

The year is 1968. When sisters Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern travel from Brooklyn to Oakland to visit their estranged mother, they aren't sure how to feel. On the one hand, they resent their mother Cecile's lack of involvement and concern for them. On the other hand, they're pretty sure they're going to meet some movie stars and go to Disneyland.

Instead, the sisters spend their four weeks going to a Black Panthers summer camp. Oldest sister Delphine begins to understand her mother's choices, and the larger political atmosphere. Away from their grandmother's rigidity and rules, Delphine gets a glimpse of a community taking care of each other, risking their personal safety to help make things right for all.

This book was a selection for the Girls Leadership Girl & Grown-Up Book Club two years ago. I bought it back this year because it's such a favorite. I hope it will give you lots to talk about, and maybe even inspire you to take part in activism in your local community. All of our girls need to hear that they have the ability to create change. So, if your girl notices something that's not right, ask her what she's going to do about it. Think of yourself as part of her crew, but she's the director. The simple act of noticing something wrong and taking action to fix it will serve as an enormous lesson in the years to come, even if she doesn't exactly reach her goal.

Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes

As grown-ups and girls arrive, allow some time for snacking and introductions or catching up.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

Everyone in the group should pair up with someone, ask each other a question, and discuss for five minutes. Then, give 5-10 minutes for pairs to introduce each other and share a bit about each other's answers. Here's something you could try:

- *When was a time that you were pretty sure you were not going to succeed, but you kept going anyway?*
- *What happened, and how did you feel about it?*

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.

- How do Delphine and her sisters feel when they're on their way to see their mother? How would you feel in their situation?
- What is the relationship between Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern like? Can you relate to it?
- What are some of the main difference between the girls' life in Brooklyn and Cecile's life in Oakland?
- When Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern first go to the People's Center for breakfast, are the Black Panthers what they expected? What does Delphine

mean when she thinks, “beating eggs never makes the evening news?” (pg. 64)

- Does being in Oakland make Delphine question what she knows? Does being there change her? If so, how does she change?
- What do you think Cecile means when she says, “It wouldn't kill you to be selfish?” (pg. 110)
- How does the activism the girls do with the Black Panthers compare to the type of work you see activists doing today?
- What do the sisters hope to get from their mother? Do they get it, or do they get something else? Do they feel satisfied at the end of the story?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

What do you feel strongly about? It could be an issue within your family, school, or larger community? What are you going to do about it? In pairs, brainstorm general ideas for how you could make positive changes around this issue.

Now, pick one small action that makes sense as a starting point. Maybe you have to invite people to a meeting, find a company's address, or jot down notes for a letter. Pick one *small* action that will help you get started on your plan. Next month, check in about whether everyone did her action.

Girls and grown-ups might decide to share around the circle so everyone has a turn, or give time so anyone who wants to share can do so.

Closing, 5 minutes

Make sure you've chosen a date for your February meeting before parting ways. 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.

P.S. Be Eleven and *Gone Crazy in Alabama* by Rita Williams-Garcia - The Gaither sisters' adventures continue in these two sequels.

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson - Woodson's memoir in verse tells the story of growing up between the south and New York, and developing a way of expressing herself through her writing.

Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly - The best-selling book about the African-American women who worked at NASA to launch the first space shuttle comes in an adult edition, a young readers' edition, and, NOW, a picture book!

Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World by Susan Hood - Each of these fourteen young activists is the subject of a wonderful poem and a piece of art by a variety of talented illustrators.

If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement by Gwendolyn Hooks, illustrated by Kelly Kennedy - A kid's-eye-view of the Civil Rights movement, and how it shaped the world we live in today.

Ahimsa by Supriya Kelkar - In 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement, ten-year-old Anjali is devastated to think of her father risking his life for the freedom struggle. But it turns out he isn't the one joining. Anjali's mother is.