

The Leavers
ARRT Book Club Study
Leadership Discussion Notes
Wednesday, November 7, 2018
3:10-4:00 pm
Stickney-Forest View Public Library District
14 participants

The Leadership Topic was "Book Club Basics." Led by Emily Borsa.

Emily began by asking, How do you decide what type of book club to form?

A following question was presented: Who has book clubs that they lead currently? A majority raised their hands, three were left who did not lead book clubs. One was a sub for a book discussion leader, but had not had to lead one yet.

Examples of various types of standard book clubs were given: fiction, non-fiction, best-sellers, genre. Many librarians "inherit" book clubs. One participant who inherited a mystery book club spoke of the challenge of having to write her own discussion questions (because most mysteries don't come w/ disc questions). Jennifer from Indian Prairie said Crime Readers has the largest attendance, Novel Idea going steady, and 20s/30s started 9 yrs ago.

Questions to ask when forming a book club are: What is your audience? What content/genre will be the focus? What time of day? At what point do you call it quits if it doesn't "take off?"

Failed book clubs examples: Podcast discussion, NF discussion, YA books for adults, GN book club. The best bet is to get two people who are interested to be the core of the group, and then build from there.

How to Promote? Promote in the building. Word of mouth is the best, "direct marketing" -those people are already coming to the building. Print Newsletters, big bookmarks.

One library got a lot of interest in their book clubs by having a Book Club Collection right near the front desk.

How do you decide what kind of books? And how to get them? How far advance to pick titles?

Most participants agreed that the **librarian should pick the books and have the final say** when it came to suggestions from book club members. Make sure there are enough copies in the system (or World Cat) available. Be aware if some members require LP, and if so, make sure the book is available in that option. If the book is popular, there will be a long wait. Plan/hold accordingly.

Always have the next month's book at the discussion, ready to give out.

Library patrons want to be challenged, but don't push too much.

Have a book with issues or timely connection to current events but watch out for books that can be too raw/emotion. Unreliable narrators good. Open/ambiguous endings good. It should

explore a basic human truth. It's good when a reader gets mad at a character (Atonement was given as an example of a book that has one of the biggest twists).

As the leader, be devil's advocate with pushy/strong opinions because that can encourage someone else to speak their opinion.

It's good when some don't like the book. Start the discussion with the person who didn't like the book, was one suggestion. The suggestion was countered by others who found this didn't always work favorably.

Emily passed out Becky's Leadership Norms and Group Norms. (attached)

For the Leader:

- Read the entire book
- Gather information to help enhance the discussion
- Be prepared to offer counter opinions
- Be prepared to begin new lines of discussion when necessary
- Do not let one person monopolize the discussion
- Be willing and prepared to take control of the group, firmly but respectfully

For the book club group: (Give at the first meeting of the year and keep it on hand)

- Make your best effort to complete the book
- Come ready to both share AND listen
- Be ready to back up your opinions with the "why"
- Self-censor
- Have a great time...and if you stop enjoying yourself, let me know ASAP

The advice for any substitute leader was: acknowledge to the group right at the beginning that things will feel a little different and to expect it might not be run exactly the same. Someone said to sit in on the discussion before she has to lead it, she told us she has done this.

At the book discussion: First thing, go around and ask everyone to say one thing that resonated with them about the book, so everyone gets a chance to talk.

Some like to have discussion questions ahead of the meeting, but some resent having an assignment. Some like a write-up afterward, especially if someone misses.

Read-a-likes for The Leaver: Pachinko, Songs of Willow Frost, Lucky Boy.

Other immigrant stories with similar themes that were mentioned: Exit West, Book of Unknown Americans, Americanah.

Emily passed out a handout of book club resources (Attached)

ARRT Book Club Resources

LitLovers www.litlovers.com

ALA Book Club Central www.bookclubcentral.org

ilovelibraries www.ilovelibraries.org

ReadingGroupGuides www.readinggroupguides.com

Book Browse www.bookbrowse.com/bookclubs/

Book Movement www.bookmovement.com

Book Riot www.bookriot.com/tags/book-clubs/

Novelist (Discussion guides when available)

Recharge Your Book Club CE video with RA for ALL www.railslibraries.info/ce/archive/102079

Leader/Group Norms from raforall.blogspot.com

Leader Norms:

- Read the entire books
- Gather information to help enhance the discussion
- Be prepared to offer counter opinions -- even if they differ from your own
- Be prepared to begin new lines of discussion when necessary
- Do not let one person monopolize the discussion
- Be willing and prepared to take control of the group, firmly but respectfully

Group Norms:

- Make your best effort to complete the book
- Come ready to both share AND listen
- Be ready to back up your opinions with the "Why"
- Self-censor
- Have a great time -- if you stop enjoying it, let the leader know