

It's hard to believe that this is our last book club of the school year. It seems only yesterday, we announced our book selections for the year, excited and hopeful for all of our over 3,000 Girl & Grown-Up Book Club families to read, talk, laugh, and grow together. We're grateful for all the feedback we've gotten from you over the course of the past year, especially for the photos of girls! We love to see those girls engaging with each other and their communities, diving into the topic of leadership in their lives.

This month, 6th, 7th, & 8th grade girls and their grown-ups will read Sherri L. Smith's historical fiction novel *Flygirl*. Set at the start of World War II, it tells the story of an African-American girl named Ida Mae who dreams of being a pilot. The war presents an opportunity for light-skinned Ida Mae to pass as white in order to become a pilot for the war effort. But she pays a high cost, denying who she is, her family, and where she comes from. After working so hard to reach her goal, Ida Mae wonders if there's a way for her to fly and be true to who she really is.

Since this is the last month of book club for this year, take a moment to reflect on how far you've come. Perhaps you came together as a group of acquaintances who now call yourselves friends. Perhaps you were friends who have deepened your bonds through sharing with and supporting each other. We at Girls Leadership hope that your club will continue to be a big part of each other's lives - and that you'll keep your club going in some way until next fall when we release our next book selections! If you're interested in continuing to meet to discuss great books, try checking out our blog's Book Club archives, browse on A Mighty Girl's website, or check out some of the notable books from the American Library Association.

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

As grown-ups and girls arrive, spend some time catching up. The host family might put out snacks and drinks.

## Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

Annie Dillard wrote, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” Whether your book club has been meeting for two years or two months, your choice to be part of this program shows your commitment to your girl, yourself, and your community.

Take a moment to think back on the books you’ve read this year. Which ones have been favorites? Which prompted the best conversation? You could talk about whether you’re going to keep the book club going next year. If so, how would you want it to be the same? How would you want it to be different?

## Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

These questions about *Flygirl* might help you begin your book talk. Some groups might discuss all of these questions, but many groups will use only one or two questions to get their conversation going. Feel free to write your own discussion questions.

- Why is it so important for Ida Mae to become a pilot? What is standing in her way?
- Why are Bessie Coleman and Amelia Earhart heroes to Ida Mae? Who are your heroes?
- Why does Ida Mae lie to join WASP? Are there any circumstances in which it’s okay to lie?
- What qualities and skills do Ida Mae and her fellow WASP trainees need to be successful as pilots? Are any of these general leadership qualities? Think about your goal. What qualities do you need to be achieve your goal?
- How does Ida Mae feel when she lies about who her mother is?
- How is Ida Mae’s friendship with Patsy and Lily different than her friendship with Jolene?

## Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Give book club members a few minutes to think independently about leadership. I recommend giving everyone a piece of paper where she can write or sketch about what leadership means in her life. You could ask yourselves how being part of the club changed your idea of leadership, or how you've stretched yourself to be a leader in new ways. You might identify one moment when you practiced leadership skills, or a plan you have for doing so in the near future. Maybe you've reached out to people who show themselves to be true friends, like Mimi in *Full Cicada Moon*, or maybe you've taken bold action so reach your goals, like Mimi from *Chains*.

After a few minutes of independent reflection, give a chance for book club members to share in pairs or with the group.

## Closing, 5 minutes

Consider making some plans for the summer months so your group doesn't lose touch between now and next fall.

## 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 Group, so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

*Climbing the Stairs* by Padma Venkatraman - Fifteen-year-old Vidya lives in British-occupied India during World War II. She's smart, ambitious, curious, and dreams of attending college. When she has to move into her conservative grandfather's house, her hopes for an education start to fade away. A budding romance makes Vidya question the life she thought she wanted.