

Welcome to a new year of Girl & Grown-Up Book Club for 4th and 5th grade girls! 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, *Gabby Garcia's Ultimate Playbook*.

For any newcomers (or anyone who'd like a refresher), let's go over the nuts and bolts of book club. Girls might want to read books independently, read to a grown-up, or listen as a grown-up reads the book to her. Any of those options are totally fine, as long as both the grown-up and girl read the book. In my experience, reading together provides the opportunity to discuss as you go, and can help some people feel more prepared for the group discussion. Even if you don't read together, it could be helpful to discuss prior to the book club meeting.

We do our best to select books that are well-written, age-appropriate, and thematically connected to the Girls Leadership mission. However, if the title we've suggested for the month doesn't work for your group for any reason, feel free to change it up. If you'd like ideas for other titles, you could check out the alternate titles we list at the end of every discussion guide, or look through the Girls Leadership book suggestions from other grades or previous years. You could also check websites like A Mighty Girl (amightygirl.com/books), or talk to your local children's librarian.

Most clubs meet in members' homes on a rotating schedule. Girl & grown-up 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.

This month, you might find yourself thinking back on a time when you, like our main character Gabby, had a hard time asking someone for what you wanted. Maybe you even said you wanted the opposite of what you really, in your heart,

needed. Many of us, young and old, struggle to find the words to ask for support and help.

You also might find yourself reflecting on the things in your life that make you feel most content, excited, and energetic. Gabby loves to play sports, especially baseball. She has fun, feels successful, and pushes herself to be better all the time. What do you do to feel successful and have fun? Do you enjoy sports or physical activities too? Is there something you've been wanting to try but haven't yet?

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, think about allowing some time for snacking and introductions or catching up. Snacks don't have to be fancy; 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 questions, for example: **“What is one place in the world you would love to visit?”** 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 go to Costa Rica because she loves hot weather, beaches, and nature.”

If this is your first meeting together, gather the group for a quick **Book Club Mad Libs** activity (download on the toolkit page). This will help get club members on the same page about expectations, particularly about privacy, and will also help you give your club a fun name.

Book Discussion, 30 minutes or so

You might decide to start the discussion with every member saying her favorite part of the book before reading discussion questions. 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 come up with your own discussion questions, or bring up any ideas that came up while you were reading.

- What does Gabby expect will happen when she arrives at her new school Piper Bell? What actually happens?
- Why does Gabby quit the baseball team? Do you think this was a good decision? Why or why not?
- Why doesn't Gabby tell her Dad that she doesn't like the lunches he makes? What does this tell us about the kind of person Gabby is?
- What are Gabby's first impressions of the field hockey team? How does she treat her new friends?
- Did you enjoy the way the book ended, with Gabby splitting her time between the baseball game and the talent show?
- How does having a "playbook" help Gabby?
- Do Gabby's goals change from the beginning of the book to the end? How?
- What do you think of the "sports announcers" in Gabby's head? Are they helpful? Do you ever hear judgmental voices in your head? What do they say?
- How does Gabby's attitude about playing on a team change by the end of the book?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Is there something you can think of that you would like to ask someone for? Perhaps you want to ask for more time to do something you love, or you'd like

your teacher to help you with a problem. Whether or not you can think of something right now, try to make a plan for how you will find the courage to ask for what you need.

Participants can talk to each other in pairs or as a whole group. What are some strategies for asking for what you need? For instance, you might write down what you want to say first, or practice asking in front of the mirror. Consider setting a goal for the next month. Maybe you will ask for something you need three times. 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 Group** so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson - This is a super fun graphic novel about a girl who goes to roller derby camp. In addition to taking a *lot* of bumps and bruises, she learns about courage, friendship, and accepting differences.

The Kicks series by Alex Morgan - Star soccer player Alex Morgan wrote this fun series about a girl who moves to a new school, and finds fun and friendship on the soccer team.

Remember My Name: My Story from First Pitch to Game Changer by Mo'ne Davis - Mo'ne Davis was the first female pitcher to win a game in the Little League World Series. She was the first Little League player to be on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. She was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. All this, and she was only thirteen years old. This is the true story of her journey.