

## ***Discussion Guide for Left Behind***

### **Just-for-Fun Facts**

- 1) What was the original flight plan of the 747 Rayford Steele flew when the Rapture occurred, and where does the plane end up?
- 2) By what name does Nicolae Carpathia address Buck at their first face-to-face meeting and why?
- 3) What is the name of the *Nightline* host who interviews the president of Romania on the evening after his historic address to the United Nations?
- 4) How old is Nicolae Carpathia when he first bursts onto the scene?
- 5) In the fictional account of the Rapture in *Left Behind*, the time of the year of the disappearances is narrowed down to which two months?
- 6) A political leader from what country suddenly resigns, catapulting Nicolae Carpathia to leadership of the United Nations?

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Prayer**

- 7) The sense of urgency to share the gospel with others is impressed upon Bruce Barnes, the visitation pastor of New Hope Village Church who is left behind. He warns Rayford Steele not to put off making a decision about Christ. What would be worse than finally finding God and then dying without him because you waited too long? (p. 203). Rayford eventually prays to God for the free gift of salvation. Have you ever prayed a prayer like Rayford's? (see p. 216) Would you like to pray it now?

*Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner. I am sorry for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. I ask this in the name of Jesus, who died for me. I trust in him right now. I believe that the sinless blood of Jesus is sufficient to pay the price*

*for my salvation. Thank you for hearing me and receiving me. Thank you for saving my soul.*

- 8) Rayford Steele's first prayer following his own for salvation is for his daughter, Chloe (see p. 218). What names come to your mind as you seek God on behalf of those who don't yet know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? Take a moment to thank God for answered prayer for a loved one.
- 9) Buck fears for his life and his very soul just moments before the important meeting at the U.N. in which Nicolae Carpathia, whom Buck is beginning to suspect is the Antichrist himself, will announce his new position of leadership (see pp. 444—45). He asks God for protection and then prays for salvation. Do you remember a time when you feared for your physical safety? How did God specifically answer your prayer?

### **Boldness**

- 10) The rapture of believers, along with the attack of Israel by Russia, marks the beginning of the end times. How have you prepared those unbelieving loved ones and friends, who ridicule you now, for the day when they will be left behind?
- 11) Chloe accuses Bruce of promoting a self-serving theory in his claims that God has raptured the church and carried away all the believers (see p. 190). Bruce responds by telling her his story. When was the last time you willingly shared your Christian testimony with someone who didn't want to hear it? How did that person respond to your story?
- 12) Nicolae Carpathia invites Buck Williams to attend an important pre-press conference regarding his ideas for a new Security Council. By now, Buck suspects that Carpathia could indeed be the Antichrist. Bruce warned him about. Bruce urges Buck not to go, but Buck insists that he cannot miss this opportunity of a lifetime. Bruce confronts Buck about his spiritual need for God in the face of mortal and spiritual danger (see pp. 426-430). If you knew someone whose job put him in the presence of evil, how would you convince him of his need for divine protection?

### **Sharing Faith**

- 13) Rayford recalls how his wife, Irene, had switched churches and gotten serious about her faith. She had been excited and wanted him to discover what she had found (see p. 145). He had responded by running. Do you remember a time

when someone shared their faith and you reacted by running away? What would you say to that person now?

- 14) The Sunday after the Rapture, Pastor Bruce holds a service at New Hope Village Church and invites those people who have just made decisions for Christ to step forward and tell their stories (see p. 220). Would you be willing to tell your story publicly? Why or why not?
- 15) Rayford Steele confesses to Hattie Durham that he had been interested in pursuing a relationship with her at one time but is now more interested in her spiritual condition (see pp. 369—72). He apologizes to her and she cries. What would you do in such a situation? Do you think Rayford was right in sharing his feelings with her, or would you have handled it differently?

### **Prophecy**

- 16) Fourteen months prior to the story's opener, Cameron Buck Williams had been on assignment in Israel to interview *Global Weekly's* Newsmaker of the Year, Chaim Rosenzweig, who had chemically engineered a synthetic fertilizer that could make the desert bloom. While Buck is there in Haifa with Chaim, Russia launches a full-scale attack that lights up the night as if it were daytime and threatens to entirely vaporize Israel. Yet the assault fails to do any damage whatsoever, and not one person is touched by the holocaust. Crashed planes and missiles would then provide completely for Israel's fuel needs for six years to come. How would unbelievers you know dismiss such fulfillment of biblical prophecy and deny the obvious implications?
- 17) When you consider the numerous biblical prophecies that have already been fulfilled during just the twentieth century, how does this fictional account of the fulfillment of Ezekiel 38 and 39 encourage you and give you hope?
- 18) Bruce Barnes calls an emergency meeting of the core group to describe some ideas he has been considering about what the future holds. Consider what your reaction would be to read the book of Revelation and discover that something specific happening in the world right now was something actually predicted in the Bible. What would you do?

### **Fellowship**

- 19) At the end of chapter 23, the core group at New Hope enthusiastically and emotionally welcomes Chloe into their midst. When you think about the first

days after your conversion, how would you describe the welcome you received by those with whom you had close and frequent fellowship?

- 20) The task of the Tribulation Force is clear: Their goal is nothing less than to stand and fight the enemies of God during the seven most chaotic years the planet would ever see (see p. 468). Would you be willing to be a part of a tribulation force? Why or why not?
- 21) In the middle of chapter 24, at the third Sunday service after the Rapture, Bruce plays the former pastor's videotape, tells his own story again, talks briefly about prophecy, invites people to receive Christ, and then opens the microphone for personal accounts. As had happened the previous two weeks, people stream forward and stand in line until well after one in the afternoon, eager to tell how they had now, finally, trusted Christ. The fellowship among the newly saved is a special experience the things of this world fade in their importance and time virtually ceases to matter. Recall sweet times of fellowship you have experienced and share them with the group.

### **God's Sovereignty**

- 22) In the book's fictitious account of the Rapture, all babies and young children disappear. Try to imagine a world without them how would this affect your understanding of God's sovereign will?
- 23) Often unbelievers are filled with resentment that God would rapture his church and leave behind those who refused to surrender to his sovereignty. What are some ways you could help these folks to get past this difficult obstacle? How might you lead them toward repentance?

## **Answer Key for *Left Behind* Just-for-Fun Facts**

- 1) An overnight flight from Chicago O Hare to Heathrow Airport, London (see pp. 1, 28). The plane is halfway over the Atlantic when Captain Steele is instructed to return to Chicago.
- 2) Mr. Williams or Mr. (George) Oreskovich or (Steve) Plank (see p. 287). This is significant because Buck is traveling incognito as George Oreskovich and, upon arrival in New York, also takes on another alias, that of his boss, Steve Plank, to try to ditch a fellow newsman. There is no natural explanation for why Nicolae Carpathia could know both aliases, given the secrecy around the names. Yet he does.
- 3) Wallace Theodore (see p. 269)
- 4) 33 years old (see p. 302)
- 5) February or March, since that is when the Major League Baseball teams are in spring training (see p. 304)
- 6) Botswana (see p. 412)