



For immediate release

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Check Out A Book Discussion Kit @ Your Lewis & Clark Library!

(Helena, MT) September 10, 2012—Book groups have increased in popularity over the years and now you can start your own...all you need is a few interested individuals and your library card!

Your Lewis & Clark Library is pleased to offer “Book Discussion Kits” available for check out. Available in a wide variety of genres, these kits feature author information, discussion questions, and at least five copies of the book. Available for a 6 week check out period, there is plenty of time for each member to read the book and then meet for a discussion at the location of the groups’ choosing. It’s easy, it’s fun, and it’s free, all you need is a library card!

For a complete list of “Book Discussion Kits” visit the Library’s website at www.lewisandclarklibrary.org and select “catalog” and then the “kits” tab on the center of the maroon menu.

Reluctant to join or start a book discussion group? Here are five great reasons why joining a book group can be fun:

5 Reasons to Join a Book Discussion Group

1. Meet people just like you

If I were ever to move to a new town, I would immediately search out one or two local book groups. There is something comforting and familiar in a group of readers. Though personalities, backgrounds and culture may differ, I have always been able to find common ground with book lovers, no matter the circumstance.

2. Meet people that are different from you

So often we find ourselves surrounded by people that look like us, talk like us, act like us. Most of our friends are roughly the same age, have the same level of income, and have similar beliefs and values. Book groups are a terrific way of expanding your circle to include people of varied backgrounds and life experience. The act of discussing a book often sparks debate, and entices people to open up about their own views and life stories. I’ve learned so much about the world

from people I've met in a book group, and so many times they were people I would not have met otherwise.

3. Get back to reading

It's a very common scenario, one that I hear all the time: "I used to love to read, but I never got back to it after _____ (*having kids, going to school, starting a new job, ... fill in the blank with your own situation*). For whatever reason, reading for pleasure is one of the most frequently sacrificed activities when there are not enough hours in the day. Joining a reading group gives you a reason to sit down with that book. There is a specific deadline for finishing, and so finding the time to read becomes more of a priority. While there are certainly times when life interferes and you may not finish the book before your meeting, motivation comes from knowing that others are counting on your participation.

4. Stretch your reading muscles

I enjoy reading books for their entertainment value, and find nothing more satisfying than spending a rainy day curled up with a page-turner. But sometimes, I want something more challenging. When I read for book club, I know that I will be expected to contribute, and so I tend to read more carefully and more thoughtfully. I read my book group books with a pad of sticky notes next to me, marking pages and passages that illustrate a thought or idea. I find that the discussion around a book always gives me something to think about — a character trait that I hadn't noticed, or a subtext that flew right over my head as I was reading. My favorite book discussions are those where I start out hating the book, and then after listening to everyone else's comments, come out of the meeting with new appreciation for and understanding of the work.

5. Discover new genres and authors

It's so easy to fall into the habit of reading the same authors or the same genres. After all, there is always an element of risk in a new book. What if you hate it? By sticking to the familiar, much of that risk is alleviated. But so is the joy of discovery. Reading groups force you to explore new reading paths. There was once a woman in one of my book groups who announced at the first meeting that she didn't like reading about other countries or cultures because they were so unfamiliar to her. She struggled with pronunciation, and keeping characters' names straight. But since our books were chosen by vote, we often read books set in other places. I was stunned and delighted at one meeting where the woman announced that she really liked *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, which is a novel set in Colombia in the early 1900s. It was a book that she would have never picked up on her own, but because of reading group, she found a new appreciation for books set in foreign lands. I myself have loved books that I thought I would never enjoy, and I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything.

(From the Blog: Books on the Nightstand: illuminating conversations about books and reading, by Ann Kingman)