



Medical College of Wisconsin Common Read

Book Discussion Guidelines: For Facilitators

Logistics

1. Select a theme for your book discussion
 - For example:
 - A chapter to focus on
 - A topic carried throughout the book
2. Email commonread@mcw.edu to request a room be reserved, please include:
 - Your name and role
 - Desired theme or focus
 - Date
 - Time
 - Number of expected attendees (or attendee max)
 - *About 15-20 people is optimal for a book discussion*

Set the Stage

- ✓ Be prepared with an icebreaker. A lighthearted question will do! For example:
 - Where would you take the author in Milwaukee?
 - What did you find most compelling about the book?
- ✓ Begin by asking the participants to introduce themselves (name and current occupation)
- ✓ Next, mention some goals of the MCW Common Read Program:
 - *To unite students, residents, faculty, staff, and community members alike in thought-provoking discussions about timely topics*
 - *To provide a foundation for conversations around change, compassion, caring, and character*
 - *To create a safe space for idea-sharing and problem-solving*

Optional Ideas for Facilitators

- Ask participants to say what they liked about the book. Beginning with negatives might stifle some people who liked the same things that others did not. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak, perhaps go in a circle around the room.
- Introduce some quotes from a book review that was negative to stimulate discussion. Ask for thoughts about this negative review.
- Feel free to use some of the discussion questions from the author's website linked to on this site
 - You may want to generate discussion questions that apply to your specific theme or desired audience
- "Let's return to the book" can be a good way to get back on track if the conversation derails

Wrap Up

- ✓ Choose a way to end the discussion. If you've set a stopping time and it's getting close, you may mention there are only XX number of minutes left and find out if anyone has any burning issues that weren't yet addressed. If the conversation has lulled, or it seems like most people are "done" with the exception of a few, you can help end the official discussion by thanking everyone for coming and hanging around to finish up with those who still have comments.

Remember

If you are an expert on your theme, feel free to share your opinion about certain discussion topics, however if you are not, do not let your own opinions influence how you handle the discussion. If something is said that seems untrue or upsetting, you can ask the group, "What do others think about that?" Be comfortable with the fact that some participants will speak more than others and others will not speak at all. Some mostly listen, and that is OK!! Don't worry if there is silence: a silence of 3 or 4 seconds may feel like a long time, but the break may elicit thoughtful comments.

Guidelines were adapted with permission from UW Madison's Go Big Read Program

Last update: 11/21/18