors. Finish the sentences.

1. Papa said “. . . You must keep the lights burning, Abbie. Many ships count on our lighthouses.” Abbie followed Papa down the steps. Another day, she would have raced. This morning, _____

2. The waves would be too high for the little boat. Then she would have to care for the lights. Abbie looked up. The two _____

3. Abbie ran up the lighthouse steps. She stopped at the top to look out. The waves _____

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3. Have you ever had a situation in your life where your mom, dad, brother, sister, or friend depended on you to do what you said? What was it? _____

4. Abbie talked to her chickens about her troubles. Who do you talk to when you are troubled? _____

In the bible, God tells us to talk to Him. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16–17. “Be joyful always; pray continually; . . .” When do you spend time in prayer?

When would be a good time each day to pray? _____

Answer Key

Note: Most of the questions in Progeny Press study guides deal with students' understanding and interpretation of issues in the novel; therefore, most answers will be individual to the student. Progeny Press answer keys are designed to be as inclusive as possible for the teacher and/or parent, giving enough background and information to judge whether the student has grasped the essence of the issue and the question. We try to point out some directions students' answers might take, which directions might be best, and some errors that may appear. Students are not expected to answer as completely as the answers provided in the Answer Key.

Before-You-Read Activities

1. In the book on page 16 is a picture of the cottage between the lighthouses. Show this picture to the children. Point out the two chimneys. They may have burned wood or coal. They may have used open fireplaces or woodstoves or coalburners. Stone walls and floors would have been cold and difficult to heat. Notice how many layers of clothing and wraps they wore by looking through the pictures in the book.
2. In the mid 1800s working class girls wore long underwear when it was cold, pantaloons, at least one or two petticoats (usually more) and an outer dress or skirt and blouse. Over this they would wear an apron or pinafore. If it was cold, they would add a shawl or coat and a hat or kerchief.
3. Lighthouses were built mainly of stone. It was readily available, durable and withstood the wind, seawater, and storms. Display pictures of lighthouses or have children use their books to look at while they draw a lighthouse.
4. Ships depended upon the lighthouses to warn them of dangerous rocks and shorelines. Answers will vary.
5. Abbie and her sisters were taught by their parents and eventually, the older children taught the younger ones. They probably used the Bible and any other books they might have been able to afford. Remind the children that only very wealthy people owned many books at that time. There was also very little paper available.

Looking at the Story

Answers will vary.

1. Her father sailed to town to get supplies - medicine, oil, and food.
2. Abbie felt scared and nervous.
3. Yes, it is the same as a promise because we should tell the truth.
4. Abbie talked to her chickens because she was scared.
5. The first time Abbie lit the lights, a ship at sea saw them and steered away from the dangerous rocks.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Without the chickens and their eggs, Abbie, her sisters and her mother may have starved.
8. Answers will vary.