

Welcome to the second month of Girls Leadership Girl & Grown-Up Book Club! This month, we're reading books that deal with allyship, which means using one's privilege to support a marginalized group or individual. In Aida Salazar's debut novel *The Moon Within*, Celi is growing up, and her mother is excited to celebrate her first period with a traditional Mexican ritual. Meanwhile, Celi has her first crush and is supporting her best friend Marco through his gender transition.

In this book, it's the main character who is trying to understand and support a friend. Celi doesn't always do the right thing. At what points in the story do you notice Celi making mistakes, and how does she deal with those?

Another interesting question to consider as you read, is whether Celi really is acting as an ally to Marco, or would you say that she's simply being a friend? Allyship and friendship aren't the same, but they can coexist between two people, and one can lead to the other.

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

Everyone pair up with someone other than your girl or grown-up. If possible, try to pair with someone you don't know very well. Pairs take turns asking each other an icebreaker question. You could make up your own icebreaker or use one of our suggestions.

“What’s one thing that an adult in your life encouraged you to do that you *really* didn’t want to do, but later you were glad you did?”

“What’s one thing that an adult in your life encouraged you to do that you *really* didn’t want to do, and later you were glad you’d listened to your instincts?”

Take a few minutes for anyone who wants to share their answer with the group.

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 are Mima and Celi’s feelings about Celi’s body different?
- How does Celi describe her cultural identity? Does it play an important role in her life?
- Describe Celi and Marco’s friendship?
- Marco’s mother asks Celi to help Marco feel safe as he’s transitioning. Does Celi do this? How?

- What are Celi's feelings for Iván? Why doesn't she want to tell her parents or Marco how much she likes Iván?
- Why does Celi agree to the moon ceremony? How have her feelings changed?
- What do you think about the kind of celebration Celi and Marco have? Would you enjoy a celebration like that?
- How does Celi's relationship with her mom change throughout the story?
- Discuss the role music and dancing play in this book.
- Why does Celi reject Iván? What would you have done in her place?
- Talk about what being an ally means to you. How would you define it? How is it different from being a friend? Can someone be both? What would you say about Celi - is she an ally to Marco? Why?
- How is allyship connected to leadership?

Leadership Goals, 15 minutes

One of the best ways to define allyship is to observe it in the wild! See if you can spot examples of people using their privilege to support and amplify marginalized groups and individuals, people taking on the struggles of others as if those struggles were their own. Be on the lookout when on social media, in particular.

Do you have an opportunity to be an ally to someone? Remember that, first and foremost, an ally's job is to listen to another's experience, and to what kind of support they need. You might want to share any of your observations or experiences with your book club at the next meeting.

Closing, 5 minutes

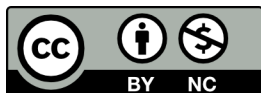
Before everyone goes off their separate ways, make sure you've chosen a date for your January meeting (no meeting in December, unless your group plans its own event). Happy reading!

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.

If You Come Softly by Jacqueline Woodson - Ellie and Miah meet at a private school and fall in love, despite many of differences in their backgrounds. Elli is Jewish and white, Miah is Black. Together, they seek to understand the other's lives, and to figure out if their relationship can find a safe place in the world. This novel from 2006 still resonates.

Piecing Me Together by Renée Watson - Jade attends a mostly-white private school, and feels torn between the opportunities she gets there and the fact that few people understand her life. Jade realizes that staying quiet isn't the solution. She has to find a way to ask for the opportunities she wants, and speak up in her relationships, too.



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