DISCUSSION GUIDE * The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night * Mark Haddon

1. **What do we learn about diagnostic categories and labeling?**
2. **How does the book help us experience empathy?**
   a. **What is Christopher like? What does he like? Dislike?**
      1. **Metaphors, lying, uncertainty, strangers**
      2. **Wants to be an astronaut – why?**
      3. **What is his favorite dream?**
   b. **What would you say is the difference between the external world (what people see of Christopher on the outside) and the internal world (what the reader learns about Christopher through his narration)**
   c. **What are some similarities and differences between you and Christopher?**
3. **What are some of the family dynamics?**
   a. **Relationship between father and son**
   b. **Mother and son; why does the mother leave?**
   c. **Mother and father**
   d. **What might be some of the effects of a "special needs" child on a family?**
4. **What is the meaning of violence, domestic and otherwise, in the book?**
5. **Why is there so much emphasis on lying?**
   a. **What are some of the lies in the book?**
6. **What do we learn about trust from the book?**
   a. **When is trust broken?**
   b. **How can trust, once broken, be rebuilt**
   c. **Is anyone in the book completely trustworthy?**
7. **What is the relationship between a detective story and medicine?**
   a. **Why does Christopher set out to solve the mystery?**
   b. **What are the limitations of rationality and analysis suggested in the book?**
8. **In what sense is this book a story about personal growth?**
   a. **How does this relate to where you are in your own life?**
   b. **When Christopher goes on his journey, what is the role of "groaning" and what does he try to do instead?**
   c. **What kind of "groaning" do you do and what alternative strategies do you have?**
   d. **How does Christopher feel about being in a new place with new people? How do you feel?**
   e. **How does Christopher gain confidence? How do you**