

# Recharge Your Book Club

Presented by Becky Spratford  
For Utah State Library

March 12, 2019

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<http://raforall.blogspot.com>

@RAforAll



# Schedule of Events

- ❖ Why Book Discussions
- ❖ Reassess Your Leadership
- ❖ Rethink the Group Dynamic
  - Shake things up
- ❖ Pick Better Books
- ❖ Identify the Best Resources
- ❖ Have More Dynamic Discussions
- ❖ Keep Them Coming Back For More

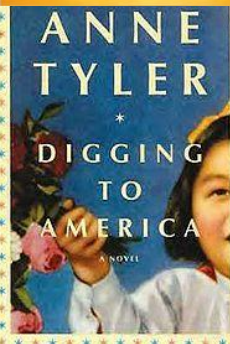
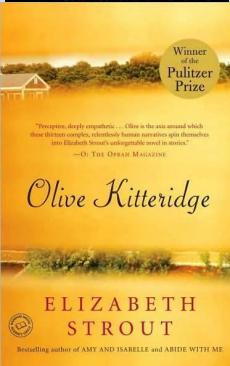


# Why Are You Doing This?

- ❖ Books are meant to be talked about as much as they are to be read alone.
- ❖ What a book discussion is meant to be.
- ❖ Book Discussion is a dialog, guided, not led, by the facilitator
- ❖ Leadership role is both challenging and rewarding.



# Life-Long Learning



- ❖ More fun than school.
- ❖ Value in sharing opinions and hearing counter ones
- ❖ Learn more about what you didn't understand or just plain missed.
- ❖ Learn about new and varied authors and their books
- ❖ Meet people with a shared interest in reading.



# Reassess Your Leadership

- ❖ Leadership role is both challenging and rewarding.
- ❖ How long has it been since you have participated in a book group?
- ❖ Support group for book club leaders [article by me]
- ❖ Are you burnt out?
  - It's okay to take a month off



# Leadership Norms

- ❖ Read the entire book
- ❖ Gather information to help enhance the discussion
- ❖ Be prepared to offer counter opinions
- ❖ Be prepared to begin new lines of discussion when necessary
- ❖ Do not let one person monopolize the discussion
- ❖ Be willing and prepared to take control of the group, firmly but respectfully



# Rethink Group Dynamics

- ❖ Have the group reassess itself
- ❖ Shake things up-- no one will get hurt... I promise!
  - Survey patrons who do NOT come to group
  - All read a different book
    - same genre
    - anything goes
  - Meet somewhere else
  - Add a movie to the mix
  - Just have a party for no reason



# Group Norms

- ❖ Make your best effort to complete the book
- ❖ Come ready to both share AND listen
- ❖ Be ready to back-up your opinions with the “why”
- ❖ Self censor
- ❖ Have a great time
  - If you stop enjoying yourself, let me know

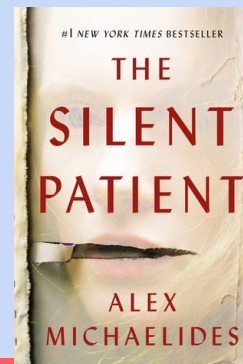
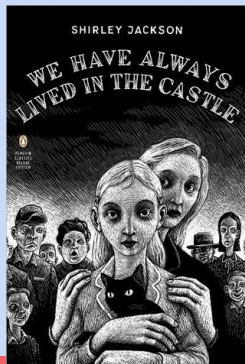




# Pick Better Books

- ❖ Institute a “Dictatorial Democracy”
  - Details
- ❖ Get inspiration from other libraries
- ❖ Educate the participants in what makes a good choice (next slide)
  - Will defuse problems when no one likes a book
  - Agree to disagree (norm!)
- ❖ Take what’s hot and look at it from a different perspective-- same ballpark, different game

➤ **This** instead of **This**



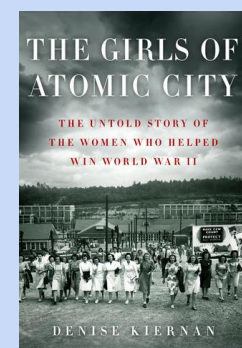
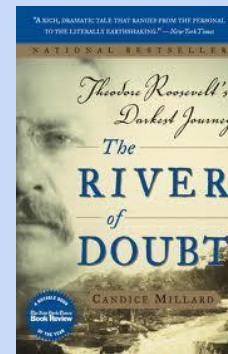
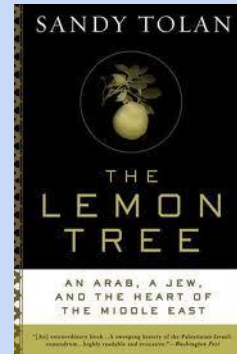
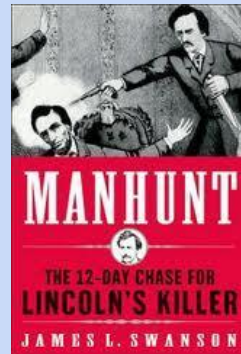
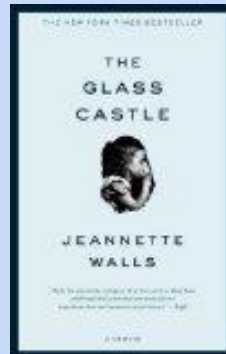
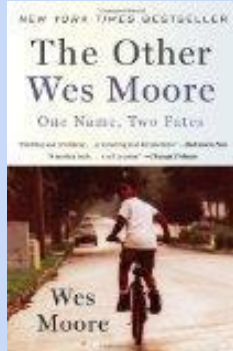
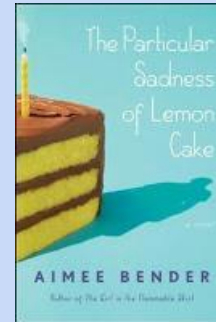
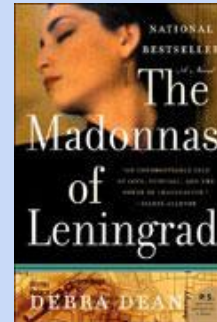
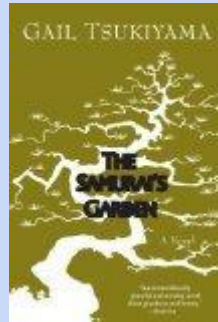
# General Tips for Choosing Discussable Books

- ❖ Well written
- ❖ Explores basic human truths
- ❖ 3-dimensional characters
- ❖ Ambiguous endings
- ❖ Unique style, frame, or setting
- ❖ Media sensations or current events: tread with caution!
- ❖ Proven winners
  - Don't forget the backlist



# Unique Titles That Worked

All covers link to full discussion notes. Please [here](#) for reports of all titles going back to 2007.



- [Becky's brand new inclusive grab and go lists of 6 books each via Novelist \[more info\]](#)
- [More crowd sourced titles-- you try too!](#)



# Pick Better Books: Resources

- ❖ Here is my go-to list of resources
- ❖ Travel to the past:
  - old bestsellers, old book group favorites, old awards
  - pick a year and read major award winners
- ❖ Stage a Battle of the Books.
- ❖ Read a Kids' Book
- ❖ Have a party or go on a bookish field trip
- ❖ What are other groups doing?
  - near and far
  - pen pals?



# Preparing for the Discussion

- ❖ Don't over prepare!
- ❖ Do:
  - Analyze the themes of the book
  - Get to know the characters
  - Notice the structure of the book
  - Make comparisons to other works by this author or other similar “read alike”
  - Step away from the book/library world for inspiration: Ted Talks or Business resources (example)



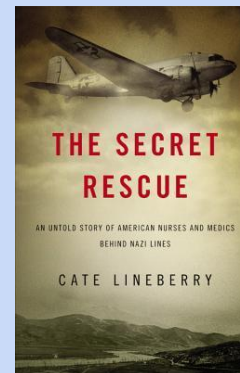
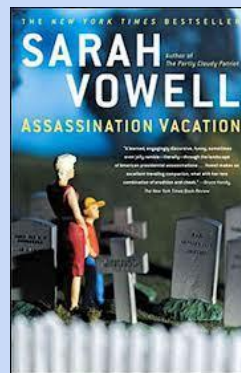
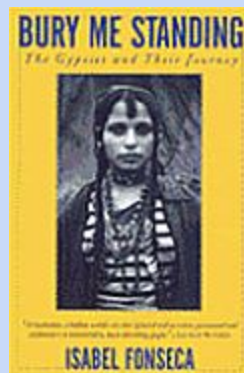
# Change Up the Resources You Consult to Prepare

- ❖ Becky's Best Resources (again)
- ❖ Other ideas
  - Interviews
  - Reviews-- 5 star and 1 star
  - Author websites, newspapers, web based journals etc...a broad search.
- ❖ Gather maps and/or information about setting or historical period if necessary
- ❖ Read notes of other groups
  - ARRT Book Club Study
  - RA for All



# Gathering Questions

- ❖ LitLovers general questions--mold them for your book
  - Fiction
  - Nonfiction
  - Pro Tip: I use both no matter the book
- ❖ Other libraries or **schools**
  - I post original questions when appropriate



# Leading the Discussion [1]

- ❖ Get in the room first
- ❖ Begin with background about the book and author
- ❖ Handout any charts, maps, and/or information if applicable
  - Example
- ❖ Make the first question easy
- ❖ Go with the flow
- ❖ Be ready to play devil's advocate





# Leading the Discussion [2]

- ❖ Look around at everyone
- ❖ Encourage participation
  - But keep “eager beavers” in check
- ❖ Begin new line of discussion promptly as old one peters out
- ❖ Handle disagreements calmly
- ❖ Keep the balance between personal revelations and reactions to book
- ❖ Take notes
  - to use now AND later



# Closing the Discussion

- ❖ Keep track of time
- ❖ Give people a chance for last minute comments
- ❖ Leave time to speculate on open endings
- ❖ Summarize the important points and reactions brought out in discussion
- ❖ Thank people for coming and for their participations
- ❖ Briefly introduce the next book



# Keep Them Coming Back

- ❖ Write up a summary of the discussion
  - Book Discussions on RA for All
- ❖ Engage the participants outside of book club
  - Beta test groups for new services
  - Get them to join the Friends
  - Use them as volunteers
- ❖ Keep the dialog about the group as open as the dialog you have about the book



# Questions?

## **RA for All**

Matching Readers With Books  
Through Your Local Public Library

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