

Faith Lutheran Church Book Club

Discussion Questions

February 17, 2026

***Anxious People* by Fredrik Bachman**

1. The man on the bridge tells the boy, “Do you know what the worst thing about being a parent is? That you’re always judged by your worst moments.... Parents are defined by their mistakes.” Do you think this statement is true?
2. Nadia (the psychologist), James (the police officer), Zara and Estelle all have stories tied in some way to the bridge. What does the bridge represent to each of them? Has the bridge’s meaning changed for them by the end of the book? If so, how?
3. Anna-Lena compares her and Roger’s marriage to a shark that can’t breathe unless it is moving the whole time: “People need a project...if we didn’t keep moving, our marriage wouldn’t get any oxygen. So we buy and renovate and sell.” Why does Anna-Lena think that a project is the one thing keeping their marriage from falling apart?
4. How did you feel when the identity of the bank robber was revealed? Were your assumptions challenged? How does the author manage to keep this a surprise?
5. Zara appears to be very cold and distant to other people. Is Zara’s attitude toward people a defense mechanism? Do you agree with the psychologist that Zara isn’t depressed, just lonely? What is it that Zara can’t forgive herself for?
6. While on the apartment balcony, Zara starts to open up to Lennart. Why is he the person to whom she is able to open up?
7. At the start of ANXIOUS PEOPLE, the author tells us, “This story is about a lot of things, but mostly about idiots.” In what ways are these characters acting like idiots? At the end of the book, do you think that’s still a fair description of them?

8. Jim and Jack, the father and son policemen, have a difficult relationship that is made worse by their working so closely together. What is it that annoys them about each other?

9. **ANXIOUS PEOPLE** is very much a character study. How did your feelings about these characters change over the course of the book? Who is your favorite character and why?