FREE SAMPLE

The Kids' Book Club Host Kit

Everything you need to run a book club children love - for ages 7 to 12

Free sample - three real pages from the kit: How to Host a Kids' Book Club (kit p. 2), Discussion Questions 1-10 (kit p. 10) and Craft & Activity Ideas 1-8 (kit p. 13). The full kit is 24 pages: a host planner and 12-meeting calendar, a member tracker, a book-picker vote sheet, meeting plans, 30 original discussion questions for any book, 16 craft and activity ideas, allergy-aware snack plans, awards and a parent helper rota.

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How to Host a Kids' Book Club

Short meetings, real choices, lots of fun

A kids' book club is a small group of children who read the same book - or the same kind of book - and then meet to talk about it, make something, and eat something nice. The club works best for children aged about 7 to 12, in a group of 6 to 12 members, meeting once a month for 60 to 90 minutes. Younger children need shorter meetings and more making; older children want longer discussions and real choices about what to read.

The shape of a meeting

1. Welcome and snack - children arrive, settle in, and eat something. Ten minutes, and it matters: hungry children do not discuss books.

2. Book talk - the discussion questions on pages 10 to 12, picked by the host. Fifteen to twenty minutes is enough; let the children do most of the talking.

3. Vote or choose - vote for the next book, or vote for a favourite, using the vote sheet on page 6. Five minutes, and every child gets a real say.

4. Craft or activity - make something from the craft ideas on pages 13 and 14. Twenty to thirty minutes, and the messiest part of the meeting.

5. Awards and celebration - a small award, a star on the chart, or a round of applause for a good idea. Five minutes, and never skip it.

6. Goodbye and next book - hand out the next book choice, remind everyone of the next date, and send them home with something they made.

The host's real job

Your job is not to teach the book. It is to make sure every child speaks, nobody is laughed at for an opinion, and the meeting ends while everyone is still having fun. Ask open questions, wait for answers, and repeat a child's idea back to the group so they hear it valued. If one child talks all the time, thank them and ask, "Who else has an idea?" If a child is shy, let them draw their answer instead of saying it - the craft table is also a discussion table.

Choosing books children will actually read

Let the children choose, from a shortlist you prepare. Three or four books, all available in the library or cheaply, all about the same length, and all with something to talk about. Check the reading level honestly: a book too hard kills a club faster than a book too easy. The book-picker vote sheet on page 6 makes the choice fair, and the children will read a book they voted for with far more enthusiasm than one handed to them.

Discussion Questions (1 of 3)

Any book - write the title in at the top

Book we are discussing:

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1. Who was your favourite character, and why? There is no wrong answer. A favourite can be the hero, the funny one, or even the villain - ask why, and listen.

2. What was the most exciting part? Let the child tell it in their own words, like a story. Do not correct the retelling; the excitement is the point.

3. What would you have done in the character's place? Children love this question, because it lets them step inside the story and argue with it.

4. Was there a part that scared you, or made you sad? Feelings are the heart of book talk. If a child says a part was scary, ask what made it scary - and what helped.

5. Which character would you like as a friend? And what would you do together? The answer tells you what the child values in a friend.

6. What did the cover make you think the book would be about? Was the cover right, or did the book surprise you? Covers are promises, and children are good judges of them.

7. If you could change one thing in the story, what would it be? A different ending, a rescued character, a longer adventure - children rewrite stories boldly, and the rewrites are worth hearing.

8. What was the funniest part? Ask the child to read the funny bit aloud, if they can find it. Reading aloud is a skill, and a funny passage is the best practice.

9. Did the book remind you of anything in your own life? A place, a person, a school day. Books connect to life, and this question finds the connection.

10. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Who, exactly, and why them? A recommendation with a name on it is a real recommendation.

Craft & Activity Ideas (1 of 2)

Eight makes - one per meeting, or pick your favourites

1. Character portrait - Draw or paint your favourite character, with three words around the portrait that describe them. Display the portraits together at the end of the meeting.

2. Map of the story - Draw a map of the places in the book: where the story starts, where the adventure happens, and where it ends. Add a dotted line for the journey.

3. Book cover redesign - Design a new cover for the book you read. What picture would you put on it, and what would the back cover say?

4. Bookmark making - Make a bookmark for the next book: card, colours, and one line from the book you loved - written in your own words, not copied.

5. Story dice - Make a set of story dice from paper cubes: characters on one, places on another, problems on a third. Roll them and invent a one-minute story.

6. Character diary - Write one diary page as if you were a character in the book, on the most exciting day of the story. Read the best ones aloud.

7. Scene in a box - Build one scene from the book inside a shoebox, with paper figures and drawn backgrounds. Small boxes make big imaginations.

8. Book badge - Design a badge for the book club: the club name, a book, and a motto the children choose together. Wear it to the next meeting.