

Welcome to the 2017-2018 year of Girls Leadership Book Club! In this first meeting, your group will get to know each other (if you don't already), you'll pick a group name, and, most importantly, you'll share your thoughts about this month's book, ***The Year of the Book***.

As you discuss this book, first with your girl and then with your club, you might find yourself thinking about times in your own life when it was easier to retreat into solitude than to deal with the messiness of relationships. Beyond making personal connections, this novel might inspire readers to pick up some of Anna's favorite books, like *My Side of the Mountain* and *A Wrinkle in Time*, make paper airplanes, or try a new sewing project.

Most book clubs will meet in members' homes, alternating each month. When you meet, the whole group will have already read the book. Grown-ups and girls might read together or independently; either one is totally fine. It's a good idea to have copies of the book on hand for reference if possible. Grown-up and girl pairs should take turns leading the meetings. This will involve choosing discussion questions to start off the meeting, drawing out quieter voices, and keeping an eye on the time. Don't worry too much if some participants are hesitant to share during this first meeting. Some people need one or two meetings to warm up.

On the following pages, you will find some suggestions for how your book club meeting might go. Feel free to use whichever of these questions and tips works for your club, and substitute as you wish. The best book discussions develop organically as people listen closely and respond to each other.

### **Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes**

As grown ups and girls arrive, allow some time for snacking and catching up. Snacks don't have to be fancy at all; it can be as simple as a picnic blanket in the backyard, or sitting around the coffee table eating popcorn and lemonade.

### **Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes**

Girls and grown-ups might ask each other a question, such as: **"If you could hang out with one fictional character for the day, who would it be?"** Give five minutes for pairs discussion. Then, give 5-10 minutes for grown-ups and

girls to introduce each other and share a bit about each other's answers. It might sound something like, "This is my mom. Her name is Shannon. She would love to hang out with Wonder Woman."

Since this is the first meeting of the year, gather everyone before so you can go over ground rules. It's helpful if the club members are all on the same page about expectations, particularly when it comes to privacy. Our **Book Club Mad Libs** can help with this, and will also help you give your club a fun name.

### **Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so**

These questions about *The Year of the Book* might help you begin your book talk. Some groups might have time to get to all of these questions, but many groups will pick one or two questions and spend the whole meeting discussing those. Feel free to write your own discussion questions.

- What kind of person is Anna? How do you know? Are there any clues in the book about what kind of person she is?
- What role do books play in Anna's life? What role do books play in your life?
- Anna's mom calls her "selfish girl." Do you think there any truth in that?
- Anna uses excuses to avoid Laura. Why is she avoiding playing with her friend? If you were Anna, what would you do?
- What kind of person is Allison? How do you know? Why might she act the way she's acting?
- What is Laura's friendship with Allison like? Have you ever had a friendship like that?
- Is Anna different at the end of the book than she was at the beginning? In what ways?
- How does this book connect to the ideas of inclusivity and empathy? In what ways is Anna inclusive?

## **Leadership Goals, 15 minutes**

Are there people in your life - maybe in your neighborhood, or at school - like Jamie in this book - might be feeling lonely, or in need of a friend? Can you show leadership by being inclusive toward that person?

Participants can talk to each other in pairs or as a whole group. Think about setting a goal for the next month. For instance, you might make a plan to invite a new person to sit join your game or lunch table. This goes for grown-ups, too! Report back to the club next month.

## **Closing, 5 minutes**

Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your November meeting. Happy reading!

## **Further Reading**

If you really loved this book, and you'd like to read more books like it, here are some suggestions. If there are other books you would like to recommend, we'd love to hear them! Please share them on our **[Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook page](#)** so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

The entire *Anna Wang* series by Andrea Cheng - There are five books in all, following Anna and her family over the course of many changes.

*Remembering Mrs. Rossi* and *Letters to Leo* by Amy Hest - In the first of these two books, Annie's mother has unexpectedly died unexpectedly, and she uses a collection of mementos for comfort. In the second book, Annie and her dad continue to process the grief of losing her mom, helped along by the presence of a new dog named Leo.