



BOOK CLUB

SUMMER VENTURE

Summer reading.....long days, less commitments, reading books you don't HAVE to read. Reading in hammocks or staying up late reading in bed knowing you can sleep in the next morning. A great book educates us and entertains us and maybe even more magical it takes us on a journey. Enhance the experience even more by reading with others and gather together (in person or online) to discuss the book and what it meant to you. Book Clubs are simply a gathering of people who share a love of reading. Book Clubs also give readers a way to commit to reading at least one book a month (or whatever time frame your group agrees on.) It's easier than you think. If you're hungry to dive into a great book this summer and discuss it with friends or meet new friends then this is the summer venture for you.

Who the Venture is for- You can have as many as 12-15 and as few as 4. We advise at least 4 or 5 people in attendance so if one or two members are absent you can still meet and have a discussion. If you have too many members not everyone will have a chance to participate. Some online spaces require 10 or less participants. You can gather with people in the same life stage as you or you can have a multi-generational group to gain an even more varied perspective. Truly any age can participate in a book club.

How to Invite Members- Talk to close friends, co-workers and people at Crossroads. You can utilize online sites like FaceBook and Goodreads to see if people are interested. You may be a part of an existing group that would like to read a book together. Have your friends invite their friends which creates a variety of people that don't necessarily all know each other. Once you know who's interested invite people using free invitations online with www.evite.com or invite through "Events" on Facebook. Make sure to include all important information ie. location, date, time, address and book selection.

Suggested Schedule- Typically a book club meets once a month after everyone has finished reading the book. Since this is a summer commitment only, your group may want to meet more frequently. If two weeks is not enough time to finish a book you could meet to discuss half the book mid-month. The most important thing is to set a firm day and time for each meeting for the entire summer before the first meeting. This gives members plenty of planning time to set the meetings on their calendars. Book Clubs usually last around 90 minutes depending on discussion time and snack time. Honor your members schedule and keep discussion time within the originally planned timeframe. One tip might be to meet later in the evening to give families a chance to have dinner before gathering with your group.

Location Suggestions- As the host you can offer your home to meet in or see if other members want to host. Some book clubs find success with moving from house to house to meet. You can meet indoors or outdoors as long as the space has enough seating for the number of members in the club. Keep temperature in mind especially during these warm summer months. You can meet at a coffee shop, restaurant or you can meet online.

Food/Menu- The hosts can be responsible for providing drinks and snacks for everyone or members can take turns with food and beverages. Typically with book clubs food is kept easy and minimal to have more time for discussion or you can have a theme for food that corresponds with the book you just read. For example serving comfort food if the book takes place in the south or Italian food if your book takes place in Italy. If your club meets online you may all decide to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea together during your discussion in your individual environment. Your group may decide not to have snacks at all or to have a bigger meal. It's entirely up to you and the members.

Book Selection- The host should select the first book and notify members so they can start reading as soon as possible. Make sure to contact your members email and/or text about the book selection and where they can get a copy of the book. The easiest way to get books is through Amazon and members can choose the format that works best for them whether it's kindle, audio or hardcopy. If there is time to read more books the members can bring suggestions to the group at a later time in the future. Consider choosing a book that leads to greater insight and discussion and also a book that's not too long. Typically books that are 400 words or less are more likely to be finished. Let your members know there is no pressure to finish reading but spoilers will happen and they have to consent to that.

Here are some great sites for book suggestions:

www.goodreads.com
hello.sunshine.com

Pastor Ryan Howell recommendations:

A Framework for Understanding Poverty by Ruby K. Payne
The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
Somebody's Daughter by Julian Sher
Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson

Tara Kaya's Favorites:

Beginners Pluck by Liz Bohannon
One Thousand Gifts by Ann Voskamp
Wild by Cheryl Strayed
Big Little Lies by Liane Moriarty
Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly

Discussion- The host can guide the discussion or another member in the group. Some groups choose to take turns with this job depending on who is providing snacks so one person does not have to handle everything. Before the meeting whoever is leading the discussion can search analysis or questions about the book. Searching author information might be helpful as well. Many books now include discussion questions at the end of the book. If needed here are a few sample questions you could use:

- What was your favorite part of the book?
- What was your least favorite?
- Did you race to the end, or was it more a slow burn?
- Which scene has stuck with you the most?
- What did you think of the writing? Are there any standout sentences?

COVID Guidelines- Once you know who the members of your book club will be you can discuss their comfort level with COVID-19. You may decide to meet in a home and wear masks or host a group online using one of the many digital spaces. Here are a few examples:

zoom.us

microsoftteams.com

hangouts.google.com

All of the above tips can be used in an online group.

End of Summer Celebration- One last tip for a fun book club...watch a movie together. If there is a movie made based on the book your club has read a fun activity would be to watch the movie together after reading the book. These days you can find so many great movies on different streaming platforms like Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime etc. One of the books Pastor Ryan Howell suggests, Just Mercy was made into an incredible movie that was just made available for free for the month of June but can also be found on AppleTv. In addition this book and movie is so relevant with what our nation is going through right now.

Find some great books and start reading with friends....have fun!