

RED RAIN

RED RAIN #1

Study Guide



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Hi everyone! It's Rachel Newhouse, the author. Thank you so much for your interest in the Red Rain series! I wrote these books with *your* kids in mind. My goal is to not only represent Christ in the science fiction genre but also give parents and educators a clean, trustworthy series they can give to their young readers. I hope these books encourage your student to love reading, love Jesus, and maybe, just maybe, love the wonderful world of science fiction.

To help facilitate these goals, I've created this study guide to correspond to *Red Rain* (Book #1 of the Red Rain series). It's written with homeschool parents in mind with a strong emphasis on discussion questions and group activities. My goal is to help make reading a family affair. In a world where entertainment can be dangerous, one of the best ways to protect your kids is to engage with them about what they are reading and watching. When you interact with kids about media, you build trust and create a safe environment where they can bring their questions to you. The discussion prompts and group activities in this guide are designed to create a dialog between parents and readers and encourage students to think critically about themes in literature.

In addition to discussion questions, I've also included a reading comprehension quiz and several independent activities your reader can complete on their own. The great thing about science fiction is that it naturally ties into several core subjects—science, social studies, literature—meaning you can use this book as the basis for a whole unit study if you wish! This study guide is divided by core subject; you can work through it in order or focus on the topics that interest your student the most.

Most of the activities in this guide are geared towards upper middle grade/lower high school (10-16 years old, or 4th-10th grade), with many activities being adaptable to younger grades. Since the series appeals to both middle grade and young adult audiences, several of the units have expansion activities for advanced high school students.

I love hearing from readers and parents, so if you or your student have any feedback on the book or this guide, feel free to message me through my website or social media! I'd love to hear from you. Happy reading, and welcome to Mars!

*In Christ,
Rachel*



ABOUT THE BOOK



Please don't send me back to Earth.

The year is 2075. Earth is ruled by a one-world government. In order to maintain unity, all citizens must deny their national, racial, and religious identities—or suffer the consequences.

Stripped of her rights for refusing to assimilate, sixteen-year-old Philadelphia Smyrna escapes Earth's religious containment camps when her father is summoned to work on Mars. The remote research base seems like a haven of tolerance—until she discovers it's the same base where her brother mysteriously died two years before. Searching for answers, she stumbles into a hidden lab and uncovers terrifying experiments for an apocalyptic weapon. The scientist in charge has cruel plans for Earth, and he will kill to keep his

secret hidden. Racing to stay one step ahead, Philadelphia must decide whether to save the people who have oppressed her for her entire life—or save her family and let Earth burn.

Reading Level: Age 10+ (8+ for confident readers)
Content Warnings: mild violence, implied swearing

For more information about the series, including a comprehensive content breakdown, visit: www.rachelnewhouse.com/for-parents



READING COMPREHENSION QUIZ

(Answers in back.)

Chapters 1-5

1) True/False: Philadelphia has been going to public school for her entire life.

True / False

2) Philadelphia mentions that more people used to live in the containment camp, but now only a couple dozen families are living there. What do you think happened to the other inmates?

3) Philadelphia says the government wants people to “assimilate.” Based on these chapters, what do you think assimilate means?

4) In Chapter 3, the government claims they were not responsible for the virus that deleted the Bibles. Do you believe them? Why or why not? If not, who do you think did it?

5) True/False: Philadelphia’s brother Ephesus died on Mars.

True / False



Chapters 6-11

6) In Chapter 6, Philadelphia quotes the following line from the Bible: “I am the way, the truth...” (NIV) What is the reference of the Scripture she’s quoting?

7) In Chapter 7, Philadelphia’s dad, Dr. Smyrna, claims he is being forced to take the job on Mars. Why doesn’t he have a choice?



8) Philadelphia says the flight to Mars takes 59.5 hours. Approximately how many days is that?

9) Mr. Sardis says he’s a “horticulturalist.” Based on context clues, what kind of science does Mr. Sardis study?

10) Based on these chapters, do you think Dr. Nic is a good character or a bad character? Explain.



Chapters 12-15

11) True/False: Philadelphia talked to her brother Ephesus frequently while he was stationed on Mars.

True / False

12) The wing where Ephesus used to live is unused and vacant when Philadelphia visits. What explanation does Cea give for why the rooms are empty?

13) In Chapter 14, Philadelphia gets lost on base. If you were in her place, what would you have done differently to prevent getting lost?

14) In Chapter 14, Dr. Nic is upset that Philadelphia was wandering around Gate 74. Why do think that is?



15) In Chapter 15, someone deletes the security footage of Philadelphia opening Gate 74. Who do you think deleted the footage?



Chapters 16-19

16) In Chapter 16, Philadelphia thinks some of Ephesus's belongings should still be in storage. Why does she think that?

17) In Chapter 16, Philadelphia is reading the Bible passage that begins: "See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut." (NIV) What is the reference of the Scripture she's reading?

18) In Chapter 17, Cea says Dr. Nic plans to free Mars from government control by "becoming more powerful than they are." Do you think this is a good plan? Why or why not?

19) In Chapter 18, Philadelphia is able to open a door even though it's locked. Why do you think she was able to do that?

20) Based on these chapters, do you think Dr. Nic is a good character or a bad character? Explain.



Chapters 20-23

21) In Chapter 22, why doesn't Dr. Smyrna want to alert the government about Dr. Nic's secret project? What is he afraid will happen if he does?

22) According to Cea in Chapter 23, who can open Gate 74?

23) According to Ephesus in Chapter 23, who can open the door to Lab 1?

24) Ephesus compares the chemical superweapon "Red Rain" to what real-life natural phenomena?

25) Who programmed the virus that deleted the Bibles?

26) In Chapter 23, Philadelphia knows she can open the door to Lab 1 even though it's locked. Why do you think she was able to open it?



Chapters 24-28

27) In Chapter 24, Philadelphia quotes the verse: “Evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (NIV) What is the reference of the Scripture she’s quoting?

28) Why does Dr. Smyrna refuse to work on Red Rain? Do you agree or disagree with his decision?

29) In Chapter 26, who does Philadelphia email asking for help?



30) In Chapter 28, Cea returns to the unassimilated camp even though she doesn’t have to. Do you think she made the right choice? What choice would you have made?



UNIT: SCIENCE

Colonizing Mars

Over half of the story in *Red Rain* takes place on Mars. While all of the technology in the book is fictitious (that's why it's called science fiction!), scientists today are actively studying how to put humans on Mars. It might even be possible during your lifetime! Keep reading to learn more about the science behind Martian colonization. Pay attention to the terms in **bold**, then complete the crossword puzzle on the next page to practice what you learned (answers in back).

Earth has been dreaming about putting humans on Mars since the 1940s. The first successful space mission to Mars was completed by NASA's **Mariner 4**, which flew by the planet on July 14, 1965, and took twenty-one photos. (Bonus fact: These are the first photos taken of another planet from space!) In 1971, USSR's Mars 3 became the first spacecraft to land on Mars, although it only transmitted for two minutes before losing contact. Since then, there have been over thirty successful missions to Mars, including ten landings.

There are many reasons why scientists think Mars is a good candidate for human colonization. Like Earth, Mars is rich in many of the elements needed to support life such as **carbon**, an essential ingredient in DNA. Mars also has large amounts of water, although most of it is in the form of ice and **permafrost**, or ground that remains completely frozen all year round. In addition, Mars' **diurnal** cycle is almost identical to Earth's; a Martian day is 24 hours, 37 minutes, and 22 seconds long. That means the surface of Mars experiences periods of daylight and darkness very similar to Earth. Compare that to the surface of the moon, where "daytime" and "nighttime" last about two weeks!

In addition to the ingredients for life, Mars also contains minerals needed for industry. If humans are to survive on Mars, they would need metals such as **copper** to build machines and conduct electricity. Mars is believed to have significant mineral deposits that could be mined, just like on Earth. Mars also has **geothermal**



power resources. Geothermal power is energy that is harvested from the planet; Mars has enough energy to theoretically support human civilization.

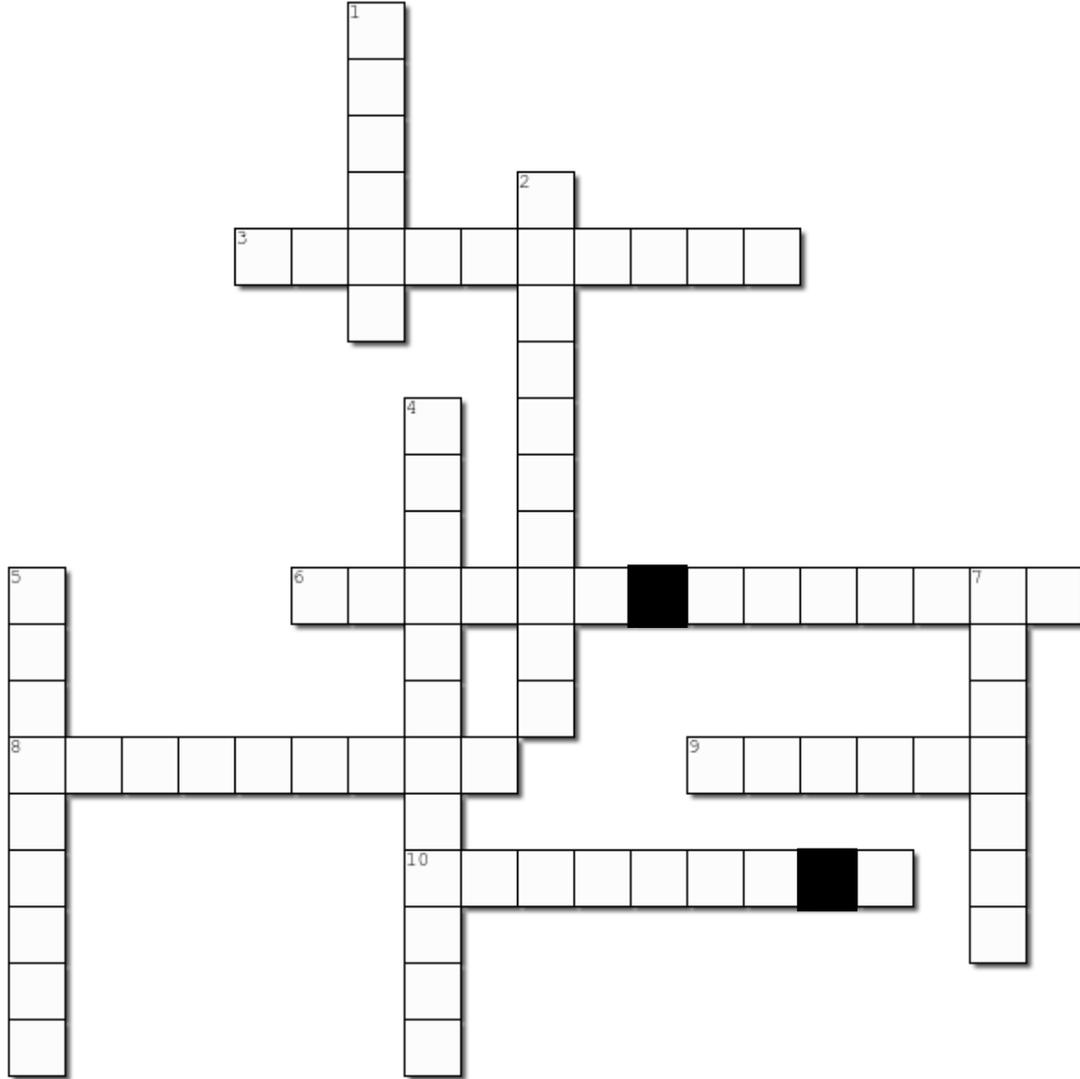
Despite all these benefits, there are many challenges to colonizing Mars. Perhaps the biggest problem is the fact that Mars' atmosphere is composed primarily of **carbon dioxide**. Not only is this atmosphere unbreathable for humans, but it's also very thin. This means the surface of Mars is extremely cold, with temperatures as low as -285 degrees Fahrenheit! The atmospheric pressure on Mars is also very low. In fact, the pressure is so low that, if you were to try and walk on the surface of Mars without a spacesuit, your blood would boil!

In addition to the thin atmosphere, most of the water on Mars is found in ice buried beneath the surface. Scientists would need to invent a way to extract this water before humans could survive on Mars. We would also need to protect ourselves from the extreme levels of **radiation** on the surface of Mars. Radiation is energy produced by the sun and other stars. On Earth, our planet's strong magnetic field and thick atmosphere protect us from harmful radiation. On Mars, however, we'd be exposed to 700 times more radiation, which can lead to cancer and other diseases.

Scientists are experimenting with ways to circumvent these problems and make the surface of Mars habitable for humans. One of the most popular theories is called **terraforming**. Terraforming involves adding elements to Mars' atmosphere to make it thicker and breathable. While there are a lot of challenges with such theories, many scientists are devoting their lives to the study, and new advancements are being made every day. If you love Mars and want to learn more about space, ask your parents to help you find more books on **astronomy**, which is the scientific study of outer space. Maybe one day you'll be like Philadelphia's dad, Dr. Smyrna, and get to work on Mars!



Colonizing Mars Crossword Puzzle



Across

3. energy harvested from the planet
6. the primary element in Mars' atmosphere
8. energy produced by the sun
9. a metal that conducts energy
10. the spacecraft that completed the first successful flyby mission of Mars

Down

1. an element essential for life that's found in DNA
2. ground that remains completely frozen all year
4. adding elements to a planet's atmosphere to make it habitable for humans
5. the scientific study of outer space
7. an adjective that means 'daily'



UNIT: BIBLE STUDIES

The Seven Churches of Revelation

In Revelation 2-3, Jesus gives John the Revelator messages for churches in seven different cities. Five of the characters in *Red Rain* are named after these churches. **Can you catch them all?** (Answers in back. Hint: One of the characters goes by a shortened version of the city's name!) These names are more than just fun Easter eggs; they also contain important spiritual messages. Answer the questions below and see what meanings you can discover.

Bonus: The seven cities mentioned in Revelation 2-3 were all located in ancient Asia Minor, or what is now modern-day Turkey. Can you find Turkey on the globe?

Reading Comprehension Questions

1) Read Revelation 3:7-13. In vs.8, Jesus praises the church for refusing to deny His name. In what ways did the character of Philadelphia hold fast to her beliefs in the story?



2) What other additional parallels can you draw between the passage and the character of Philadelphia? List two or more.

3) Read Revelation 2:1-7. In vs.4, Jesus warns the church that they have “fallen from their first love.” In what ways did the character of Ephesus compromise his beliefs in the story?



4) What other additional parallels can you draw between the passage and the character of Ephesus? List two or more.



5) Read Revelation 3:14-22. In vs.15, Jesus condemns the church for being lukewarm. In what ways was the character of Cea “lukewarm”? Did you agree with her actions? Why or why not? What would you have done, if you were in her place?



Bonus: The character of Nic also gets his name from Revelation 2-3. See if you can find the reference! (Answers in back.)



UNIT: LITERATURE

Genre Studies: Dystopian Fiction

Hint: As you read this essay, pay special attention to the words in bold!

A **genre** is a category of fiction. All fiction in a genre shares similar styles and themes. For example, historical fiction is set in the past and often features real people and events (such as World War II), while fantasy fiction usually features imaginary worlds (such as Narnia) and mythical creatures (like dragons). **What's your favorite genre of fiction?**

Red Rain fits in two genres: **science fiction** and **dystopian**. Science fiction is usually set in the future and features space exploration and advanced technology (like robots and spaceships). In *Red Rain*, humans are living on Mars, and the space flight only takes about three days—that's definitely science *fiction*! (Although, as you'll learn in another unit, scientists are exploring ways to colonize Mars, so maybe it will be possible in your lifetime!)

Some science fiction also features aliens and other fantastical creatures. (There aren't any aliens in the Red Rain series, though.) Some famous examples of science fiction include Star Wars, Star Trek, and superheroes like Batman and Superman. **Do you have a favorite science fiction book or movie?** (Bonus: Ask your parents what their favorite science fiction story is!)

Dystopian is a subgenre of science fiction, which means it's a specific type of science fiction. The word "dystopian" comes from combining the Greek prefix **dys-** ("bad, wrong") with the root word **topos** ("place"). In other words, "dystopian" literally means "bad place"! Dystopian fiction always features a corrupted society, government, or culture. In *Red Rain*, we have an evil government that has outlawed religion and forces all citizens to conform to a specific set of rules. That's definitely not a society I'd want to live in!



While dystopian might not sound like a fun genre at first, it's actually a very important type of fiction. Dystopian fiction allows us to explore human society and culture. By **contrasting** the fictional world in the story to the real world around us, dystopian fiction enables us to examine our culture and ask: Is this the way things should be?

As Christians, we can use dystopian fiction to **compare** the world around us to Biblical values. God has called us to be “in the world but not of it” (John 17:14-19), and we are told “not to conform to this world” (Romans 12:2). That means the world’s way of thinking is not our way of thinking, and we should not follow society or do “what’s popular” when it disagrees with God’s Word. In *Red Rain*, Philadelphia holds firm to her Christian beliefs even though it’s illegal. My hope is that after you read her story, you’ll be inspired to do the same thing and stand up for your beliefs even when it hurts.

Complete the vocabulary activity below, then answer the discussion questions to think about the themes in the story. Feel free to include your own thoughts: What did *you* learn from the book?

Match the Vocabulary

Draw a line to match the vocabulary words to their meaning. (Answers in back.) If you get stuck, reread the essay above and look for the terms in **bold**.

compare	Greek root word meaning “place”
dys-	a subgenre of science fiction featuring corrupted societies
genre	to study the similarities between two objects
contrast	a genre of fiction categorized by futuristic settings and technology
science fiction	Greek prefix meaning “bad, wrong”
topos	a category of fiction
dystopian	to study the differences between two objects



Essay Questions

1) There are a lot of things wrong in Philadelphia's world, including religious persecution and economic oppression. Can you see any similarities between Philadelphia's fictional world and our current one?

2) In the book, Philadelphia resists the government in a variety of ways, including continuing to practice her religion even though it's illegal. If you lived in the United, how would you react?



3) If you were going to create your own dystopian society, what “fault” would it have? Would the government outlaw something? Would there be special regulations that people had to live by? Your answer can be silly or serious!

Family Discussion Question: Parents, ask your student to identify one thing they think is wrong in our current society. Then ask them how they would fix it, if given the chance. Their answer does not need to be “big” or practical; depending on the age of the student, they might say the biggest problem in today’s society is early bedtimes. 😊 That’s okay; encourage them to solve their proposed problem, no matter how small it is. The purpose of this activity, and reading dystopian in general, is to encourage students to critically examine the status quo and compare it to Biblical world values.



High School Expansion Activities

a) If your student is interested in dystopian, choose additional dystopian titles for them to read. Have them write a book report and ask them to answer the following questions in essay form:

1. What fault did the fictional society have?
2. What does the Bible have to say about those issues? Cite at least one verse.
3. How did the characters in the book respond?
4. Was the characters' response Biblical? Why or why not? Cite at least one verse.
5. How would you respond?
6. How would you correct the fictional society, if given the chance?

Note that most modern dystopian titles are geared at young adult or adult audiences and have varying content levels, so do your research and pick a title that's appropriate for your reader. My personal recommendation for readers 13+ is *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner for its creative premise and brave hero. (Content warning: moderate violence and fake swearing.) For older teen readers, classic dystopian titles like George Orwell's *Fahrenheit 451* are also good options.

b) If your student enjoys writing, have them take their answer to question #3 from the essay questions in the previous section and turn it into a story. I would recommend having them start by writing one scene set in their fictional world. Instruct them that the goal of this scene is to demonstrate what's wrong with their fictional society.

Use Ch.1 of *Red Rain* as a model. The book opens with unassimilated students being forced onto the school bus at gunpoint. By starting the book this way, I immediately show the reader what kind of world the characters are living in (an oppressed society where homeschooling is illegal and kids are forced to go to government school), as well as establish several important facts about the main character, Philadelphia (she used to be homeschooled, she's a Christian, etc.).

If your student enjoys the exercise, consider expanding the project and having them develop characters and write an outline for their proposed book!



UNIT: SOCIAL STUDIES

The Right to Homeschool

A recurring theme in *Red Rain* is that Philadelphia's family has lost the right to homeschool. While the scenario portrayed in the book is exaggerated for the sake of fiction, educational choice is a right that's under constant attack in our world today. Use this book and the family discussion questions below as an opportunity to explore this important subject with your student.

Family Discussion Questions

1. Talk with your student about your reasons for homeschooling. Why did you choose to homeschool? Was it for educational, religious, or cultural reasons, or a combination of all three?
2. Ask your student why homeschooling is important to them. What do they like most about it? What do they like the least?
3. Help your student research the homeschooling laws in your state, adjusting for the ability of the student. What regulations are you as the parent-teacher required to follow (i.e., standardized testing)?
4. Have you as the parent ever encountered any resistance to homeschooling, whether from the law, family members, or society? Explain to your student how you responded and why.

High School Expansion Activity: Political activism is one of the best ways to preserve homeschooling rights. During the next local election, help your student research any education-related bills or proposals, as well as any school board appointments. How do the bills affect your right to homeschool? Do any of the candidates express any views that are openly pro- or anti-homeschool? Ask the student to explain how they would vote and why. Bonus activity: Draft a sample email to a politician or school board member arguing for or against a current issue or bill. Use the activity to study formal letter writing and professional email etiquette.



ANSWER KEY

Reading Comprehension Quiz

1. False.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.
5. True
6. John 14:6
7. He's unassimilated.
8. 2.5 days
9. The science of plants
10. Answers will vary.
11. False
12. The wing was shut down after the test failed.
13. Answers will vary.
14. Answers will vary. (In the book, Dr. Nic is upset that Philadelphia is wandering around Wing 74 because that's where his secret project is.)
15. Cea (Answers may vary; the book only implies who did it.)
16. Philadelphia believes her brother's belongings should still be in storage because Ephesus was only coming to Earth for a visit, not to move back home.
17. Revelation 3:8
18. Answers will vary.
19. Answers will vary. (In the book, Philadelphia can open doors set to accept her family members because their DNA is similar.)
20. Answers will vary.
21. Dr. Smyrna is afraid Philadelphia will be sent back to Earth if he resists Dr. Nic.
22. Nic, Carnegie, Cea, and all the scientists who helped build Wing 74
23. Ephesus and Dr. Nic
24. Acid rain
25. Ephesus
26. Answers will vary. (In the book, Philadelphia can open the door to the lab because it was set to accept her brother and their DNA is similar.)
27. 2 Timothy 3:13
28. Dr. Smyrna refuses to work on Red Rain because it violates his ethics. Additional answers will vary.
29. Commander Ambrose
30. Answers will vary.



Unit: Science

Across

3. geothermal
6. carbon dioxide
8. radiation
9. copper
10. Mariner 4

Down

1. carbon
2. permafrost
4. terraforming
5. astronomy
7. diurnal

Unit: Bible Studies

- The five characters named after the churches of Revelation are Philadelphia, Smyrna, Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea (Cea).
- The character of Nic is inspired by the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6, 14-15).

Unit: Literature

compare	to study the similarities between two objects
dys-	Greek prefix meaning “bad, wrong”
genre	a category of fiction
contrast	to study the differences between two objects
science fiction	a genre of fiction categorized by futuristic settings and technology
topos	Greek root word meaning “place”
dystopian	a subgenre of science fiction featuring corrupted societies

