



## Fable Foibles

Discussion questions for *How to Get Ready for Short-Term Missions* chapters based on "Mission to Mars: a fable" by Greg Taylor.

### CHAPTER ONE: "THE JOURNEY BEGINS"

1. The Monk asks, "What did you learn when you went to Mars?" Why is this question important to answer? Why is it important to ask it *before* going?
2. "Our mission! It's to tell them about life on earth." This mission proclamation is pretty last minute! What is the problem with this goal?
3. The monkeynauts were happy to see Mars in the windshield of the rocket to simply have hope of stretching their legs and hang from whatever trees they might find on Mars. Is there anything unrealistic about their expectations here? What might happen if they find out their assumptions are not true?
4. "Think we'll see Martians, do you? Do you?" Dave said excitedly. Just think about his question for a minute. He was excited and that is good. But now list at least two things you see that may have made his question a self-centered. (Note: *This is a tricky one!*)

### CHAPTER TWO: "THINGS TO PACK"

1. "The monkeys decided they'd sleep better in the rocket, even though it was cramped. They were afraid of the small flying creatures that seemed to be biting the Martians and figured they couldn't get inside the rocket."
2. Was this polite?
3. What message do you think this sent to the Martians?

### CHAPTER THREE: "ENTERING A FOREIGN CULTURE"

1. "We want to keep this simple, because you seem to be simple people." What kind of assumption is bob making here?
2. Is it a fair and/or valid assumption?

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: "WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER"**

1. Dave complains that he misses home almost immediately after their arrival. What do you think caused him to feel this way?
2. "Don't take any wooden nickels!" This is lame and completely useless advice. Have you ever been on a mission trip and heard something just as futile? Can you give examples (without embarrassing anyone that might be in the room)? How can we avoid this on our mission trips?

#### **CHAPTER FIVE: "WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO OFFER"**

1. The Martians seemed just fine with the monkey's mission. Is it always important to agree with on the purpose of a mission? Why do you think they were 'fine with it?'
2. "Dave called him Marty and it stuck. Though Marty wasn't his real name." Why do you think we never hear Marty's real name in the entire story? Is this significant? Why?

#### **CHAPTER SIX: "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS"**

"You taught about bananas, swinging from trees, but you didn't—you never thought to tell them about anything outside this zoo, never thought to bring back even a sample of the Martian life, to learn something of what they might teach us?" The Monk said, then he was silent again. All the monkeys pulled their mouths down and nodded in agreement with the wise old man.

1. Did any of the monkeynauts get to know any of the Martians personally? Why or why not?
2. What did the monkeynauts teach the Martians? Was it useful?
3. How do you think these monkeynauts could have been better prepared for their trip?

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: "WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU RETURN HOME"**

1. The monkeynauts planned to stay for a week. They arrived, gave the presentation on the second day, and left on the third. Why do you think their trip was so short? Would it have been worthwhile to stick it out?
2. When the monkeynauts got home they bragged about how impressed the Martians were, how much they'd made them laugh, how one Martian—Marty—told them that they'd been convinced bananas were a very fine food. Do you think the monkeys have a reason to brag? What does their attitude tell us about what *you* should try to avoid?
4. They figured if they succeeded in getting even one Martian to eat bananas, their trip had been a success. Does this sound familiar? Does 'getting even one person to come to Jesus' a valid reason for a mission trip? Why?
5. "We'll go back!" Dave said. Is this a hasty response? Are they *ready* to go back?
6. The Monk returned with them to show them more useful things about the big blue ball, like what monkey and zookeeper families are like and how they were created by someone called God long ago. Is this change in mission better than the first one? Is there anything still missing? What advice would *you* give to the monkeys for their second trip?

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: "KICKING YOUR KIDS OUT OF THE FAMILY TREE" (FOR PARENTS!)**

1. Why did the monkeys break out of the zoo?
2. Do you think their trip is going to be worth all the candies and candles they sold to old ladies, all the money raised?
3. Did the monkeynauts go with or without the support of the zookeeper? Why or why not? (Was this a good or bad thing, respectively?)