

Guiding Questions for Convocation Book

Fire and Brimstone by Michael Punke

Below are questions that are intended to prompt reflection and encourage students to connect with the text in different ways:

1. Does your town or state have a story like *Fire and Brimstone*? A mining accident, factory incident, severe drought or winter freeze, fires, major employer layoff, or anything along these lines. What similarities do you see with Butte's story?
2. Which person in the book do you relate most to and why?
3. Take a look at the photos in the book and think about your family photos or portraits or historical photos of your community. What do they represent to you?
4. How would you connect Montana's political and economic challenges of the early 1900's to today's political and economic challenges, either locally or nationally? What lessons or warnings do these parallels suggest?
5. What values do you think are the most important in this story? Are any of these values important to your future success, however you define success?

Additional questions for discussion:

1. Do you or your family have any important artifacts like the letters some of the miners wrote to their loved ones? How do they impact you when you read or look at them?
2. Do a little research on someone from an earlier generation (such as a grandparent or great-grandparents). Did they experience a workplace or other type of disaster? What was their experience and how did it affect them? In what ways did their experience get passed down to you?
3. Research and think about the story of someone brave and courageous who sacrificed their life for others in your family, town or state.
4. Have you toured a local site/museum in your town that tells an important story? What was your impression? Why are these stories important to preserve?
5. What are contemporary examples of workplace risk? How much risk would you be willing to take to improve life for you or your loved ones?
6. What would you do if you were Burton K. Wheeler? Is there someone like that today who you admire, and what do you admire about them?
7. Watch the 2015 film, *The Revenant*, and see if you can identify some themes that appear in both the movie and in the text.