BOOK CLUB 101

Ready to start a book club? Hosting a book club is a wonderful way to build community, strengthen friendships, and explore great books together. Here's a simple guide to help you get started.

Getting Started

Before your first meeting, think about a few basics:

- **How much time will members have to read the book?**
  Many clubs allow 4–6 weeks.
- **When and how often will you meet?**
  Choose a consistent day, time, and location that works for most members.
- **How will you structure your meetings?**
  Having a plan helps discussions run smoothly.

Staying Organized

- Keep a list of who receives each copy of the book.
  Each book has a unique Burbank Public Library barcode; use that number to track which copy goes to which member.
- Set clear expectations about returning materials on time so everyone can enjoy the next selection.

Establishing Ground Rules

A few simple guidelines can help create a welcoming and respectful group:

- **Haven't finished the book? Come anyway!**
  Not everyone finishes every book, and all perspectives are welcome.
- **Different opinions are a good thing.**
  There's no single "right" way to interpret a book. Be gracious and respectful.
- **Balance discussion and social time.**
  It's natural to want to chat! Some clubs discuss the book first and socialize afterward.
- **Interruptions and cross talk.**
  Decide what works for your group. Some clubs pass an object and speak one at a time; others enjoy a more spontaneous style.
- **Dominating personalities.**
  Encourage participation by saying, "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." If needed, a kind, private conversation can help maintain balance.

Planning Your Meeting Format

Most clubs meet for about 2 to 2½ hours. A sample format might look like:

- 30–45 minutes: Social time
- 15–20 minutes: Club business (choosing the next book, scheduling, etc.)
- 60–90 minutes: Book discussion

Once you find a format that works for your group, try to stick with it.

Leading the Discussion

Your Book Club Kit includes prepared discussion questions, but you don't have to use them.

Here are a few ways to guide conversation:

With a Leader

- The host or the member who chose the book can lead.
- Some clubs prefer having the same discussion leader each time.

Without a Leader

- Take turns sharing thoughts about the book.
- Have members write a question or observation on an index card and discuss a few together.
- Pass around the discussion-question sheet, with each person reading one aloud.
- End with a quick "thumbs up or down" and a one-sentence summary from each member.

There's no single right way - choose what feels comfortable for your group.

Returning Your Book Club Kit

The person who has checked out the Kit is responsible for all materials, and they must be returned together to a Burbank Library location:

- The Book Club canvas bag
- Noted on the Book TAG-will be the number of copies of the book in the kit (please check that all copies are included)
- Any included discussion materials in the folder

Thank you for hosting a book club through Burbank Library. We're excited to support your reading community. Happy Reading!