

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 girls engaging with each other and their communities, diving into the topic of leadership in their lives.

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.

This month, 4th and 5th grade girls and their grown-ups will read Sharon Draper's historical fiction book set in a segregated North Carolina town during the Great Depression. This story about a girl named Stella who writes in her journal every night to explore her thoughts about the world was inspired by Ms Draper's discovery of her own grandmother's journal.

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 you, 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 parents 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?.

## Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

These questions about *Stella by Starlight* 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.

- What does Stella’s father mean when he tells her to “balance courage with wisdom?”
- How is life different for the black and white children of Bumblebee?
- How does Stella feel about herself as a writer at the beginning of the book as opposed to the end of the book?
- Why does Stella’s father bring her with him when goes to vote? What effect do you think that has on her?
- Why does Stella hesitate to write about the Klan in her essay for the competition? Why does it feel so daring and risky to tell the truth?
- Stella’s teacher doesn’t choose her essay for the competition, but she keeps writing anyway? Why? Do you think it’s hard for her to keep writing after being disappointed? Have you ever felt that way?

## 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 tried to reach out to be a good friend, like Amina in *Amina's Voice*, or maybe you've learned to be flexible when unexpected changes happen, like Omakayas in *The Birchbark House*.

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

Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your April 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 Group, so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

*Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper - Melody can't walk or talk due to cerebral palsy. Very few people know how intelligent she is, even though in her head her brain is on fire, thinking and remembering and wondering. When she attends an integrated classroom for the first time, it opens up her world in ways that are both beautiful and painful.

*Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer* by Kelly Jones - Sophie and her family have just moved from the big city to a poultry farm, and they have no idea what they're doing. Sophie writes letters to her *abuela* back in Los Angeles, telling her all about her misadventures. Chicken rearing gets a lot more exciting when she discovers that some of the chickens have super powers!