

## ***Running Giant* (by Louis Reile, SM) Reading Guide**

*Running Giant* is an historical retelling of the life and times of William Joseph Chaminade, the Founder of the Marianist Family. This easy-to-read novel begins in Father Chaminade's birthplace of Mussidan, France, and highlights important events throughout his life, including his exile in Saragossa, Spain, and his providential meetings and collaborations with Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon and Marie Thérèse de Lamourous. Readers will get an introductory glimpse into the circumstances and inspirations surrounding the beginnings of the Marianist Family.

1. In chapter 1 we read how young Father Chaminade was a very faith-filled child. Describe an incident from Father Chaminade's childhood that is an example of his deep faith.
2. Many priests signed the "Oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy," which meant they no longer were connected to the pope in Rome but to the leaders of the French government. Father Chaminade is among the priests that refused to sign this oath. What does this tell you about Father Chaminade? Do you think you would have signed this oath? Explain your answer.
3. In chapter 3 we meet Marie Thérèse de Lamourous for the first time. Write a paragraph describing her to someone who has never read about her.
4. Father Chaminade is forced to leave his home in France and live in Saragossa, Spain, for three years. During this time Father Chaminade prayed with Mary at the foot of "Our Lady of the Pillar" and felt inspired to start the Marianist Family as a way to bring Christianity back to France. Many people may have ignored this call. What gave Father Chaminade the courage to follow through? How or what do you feel God is calling you to do?
5. Marie Thérèse did not want to be the director of the Miséricorde at the beginning but overcame her fears and faithfully went where she felt God calling her. Describe a time when you felt God was asking you to do something difficult or something you were afraid to do.
6. The motto of the Miséricorde was "Come freely, stay freely," meaning Marie Thérèse would only accept women who came voluntarily. Why is that important?
7. At the time when Father Chaminade returned to France, people were allowed to practice their faith. However, it had been illegal for so long that the Catholic faith basically had disappeared. To try and bring Christianity back to France Father Chaminade began the Bordeaux Sodality. He welcomed everyone to the Sodality; teachers, students, chimney sweeps, shoemakers. Why do you think the Bordeaux Sodality was so popular? Do you know any groups today that are similar to the Bordeaux Sodality? Explain.

8. In chapters 9 and 10 we meet Adèle and read about how the Daughters of Mary were founded. Adèle was well known for her letter writing. Write Adèle a letter and ask her three questions that you would like to know about her life.
9. In chapters 11 and 12 we see examples of Father Chaminade patiently waiting for signs of Providence (God) for good things, such as the young men who came forward and asked to begin the Society of Mary (male religious). Name other examples where Father Chaminade modeled patience. Is there a decision in your life you are (or maybe should be) patiently waiting for a sign from God?
10. In chapter 13 Father Chaminade is asked what is so special or important about the Society of Mary. He never said that the Marianists had one special gift to give the world, but would do as Mary told the servants at the wedding at Cana: “Do whatever he [Jesus] tells you.” What does that mean to you?
11. In the final chapter of *Running Giant* Father Leo Meyer is sent to America to establish the Marianist Family in the New World. Imagine you are Father Leo Meyer and write a journal entry about your hopes for the Marianist Family in this foreign land.