Reading Group Guide for
*Christmas at Rose Hill Farm*
by Suzanne Woods Fisher

1. “God is faithful even when we are not” is a central theme in *Christmas at Rose Hill Farm*. Which characters needed reminding of that theme? Discuss the ways in which the characters come to peace with this biblical truth.

2. The rosebud seemed to have a personality of its own: stubborn, slow, resilient, enduring. It was more than a legacy. What do you think the mystery rose symbolized in Billy’s and Bess’s life? Is there a beloved treasure in your life that might have a similar meaning to you?

3. Some parts of an Amish wedding might seem strange to you—the bride and groom’s meeting with the ministers before the ceremony, for example. Let’s flip the picture. Do you think there might be aspects of a typical American wedding that seem strange to the Amish? Which ones? Doesn’t that awareness give you an appreciation for how our culture shapes and molds us?

4. Let’s consider Amos Lapp and the broken engagement. At one point, Maggie Zook questions Amos about why he can’t seem to settle on the right Christmas gift for Bess. “It might be that you have an idea of who Bess is, who you want her to be, without really knowing her.” Do you think Amos truly loved Bess? Or was Maggie on to something? By the way, if you’d like to find out how Amos Lapp’s love life unfolds, you might enjoy reading the Stoney Ridge Seasons series.

5. Billy’s home life was less than ideal: brothers who bullied, a father who encouraged competition between his sons. Finally, Billy had enough and left home. George pointed out to him that he had acted like a Pharisee: all rules and no love. “How are you going to be salt to your family when you’re hiding away in a greenhouse in College Station? By staying away like you’ve done, you’ve only made things worse for your father. He has no one to pull him up. You might be standing on principle, but you’re all alone.”

What were your thoughts about George’s bold remarks to Billy? Was he asking too much of him? Billy certainly thought so. George was trying to show God’s perspective on his role in his family. What difference would that make to someone in a difficult relationship?
6. What were your thoughts about the character of George the hobo? You might find it interesting to know that the story about the ambulance and the pothole is a true one. Granted, there’s no way of knowing if an angel was involved, but it does give one food for thought. Have you ever had a curious coincidence occur that became strangely pivotal in your life?

7. Toward the end of the story, Billy reflects on some of the truths George has taught him. “Billy turned his wrist over and thought of how differently he would have handled things had he known how much he mattered to God, if he’d known he wasn’t forgotten, if he’d known he was being looked after. He had felt so hopeless, so all alone. And yet he had never been alone, not even during that hard time.” That insight isn’t just for Billy. It’s a biblical truth meant for me and for you. How does such knowledge affect you?

8. It would be nice, wouldn’t it, to have an angel like George appear at critical junctions in our life: times of uncertainty, times of needed healing, times of crisis. George didn’t stay, even though Billy wanted him to. Why? Had he stayed, what might have been Billy’s temptation? The folded coat on the chair, the money on top—they were signs that George’s work with Billy was complete. What final message did George deliver to Billy? To you and to me?

Emmanuel, God is with us.