

Welcome to a new year of Girls Leadership Girl & Grown-Up Book Club for middle schoolers! 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, *A Good Kind of Trouble*.

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. As much as possible, the girls should be leading the meetings themselves. This will involve choosing discussion questions to start off the meeting, drawing out quieter voices, and keeping an eye on the time. It might be hard to do, but if grown-ups can sit back and not start the conversation, girls might feel like there is space for them to do so. You might even say to them, "*We're going to let you girls start the conversation so we get to talk about the things that are important to you.*" Don't worry if there are pauses in the conversation, or if the conversation doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Better that girls feel ownership over the club. If they are struggling, grown-ups could ask if they want help before coming to the rescue.

Kids - and especially girls - are often told to stay out of trouble. In this month's book, Shayla hates getting into trouble. However, when her school principal threatens her with disciplinary action for wearing an armband to bring attention to police brutality, she decides that there are some times when she's willing to risk getting in trouble when it means standing up for what she believes in.

As you read this story, you and your girl might find opportunities to discuss what it means to get in trouble, and whether it's always to be avoided. Were there times when you got in trouble and felt it was worth the risk? What kind of trouble is healthy or acceptable? Under what circumstances would your girl have your support if she was to get in trouble, like Shayla does, at school?

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.

I hope you enjoy this month's book and that your club's conversation takes you in many interesting directions. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the Girls Leadership Book Club Facebook page! bit.ly/GLbookFB

Munch 'n' Chat, 20-30 minutes

Before girls and grown-ups arrive, the hosts might consider whether nametags might be helpful. If any of the people in attendance might not know each other, think about what you can do to put people at ease, and set a warm tone.

Leave a little time for a "soft start" during which people can arrive, snack, and catch up or meet each other.

Ice-Breaker, 10-15 minutes

Girl and grown-up pairs take turns "interviewing" each other with an icebreaker question. You could make up your own icebreaker or use one of our suggestions.

“What is something that you do to express yourself and your creativity?”

“Imagine yourself being introduced to a large crowd - now or at some point in the future. How would you want to be described? What kind of accomplishments would be listed?”

After pairs have discussed the question, take a few minutes for anyone who wants to share their answer with the group. Or, everyone could take a turn introducing their partner to the rest of the group by saying their name and briefly talking about their answer to the icebreaker. (Try to give people a head’s up in advance that they will be asked to remember what their partner said.)

If you are a returning book club, you can revisit the club expectations that you went over last year in the **Book Club Mad Libs** activity (download the Mad Libs on the toolkit page). Ask if any of the girls remember what the expectations were. This year it might be more important than ever to remind the group (girls *and* grown-ups) of the commitment to being present during this time together. It’s definitely not a time to be on the phone.

If your club is new, start by asking everyone: *What do you think are some rules we should follow?* A variety of ideas might come forward in this conversation.

My suggestions are these: 1) We share our own experiences, rather than talking about people who aren’t here; 2) We keep each other’s confidence, and don’t share with others anything that is said at book club; and 3) We stay present and keep our technology put away.

If no one comes up with these rules in the course of conversation, a grown-up might want to bring them up. After you’ve set expectations, ask if the girls want to name the club. Naming the club - much like naming a team - is a way to start to feel like a group of people who have each other’s backs. I’ve give you one suggestion for developing a club name, but feel free to get creative and use any game or activity you’d like.

The Mixed-Up Name Game: For this game, you'll need pens, paper, and a bowl or bag. Choose two fill-in-the-blank statements from the list below, or make up your own.

* "On my best day, I feel _____"

* "If I could be any animal, I'd be _____"

* "If I dyed my hair, the color I'd choose is _____"

* "If I were a salsa, my spiciness level would be _____"

Write answers to these questions on small pieces of paper, and drop them into the bowl. Girls take turns picking two or three papers out of the bowl and putting them together to form a club name. (For example, the "Spicy Squirrels," or the "Joyful Silver Bears.") Let the girls choose or vote on their favorite combination. Your club could also use this activity to get ideas, and then make up a name of your own.

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. Again, whenever possible the grown-ups should sit back and let girls drive the conversation.

- How does Shayla feel about getting in trouble? Can you relate to this feeling, or do you feel differently?
- Shayla's sister thinks it's a big deal that Shayla hasn't had a Black friend. What do you think?

- In Ms. Jacobs’ class, Shayla sometimes feels like she’s being singled out because she’s the only Black kid in the class. Have you ever had an experience like that? How did it make you feel?
- How do Shayla’s feelings about Bernard, Jace, and Tyler change over the course of the book?
- Shayla feels upset about her friendships changing, but she has a hard time speaking up about her feelings, especially about how her friend Julia seems to be abandoning her for new friends. What do you think this situation says about Shayla? About Julia? Do you think one of them is more “right” than the other?
- What do you notice about Shayla’s relationships with her parents and her sister? How do they support each other?
- What are some of the first ways that Shayla starts to speak up for herself? What can we learn from her about saying what we feel?
- How does Shayla’s life change once she starts being honest about her feelings?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

Since this month’s book is about someone who develops a more true and complicated understanding of her identity, take some time at the end of this meeting for book club members to reflect on their identities. This could be an informal conversation, pair interviews, or an art activity in which each person draws a picture of themselves that expresses their identity - maybe even multiple identities, some they were born with and some they chose for themselves.

Note: None of the parts of this discussion guide are obligatory in any way. Feel free to reshape, abandon, and reimagine as suits your group’s needs. If, for example, your group doesn’t have the energy for further discussion, you can

always skip this last part or suggest it to people as a way of carrying their thinking about leadership into the next weeks. Girls and grown-ups could agree to share their identities in ongoing conversations at home, and/or members could come to the next meeting prepared to share their thoughts.

Closing, 5 minutes

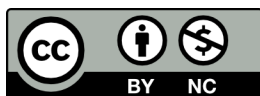
Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your November meeting. Happy reading!

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** bit.ly/GLbookFB so our community can keep growing our list of great titles.

Marley Dias Gets It Done: And So Can You! by Marley Dias - Marley Dias is a young activist who noticed that most of the books being taught in her school were by and about white people (mostly boys!). So she started the hashtag #1000blackgirlbooks to gather books about black girls to donate to school libraries. This book is Marley's story, in her own words, plus a guide for other activists to follow. You're never too young to make a difference!

Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World by Pénélope Bagieu - This book is the ultimate cool mash-up of a graphic novel and a reference book. In it, you'll find profiles of determined women who changed history by standing up for what they loved and believed in.



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