



# Jodi Picoult

## Book club discussion questions

### Sing You Home

1. Why does Picoult use a quotation from Thomas Jefferson for the book's epigraph? How can his message be interpreted in the context of the novel's events?
2. Every life has a soundtrack. Name a song that brings back a memory of a time or place. Does it matter how much time has passed?
3. The author skillfully presents the struggle couples with fertility issues have with IVF. Have you had any experience with this? Any insights to share?
4. After reading each chapter, listen to the corresponding track on the CD. Why is the ending of *Sing You Home* so poignant?
5. "There was no room in my marriage for me anymore, except as genetic material." (p. 51) Why does Max give up on his relationship with Zoe? Is he weak, or callous – or in any way justified? How has his experience of infertility and IVF affected him? How do Max and Zoe differ in their

handling of disappointment and grief? Do you think they would have stayed together if they hadn't lost their baby?

6. Pastor Clive seems to embody the very essence of fundamentalist religion. How does he make you feel?
7. 7. "This may be news to you, Reid...but God doesn't vote Republican." (p. 75) What does Zoe mean by this? How does religion relate to the public worlds of politics, education, and the legal system in SING YOU HOME? To what extent is there – and should there be – a separation of church and state?
8. Do you think it's a different world now than the one when Matthew Shepard was killed in Wyoming? Discuss.
9. So much of a friendship is like a love affair". (p. 129) Agree? Disagree?
10. A statement of religion: "I don't begrudge people the right to believe in whatever they believe, but I don't like having those same beliefs forced on me." (p.129) Discuss.
11. "The music we choose is a clear reflection of who we really are". (p. 135) What songs would be on a mix tape that describes you?
12. How does Zoe's first session with Lucy end? Do you think you could deal with Lucy?
13. The author writes an excellent scene describing the intimacy between Zoe and Vanessa. Had you thought about it in those terms?
14. Zoe and Vanessa have different experiences when they come out to their mothers. Discuss. How do you think you'd react?

15. Max struggles with his new religious belief when Liddy miscarries again. Do you understand his struggle? How would you handle the conflict?
16. Max takes Pauline with him to talk to Zoe. The author really gets to the crux of the issue when Vanessa speaks up. (p. 198) What is your opinion of Pauline's beliefs about homosexuality? Discuss.
17. In your opinion, who most deserves the embryos: Max or Zoe? Why?
18. In what ways does Liddy's reaction to snow, and her B-movie habit, inform her character?
19. "...it's not gender that makes a family; it's love. You don't need a mother and a father; you don't necessarily even need two parents. You just need someone who's got your back". (p. 319) Discuss.
20. Lucy gets angry at Zoe because Zoe won't tell Lucy about her personal life. Is Zoe right to not say anything?
21. There are several groups of spectators in the courtroom on the opening day. With which group would you be sitting?
22. When Reid is on the stand, what does Zoe find out about how Max met the cost of the last session of IVF? Why is this important?
23. What happens between Max and Liddy? Are you surprised?
24. Pastor Cline uses the Bible during his testimony and Angela uses it to contradict him. Do you believe, as Clive does, that what is in the Bible is immutable? If so, why? If not, why not?
25. Why does Lucy tackle Pastor Clive? What does Zoe reveal in the ensuing conversation with Lucy? How does Lucy react?

26. "Atheism, I realize, is the new gay. The thing you hope no one finds out about you-because of all the negative assumptions that are sure to follow." (p. 414) Agree? Disagree? Discuss.
27. Both Zoe and Vanessa have secrets in their pasts. Are the secrets relevant to their relationship? To the trial?
28. We find out Lucy's relationship to Pastor Clive. Were you surprised? Do you think she outed Zoe?
29. The decision of who gets the embryos is made. (p. 461) Did Max do the right thing?
30. What do you believe constitutes a family, a good parent?
31. Has your opinion changed in any way about gay rights as a result of reading this book? If so, how?