

Discussion Guide for Elle's Magical Shoes by Carla Reighard

Welcome

This guide is designed for families with children ages 9–12 and their parents. It uses the story of Elle and her magical shoes to spark conversations about real-life topics such as grief, bullying, forgiveness, and selflessness while also enjoying the fun, imaginative parts of the tale. The questions invite everyone to share thoughts, laugh together, and explore teachable moments about faith, family, and choosing kindness.

How to Use This Guide:

- Read the assigned chapters aloud or together before meeting.
- Parents can model vulnerability by answering first on harder questions.
- Let children share freely; there are no “wrong” answers.
- Keep the tone light and fun—celebrate the magic and horses alongside the serious topics.
- Use the optional activities to keep younger kids engaged.
- Close each section with prayer if your family finds it helpful.

Chapter-by-Chapter or Section-by-Section Discussion

Chapters 1–2: The Fairy Encounter

Elle meets the fairy Florena and learns about the magical shoes that must be given to the right people.

1. What made Elle brave enough to go outside and meet Florena?
2. How does Florena’s warning about selfish choices feel like advice we hear in real life?
3. Why do you think Florena chose Elle for this job?
4. What would you do if you suddenly saw something magical at your window?
5. How does Elle’s imagination help her handle missing her family?
6. What does “follow your heart” mean to you in this story?

Optional Activity: Draw your own pair of “magical” shoes and share what power you would want them to have.

Chapters 3–4: The Shoes Arrive

The box of shoes appears and Elle must decide who should receive them.

1. How does Elle feel when the package arrives in front of everyone?
2. Why do you think the shoes only open for Elle?
3. What was your favorite pair of shoes in the box and why?
4. How does Rebekah’s reaction show the difference between envy and true friendship?
5. What lesson is Florena trying to teach Elle about responsibility?

Optional Activity: Vote on which pair of shoes you would most like to try on and explain why.

Chapters 5–7: Reggie’s Boots

Elle gives the pink boots to Reggie and watches them change and help him.

1. Why was it hard for Elle to give away shoes she secretly wanted?
2. How does Reggie’s fear of losing people again connect to Elle’s own story?
3. What changed in Reggie after he received the boots?
4. How did the boots show that magic sometimes looks like courage and hard work?
5. What does Miss Sharon’s reaction teach us about believing in things we can’t see?

Optional Activity: Act out the moment the boots changed color for Reggie.

Chapters 8–9: The Rodeo and the Queen’s New Rule

Reggie wins the rodeo and the queen adds a stricter rule.

1. How did the boots help Reggie win more than just the competition?
2. Why do you think the queen is so angry even when things go well?
3. What does Florena’s quick thinking show about protecting others?
4. How does Reggie’s adoption feel like an answer to prayer?

Optional Activity: Create a simple “rodeo” obstacle course in your living room using pillows.

Chapters 10–11: Trent’s Cleats

Elle gives the football cleats to Trent before the big game.

1. Why was Elle nervous to talk to Trent?
2. How did the cleats help Trent play with confidence?

3. What does Trent's win teach about playing for fun instead of fear?
4. How did the shoes change Trent's life even though he was already a good player?

Optional Activity: Toss a soft ball around the room and share one way you've helped a friend lately.

Chapters 12–14: Rebekah's Musical Flats

Rebekah receives the musical shoes right before her big solo.

1. How did the shoes heal more than Rebekah's sore throat?
2. What does the scholarship mean for Rebekah's future?
3. Why is it sometimes hard to be happy for a friend's success?
4. How did the shoes help Rebekah remember her parents?

Optional Activity: Sing or hum a favorite song together as a group.

Chapters 15–18: Gina's Ballet Slippers

Elle chooses to give the ballet slippers to her bully, Gina.

1. Why was it so difficult for Elle to give the shoes to Gina?
2. How did Miss Sharon's advice about "hurt people hurt people" help Elle?
3. What changed in Gina after she received the slippers?
4. How does forgiving an enemy feel in real life?
5. What does this part of the story teach about loving people who are unkind?

Optional Activity: Write a short note of kindness to someone (even if you don't give it).

Chapters 19–21: Lilly's Mary Janes and Miss Sharon's Heels

Lilly receives colorful shoes and Miss Sharon gets the wedding heels.

1. Why do you think Lilly was afraid to accept the Mary Janes at first?
2. How did the shoes help Lilly finally speak?
3. What did the heels do for Miss Sharon that went beyond looking pretty?
4. How does Lilly's story remind us that everyone needs to feel loved?

Optional Activity: Draw a pair of shoes that would make someone feel happy and explain your choice.

Chapters 22–26: Christa’s Chocolate Flats

Christa receives the baking shoes and the family grows.

1. How did the shoes help Christa and Maggie even when they didn’t win the contest?
2. What surprised you about Miss Sharon’s engagement?
3. How did the shoes show that sometimes the magic takes time?
4. What does Jamie’s offer to help with the truck teach about family support?

Optional Activity: Invent a silly new dessert name together.

Chapters 27–29: Brady’s Boots and Katrina’s Skates

Brady receives firefighter boots and Katrina gets the ice skates.

1. How did Brady’s boots literally save the day?
2. Why was it important that Katrina still worked hard even with magical skates?
3. How did the skates help Katrina win both the competition and a forever family?
4. What does this part of the story teach about God’s timing?

Optional Activity: Share one way you’ve seen someone’s hard work pay off.

Chapters 30–36: The Wedding, Goodbyes, and the Bakery Truck

The family celebrates and faces more changes.

1. How did the shoes continue to bless the family even after they were given away?
2. Why is saying goodbye to Katrina so bittersweet?
3. What does the bakery truck success teach about delayed dreams?
4. How did the wedding feel like a happy ending for Miss Sharon?

Optional Activity: Plan a pretend “family celebration” menu together.

Chapters 37–39: The Final Shoes and the Rescue

Elle is taken to Serenity Island and must face the queen.

1. Why do you think the queen refused to free Elle’s family at first?
2. How did Elle’s foster family show real courage by coming to rescue her?
3. What finally changed the queen’s heart?

4. How does this ending show that love and forgiveness are stronger than bitterness?

Optional Activity: Write one sentence about what “magic” really means in this story.

Whole-Book Discussion Questions

1. Which pair of shoes was your favorite and why?
2. How did Elle grow from the beginning of the story to the end?
3. What hard topic in the book felt most important to talk about as a family?
4. How did the shoes help people in ways that weren’t magical at all?
5. Which character reminded you most of someone in your own life?
6. What does the story teach about giving even when it’s difficult?
7. How did prayer and faith show up in Elle’s choices?
8. What made you laugh the most in the story?
9. How does the book show that families can look different and still be full of love?
10. Which moment would you most like to experience yourself?
11. How did the story change the way you think about bullies or enemies?
12. What lesson from the shoes do you want to remember when you face hard choices?
13. How did the foster family’s love feel like real-life magic?
14. If you could give one pair of the shoes to someone you know, who would it be and why?
15. What do you think Florena’s “final prize” really turned out to be?

Thank everyone for sharing openly today. Remind the group that just like Elle learned, choosing kindness and trusting God often brings unexpected blessings. Close by praying together for the people in your own lives who need encouragement or forgiveness.