

Grades: 6-8

Little Women – Part 1

Based on the classic novel by Louisa May Alcott and loved by generations of women worldwide, "Little Women" is a universal coming-of-age story. Set against the backdrop of the Civil War, the story follows sisters Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy March on their journey from childhood to adulthood. With the help of their mother, Marmee -- and while their father is away at war -- the girls navigate what it means to be a young woman: from sibling rivalry and first love to loss and marriage. This adaptation is from the award-winning creator of "Call the Midwife," Heidi Thomas, who also wrote "Cranford" and the latter-day "Upstairs Downstairs" for Masterpiece.

Christmas 1861, The March sisters – Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy – prepare for a Christmas without presents or their father, a Union army chaplain who is away at war. Learning to appreciate the smaller things in life, the sisters strike up a friendship with their charming new neighbor Laurie, and his tutor John Brooke.

As autumn of 1862 sets in, the family receives the terrible news: Mr. March has been taken ill in an army hospital in Washington D.C. The girls anxiously await news of their father's fate, as their mother Marmee, accompanied by John, rushes to his side.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- Describe what life was like during the American Civil War in Concord, Massachusetts.
- Why does the March sisters' father go off to war?
- What charitable work does Marmee, the sisters' mother, encourage the girls to do?
- What attributes would you use to describe: Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy?
- In this episode, who do the girls help and how?
- Who do the girls meet in this episode and what loss has he recently suffered?
- Why does the neighbor provide Christmas dinner for the March girls?
- In addition to charity work, what other work do the girls do?
- As the girls continue their charity work and occupations, they still have time to continue to befriend Laurie and Brooke, Laurie's tutor. Why is Jo distressed when Brooke shows interest in Meg?
- When the family discovers that father is sick but has no money to send Marmee to his

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side? How does Marmee solve the problem? How does Jo solve the problem? Which solution do you think is the most admirable and why?

- Describe Aunt March and her significance in this point in the story.
- When Marmee leaves for Washington, how does Jo show her determination to be brave?
- How do the sisters plan to run the household now that Marmee is gone?

Question Box 2

- What would you be willing to give to someone else in a time of need?
- What stood out for you the most in this episode?
- What do you think will happen next in the story? Why?

Question Box 3 (Tasks)

- Compare and Contrast Jo and Meg March.
- Create a Timeline of events in this episode, including facts and details to support each event's significance.

Question Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Write a movie review for this episode.
- Create a poster for this movie or a book cover for the book.

Question Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Social Emotional Connection: In this show, the girls had to learn to appreciate the smaller things in life. Create a gratitude journal. Each day write one sentence about something you are grateful for. Reread your journal entries whenever you feel the need to remind yourself about things to be grateful for.
- Successful authors, playwrights, and screenwriters often pattern the characters in their books, plays, and movies after people in their own lives. If you were to create fictional characters based on some people you know, how would you describe them so the reader/viewer would quickly get to "know" them individually?
 - What would they do/ say early in your story to demonstrate their personalities?
 - In Jo's time, writers could only use a pen and ink to write.
 - What options would she have today?
 - How have those options changed the way authors create and distribute their works?
 - How might they change in the future?
 - What careers exist now because of the advancements in communication technologies that didn't exist in Jo's time?