**Discussion ideas for …**

**My Parents Cancelled My Birthday by Jo Simmons**

* Do you think birthdays are important and should they always be celebrated with a party? Or do you think that it depends on the age of the person and their own thoughts and feelings about parties?
* Tom was really upset that his mum and dad had cancelled his birthday celebrations. Do you think they were right to do so, even if they did have more pressing issues going on in their lives? Do you think that they still should have tried to celebrate in some way, even if it wasn't the party he was previously promised?
* Tom's sister had a pet pig called Tiny. Do you think that it’s okay for people to have pets like this? Is it any different to having a dog or cat? Discuss the pros and cons of keeping a farm animal as pet.
* Although the book is full of humour, it does have some serious issues too. How did you feel about Nana's dog getting killed and the stresses the family were put under by things like Tom's mum having to work all the time to make ends meet and Tom's dad not making it as a writer, and of course Tom feeling as if his family had forgotten about him and his birthday? Have you experienced things like this in your lives? How did you and your family deal with it? Do you think Tom's family coped well?
* Would you have resorted to Tom's measures to plan his own birthday? Do you think his ideas and plans were good or bad? Was it believable? Do you think you always need a lot of money to have a good time for your birthday? Discuss what’s important to you on your birthday. Toys, money, family...