With your small group, discuss each of these questions. Then, choose 6 questions to answer FULLY (in 6-8 sentences or more).

1. Early in the narrative, Moishe tells Eliezer, “Man asks and God replies. But we don’t understand His replies. We cannot understand them” (p. 5). Is this a paradox? How does Eliezer react to this seemingly unfair assertion? Apply Moishe’s statement to the ongoing crisis of faith that Eliezer faces throughout the course of Night.
2. “Most people thought that we would remain in the ghetto until the end of the war, until the arrival of the Red Army. Afterward everything would be as before” (p. 12). What might be the reasons for the townspeople’s widespread denial of the evidence facing them?
3. There are a few instances where we learn of Eliezer and his family missing out on opportunities to escape from the Germans (pp. 9, 14, and 82). How did these missed chances influence your reading of this memoir? And how do these unfortunate events fit into your understanding of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust as a whole?
4. Cassandra was a figure in Greek mythology who received the gift of prophecy with the simultaneous curse that no one would ever believe her. Compare Cassandra to Mrs. Schächter. Are there other Cassandras in Night? Who are they?
5. Two of the people Eliezer encounters more than once in the narrative are Akiba Drumer and Juliek. Describe the relationships that Eliezer has with each of them. How do their respective deaths affect Eliezer? What does each person mean to him?
6. As the story progresses, we witness scenes in which the Jews have been reduced to acting—and even treating their fellow prisoners—like rabid animals. During an air raid over Buna (see p. 59), a starved man risks being shot by crawling out to a cauldron of soup that stands in the middle of the camp, only to thrust his face into the boiling liquid once he has arrived there safely. Where else do we see examples of human beings committing such insane acts? What leads people to such horrific behavior? Is it fair to say that such beastliness in the death camps is inevitable? Do Eliezer and his father fall prey to such tragedies?
7. In the concluding pages of *Night*, Eliezer’s father is dying a slow, painful death in Buchenwald. But Eliezer is there to comfort him, or at least to try. Does Eliezer see his father as a burden by this point, or does he feel only pity and sorrow for him? Compare and contrast the father-son relationship you see at the end of this memoir with the one you saw at the beginning, as well as other father and son relationships you have seen in the novel (ex. Rabbi Eliahu).
8. It is often said that “compassion is a luxury afforded to those whose sustenance is not in question.” How does this relate to one or more characters in the book?
9. The following passages offer two different pieces of advice that were given to Eliezer during his time in the concentration camps.

“…And now, here is a prayer, or rather a piece of advice: let there be camaraderie among you. We are all brothers and share the same fate. The same smoke hovers over all of our heads. Help each other. That is the only way to survive.” (41)

“Listen to me, kid. Don’t forget that you are in a concentration camp. In this place, it is every man for himself, and you cannot think of others. Not even your father. In this place, there is no such thing as father, brother, friend. Each of us lives and dies alone. Let me give you good advice: stop giving your ration of bread and soup to your old father. You cannot help him anymore. And you are hurting yourself. In fact, you should be getting his rations…” (110-111)

Which one do you think is better advice? What evidence do you have to prove it?

Annotate the following passages for syntax, diction, tone, theme and any other literary devices.

A crowd of workmen and curious passersby had formed all along the train. They had undoubtedly never seen a train with this kind of cargo. Soon, pieces of bread were falling into the wagon from all sides. And the spectators observed these emaciated creatures ready to kill for a crust of break.

A piece fell into our wagon. I decided not to move. Anyway, I knew that I would not be strong enough to fight off dozens of violent men! I saw, not far from me, an old man dragging himself on all fours. He had just detached himself form the struggling mob. He received a blow to his chest. Then I understood: he was hiding a piece of bread under his shirt. With lightning speed he pulled it out oand put it to his mouth. His eyes lit up, a smile, like a grimace, illuminated his ashen face. And immediately extinguished. A shadow had lain down beside him. And this shadow threw itself over him. Stunned by th blows, the old man was crying:

“Meir, my little Meir! Don’t you recognize me…You’re killing your father…I have bread…for you too…for you too…”

He collapsed. But his fist was still clutching a small crust. He wanted to raise it to his mouth. But the other threw himself on him. The old man mumbled something, groaned, and died. Nobody cared. His son searched him, took the crust of bread, and began to devour it. He didn’t get far. Two men had been watching him. They jumped him. Others joined in. When they withdrew, there were two dead bodies next to me, the father and the son.

I was sixteen. (pg101-102)

We stayed outside for five hours. We were given soup. When they allowed us to return to the blocks, I rushed toward my father:

“Did you eat?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“They didn’t give us anything…they said that we were sick and that we would die soon, and that it would be a waste of food….I can’t go on…”

I gave him what was left of my soup. But my heart was heavy. I was aware that I was doing it grudgingly.

Just like Rabbi Eliahu’s son, I had not passed the test. (pg 107)

Then I had to go to sleep. I climbed into my bunk, above my father, who was still alive. The date was January 28, 1945.

I woke up at dawn on January 29. On my father’s cot there lay another sick person. They must have taken him away before daybreak and taken him to the crematorium. Perhaps he was still breathing…

No prayers were said over his tomb. No candle lit in his memory. His last word had been my name. He called out to me and I had not answered.

I did not weep, and it pained me that I could not weep. But I was out of tears. And deep inside me, if I could have searched the recesses of my feeble conscience, I might have found something like: Free at last!... (Pg 112)

Our first act as free men was to throw ourselves onto the provisions. That’s all we thought about. No thought of revenge, or of parents. Only of bread.

And even when we were no longer hungry, not one of us thought of revenge. The next day, a few of the young men ran into Weimar to bring back some potatoes and clothes—and to sleep with girls. But still no trace of revenge.

Three days after the liberation of Buchenwald, I became very ill: some form of poisoning. I was transferred to a hospital and spent two weeks between life and death.

One day, when I was able to get up, I decided to look at myself in the mirror on the opposite wall. I had not seen myself since the ghetto.

From the depths of the mirror, a corpse was contemplating me.

The look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me. (page 115)