

Suggest it to your club

PRETTY GOOD AT WALKING • A FAMILY JOURNEY • VINCE STRAWBRIDGE

You have read it. Your group hasn't. This is the part you shouldn't have to write: what the book is, what a room ends up arguing about, what somebody should know before they say yes, and how twelve people get twelve copies. Forward the link, or print it and hand it over.

What it is

In 2018 a family of six — two parents and four children — walked the Pacific Crest Trail southbound, Canada to Mexico: 2,650 miles in 142 days. The father wrote it down.

It is not really a hiking book, and you do not need to know anything about hiking to read it. It is a book about what a parent is allowed to ask of a child — told by the parent who did the asking, which is why a room can disagree about it for two hours and still not be finished.

That paragraph is there to be copied into your group's thread. The rest is for whoever picks the books.

What a room argues about

Three of them, chosen because none of them gives away the ending. There are ten in the full guide, with the mile markers where each scene can be found.

1

In the first days, cold and lagging behind the rest of the family, one of his daughters starts to cry and he names the hour *"cry-thirty."* She tells him, *"That's not funny."* A little later that same afternoon she laughs at the same joke, through her tears. **When is a family joke a kindness, and when is it a way of not stopping?**

MILE -18

2

Eighty trail miles in, he remembers a morning years earlier when his oldest, then seven, followed him toward the fishing pond. *"Dad, I'm seven. I'm not old enough to babysit,"* she said. He walked her back and watched her all the way to the door. *"Not once did she turn around."* Then one sentence on its own: *"The fish were biting that day."* **Two sentences, and your group will not agree about them.**

MILE 80.6

3

A third of the way down, in a room at Crater Lake, he tells his wife he feels like *"a single dad out here parenting my four kids."* She answers, *"Who boils water every day for lunch?"* By that afternoon he has apologized. **What work had he stopped counting — and does the apology settle it?**

MILE 833.3

Before you suggest it

This is not children's reading, and whoever leads the discussion should know what is in it before anyone accepts an invitation — not after somebody has started reading a passage aloud. The short version: a murder-suicide recalled in conversation, an account of infidelity, nudity at three points on the trail, cannibalism jokes at Donner Pass, and language that includes “*jackass*.”

The full note, with the mile marker for each one, is at the top of the discussion guide: what is in it. Read that before you put the book to a vote, not after.

Getting copies

Buy it: Kindle · Paperback · Audiobook

Or ask your library to get it. Most public library systems take title requests from cardholders — the form is usually called “suggest a title” or “suggest a purchase.” Some systems also lend book-club kits of six to twelve copies in one bag, and the same form is how a title gets into that collection. One request from one member is often all it takes.

Editions. A revised edition came out in 2026. A 2024 paperback reads a little differently in places; nothing in the story changes. The guide's quotations follow the revised text.

The author will sit in — at the end

Vince joins clubs that have read it, free, for the last part of the meeting. **Your group discusses the book on its own first.** The people in this book are his wife and his four children, and a room with him in it from the start tends to go easy. Say the hard thing while he isn't there. Then let him in and ask him about it.

Thirty to forty-five minutes, by video, or in person if you are near Lakeland, Florida. Four clubs a month, limited dates each month, and about a month's notice. There is no charge and nothing to buy.

The terms and how to ask →

If they say yes

Everything a leader needs is on one page, free, with nothing to sign up for: ten discussion questions with their mile markers, the content note in full, a note for whoever is running the night, and three passages worth reading aloud — prettygoodatwalking.com/bookclub. And something to end the night on: the family filmed the walk as they went, and the book's own moments are pinned to a map at prettygoodatwalking.com/map.

Pretty Good at Walking: A family journey · Vince Strawbridge · revised edition, 2026

This sheet: revised October 8, 2026 · prettygoodatwalking.com/nominate

The audiobook link above is an Audible referral link; using it costs you nothing extra.