

MEETING #3: GETTING IN THE SWING OF THINGS

Happy New Year and welcome to our third month of Parent & Daughter Book Club.

If your club has been reading with us since the beginning, your group is probably starting to feel solid. Your book discussion will likely be more lively and feel more natural.

If this is your first meeting, welcome. Don't forget to check the Girls Leadership website for all the previous book club resources. We also have a book club FAQ page that we update as we get your questions. If there's anything you'd like to know, please email us.

For this month's book, we are experimenting with giving fewer activities and questions in the discussion guide. Please let us know how this works for you.

- Do you use the guide?
- Do you prefer the longer ones like *Year of the Dog* and *Rickshaw Girl*, or shorter like this month?
- Is there anything else we could include in the guide that would be helpful?

If you didn't get the survey in your email, please email any feedback to dorothy@girlsleadership.org

MEETING #3: GETTING IN THE SWING OF THINGS

1. Munch and Mingle 20-30 minutes Materials = snacks

Perhaps it's been a long time since you've seen each other. Give 20-30 minutes for catching up. When it's time to start the discussion, make sure everyone is seated in a way that they can see everyone else.

If there is a girl in the group who is new or especially shy, encourage the other girls to include her, just as the girls in Maria Isabel's new class drew her into their games at recess. They might sit next to her or ask her what she thought of the book.

Book Club Tip: Now that your club might be feeling more comfortable together, the girls are probably getting over their shyness and feeling eager to share. This might lead to interrupting and talking over one another.

Make sure you gently remind girls to be good at sharing and at listening. And parents should model good listening, too. Book club should be a place where all voices are heard and encouraged.

2. Book Discussion!



45 minutes

Materials = book

Everyone should have her own book handy for reference, plus a copy of or access to this guide for the discussion questions.

The main character in *My Name is Maria Isabel* doesn't know how to solve her problem - that her teacher won't call her by her real name. Maria Isabel is very different from the other characters that we've read so far. She won't go about things in the methodical way of Pacey from *Year of the Dog*, nor will she take enormous risks like Naima from *Rickshaw Girl*. She has to find a solution that works for her, and that feels authentic.

By presenting a wide variety of characters, we hope that girls will see themselves reflected in the pages of their books. Our daughters, like the rest of us, aren't just one way or another. Sometimes they are like Naima - bold and impulsive. Other times, they are more like Maria Isabel - quiet, reluctant to speak up. Life isn't one size fits all. **We want girls to see that there are many ways to solve their problems.**

2. Book Discussion!



45 minutes

Materials = book

Some people, like Maria Isabel, need more time than others to say what they feel and ask for what they need. They might need weeks to figure out what they want to say. They might even need to write their words down on paper, like Maria Isabel does.

Maria Isabel's story has a satisfying conclusion - her teacher calls her by her real name and she gets to sing her favorite holiday song in the pageant - and she also feels proud that she solved her problem in her own time, in her own way.

My Name Is Maria Isabel Discussion Questions:

1: At the beginning of the story, Maria Isabel has to face a frightening situation: a brand new school where she doesn't know anyone.

- Has there been a time when you've gone into a class or camp without knowing anyone?
- How did you feel about it?
- What helped you through that experience?
- How can we help other people through similar experiences?

2. Book Discussion!



45 minutes

Materials = book

2: Why doesn't Maria Isabel discuss her problem with her parents?

- How would the story have gone differently if she had discussed her problem with them?

3: What kind of person is the teacher?

- We readers might be tempted to see her as cruel or insensitive. Yet, most of us have accidentally hurt someone else's feelings.
- What does the teacher do once she realizes how Maria Isabel feels? How do you think the teacher feels in that moment?
- How does she makes amends?

3. Closing



5 minutes

Materials = none

Of the three characters we've read about so far - Pacey, Naima, and Maria Isabel - **which one are you most like?** Go around the circle if there is time so everyone can share her answer.

Get out your calendars and set a date to meet and discuss February's book.