

Discussion Questions

As you read this story with your child, be sure to monitor their comprehension of the basic details in the book. Use these questions to guide conversations about the storyline as well as to stimulate rich discussion about the story. After you have discussed the basics of the story with your child, use some of the questions that relate to four of the basic themes (heroism, good/bad behavior, rules and rule breaking, trust). Questions are organized by themes below the initial discussion questions.

1. Ricky's parents explain that Tako can stay with them as long as he follows at least one rule and is "good." What is that rule? Why would Ricky's parents pick this rule as the most important?
2. Ask your child if they think you would have allowed Tako to stay if they brought him home after a bike ride.
3. What is the main difference between Mr. Pritchard's bakery and the Lee family's bakery?
4. How does Mr. Pritchard convince the Lee family that he is a "good" man?
5. What makes Tako break the main rule? If Tako could speak, what do you think he would say about his behavior?
6. After reading this story, would you trust Ricky to watch your pet?
7. What kinds of things could Mr. Pritchard have done to have a more successful business? Did he have other choices besides trickery and dishonesty? What would have been some alternative success pathways?
8. If Mr. Pritchard became our neighbor, would we trust him? What if he brought you your favorite kind of candy or video game, would you take it?



Theme: Heroism

1. One of the central themes in this book is heroism. Have your child explain their definition of what it means to be a hero. What does it mean when people say that a hero “saved the day?”
2. In this story, Mr. McCracken’s job is to protect people from misbehaved animals. Is he a hero? How does he change throughout the story?
3. Tell your child about one of your own personal heroes, explaining the reasons why.
4. What kinds of actions are heroic?
5. Are police officers, military personnel, doctors, nurses, or firefighters heroes? Is anyone who helps people a hero?
6. How are “everyday” heroes different from superheroes?
7. Can teachers be heroes? Can parents be heroes? Can babysitters be heroes?
8. Is there someone who has done heroic things for our family or for someone we know?

Theme: Trust

1. Ricky promises his parents that he will make sure Tako does not go anywhere by himself. Did you think Ricky would try his best? Did he keep his promise to his parents? Did he try his best?
2. Why didn’t Ricky’s parents initially trust that Tako was a good dog?
3. At the beginning of the story when Ricky’s parents first meet Mr. Pritchard, why do they trust him? Were there any clues as to why they shouldn’t have trusted him initially? Do you think they thought about his motives?



4. What kinds of things does Mr. Pritchard do in order to convince the Lee family that he is trustworthy?
5. What is Ricky's ultimate goal in the story? What is Tako's ultimate goal? What is Mr. Pritchard's ultimate goal? How do these goals intersect or create conflict?
6. What kinds of things could Mr. Pritchard have done to have a more successful business? Did he have other choices besides trickery and dishonesty? What would have been some alternative success pathways?
7. If Tako leaves the house by himself ever again, do you think that the Lee family will trust that he is trying to protect them or do you think that they will send him back to the pound again?

Theme: Good & Bad Behavior

1. After reading the story, would you say that Tako is a good dog or a bad dog? What are some of his actions that would be considered "good" or "bad?"
2. After reading the story, would you say that Mr. Pritchard is a good man or a bad man? What are some of his actions that would be considered "good" or "bad?" Was he being "good" when he brought over the plant to the Lee family?
3. Mr. Pritchard loses his business after the Lee family begins their bakery business. Did you feel bad for him? Why or why not?

Theme: Rules and Rule Breaking

1. Why do you have rules at school? What are some rules in our family? How are they supposed to help us?
2. Do you think that Tako should have been punished for breaking the one rule he needed to follow? Why or why not?



3. Think about a time that you broke a rule. Why did you break it? What kind of consequence was there? Do you think the consequences in our house are fair? Are some rules more important than others?
4. If someone breaks a rule, does that mean that they are a “bad” person? Do “good” people break rules?
5. Part of growing up is learning how to make decisions on your own—especially when adults are not nearby. What do you think about when you are trying to make good decisions on your own? How do rules help us make good decisions? Is there any advice you have gotten from adults about how to make thoughtful and productive decisions?



Related Activities to be Done at Home

1. Bakery Drawing: Throughout the book, many desserts are mentioned. Have your child tell you his/her favorite dessert. Work with them to draw a picture of it and write a description that would go next to this dessert in the Lee Family bakery!
2. Dog Collage: Have your child describe a pet they would like to have and how they would take care of it. Search the internet for pictures of dogs that your child likes. Print them out and create a collage (or tag them and create a pinterest site!) of your child's favorite dogs. Hopefully, a picture of Tako will make it on there, as well!
3. Recipe Collection: *The Good Dog* is full of delectable illustrations that entice all readers. As you read, help your child imagine what is actually in those artful desserts like a smushberry muffin! List the ingredients and then try and see if you can come up with recipes for the inventive desserts in the book. Pick one of the recipes to try and bake. Enjoy eating your delicious dessert!
4. Artistic Creations with *The Good Dog*: Have your child use art supplies to draw an imaginary scene with Tako in it. What is another adventure that Tako could have that would also make a good piece for an art display? If you have sculpting clay in your home, help your child make a dog that looks like Tako and/or some of the other characters in the book. Have your child act out the scene "claymation-style!"
5. Rules Poster: Discuss the rules you have in your house about keeping the family safe. With your child, make a poster of the rules that you both think are the most important and discuss why. Also, discuss if there are ever times where it might be okay to break a rule and still be "good."

