



Down Syndrome: Expecting Adam (Book) Est. Time: 2 Weeks Reading/45 Minutes Class Time

Synopsis

Martha Beck seems to have it all: a degree from Harvard, entrance to graduate school, a promising career, and an expanding family. However, while at Harvard graduate school, she discovers that her unborn son has Down syndrome. Her memoir allows the reader to experience the emotions of a parent's journey as she sorts through her feelings about disability.

Activity

Read the following book and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class:

Title: Expecting Adam (2002)

Author: Martha Beck

Publisher: Berkley Books • New York

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. How did Martha and her husband discover that Adam had Down syndrome?
2. Why did so many people in the Harvard medical community advise Martha against keeping Adam?
3. Reflect on Martha's conversation with Dr. Grendel. Did you agree with the doctor's opinion? Why or why not?
4. How do you think members of the academic community would have responded to a child with a disability that had no affect on cognitive skills?
5. At the end of Chapter 8, the author recounts that Adam "was sorry for the pain I felt as I tried to turn him into a 'normal' child and that he loved me despite my many disabilities." Discuss your thoughts on the author's statement.