Tell Me More Book Club

Westerville Public Library

Adults

Tell Me More Book Club

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Free

Byline

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A new take on book clubs! Everyone reads the same book, and then a professional associated with the topic (e.g., match-making or pet cloning) comes to talk about their own experience. The speaker is sent a copy of the book or audiobook to keep. Attendees usually ask about the specific things in the book and questions about the expert's personal experiences.

Advanced Planning

The learning outcome is for participants to learn more about a profession or situation that they read about. Regular book clubs can only draw on the participants' experience and knowledge, and are rarely specialized. This gives participants a

chance to delve deeper into a subject and ask the kind of questions they might want to ask the author.

Planning is done 3+ months in advance due to marketing restrictions.

The librarian contacted the speaker, sent them the book (via Amazon), procured the speaking contract and created the verbiage for marketing. One month before the event, the librarian ordered 40 copies of the book for distribution to attendees through shared lending libraries and the library's own collection. They are returned during the event.

Unexpected challenges consist of:

- Creating questions to ask in case there is a lull in audience participation.
- MC'ing to stop a participant from talking too much or relaying their own stories in place of the expert.
- Communicating efficiently with the speaker (reminding them) when the date is set many months in the future.
- Ensuring that an age limit is enforced when the topic is for mature audiences (e.g., the coroner, the K9 unit and the water search and rescue with police scuba divers included pictures).

Marketing

All regular book club members were invited to the book club. All library events are included online in the event section. 3-month paper event guides are available in the building and at off-site locations. Marketing was very successful.

Budgeting

No cost. I only contracted speakers who were interested in doing it for free.

Day-of-event Activity

Room setup (lecture style) took half an hour. One staff member was needed for an hour before the event to set up chairs and A/V. The speaker was contacted early in the day for confirmation. The unexpected challenges included them being late because of directions, parking or hauling in gear.

Attendees usually ask about specifics in the book and questions about the expert's personal experiences.

Examples include:

- A hostage negotiator talked about James Patterson's Michael Bennett series.
- The county coroner talked about Mary Roach's "Stiff: The Curious Lives of Cadavers."
- A local matchmaking agency talked about Jennifer Probst's "Searching for Someday."
- The local K9 search and rescue covered Nora Robert's "The Search."
- A pet clone agency talked about Jurassic Park.

The speaker gets a list of questions that I'd like them to address. This example is from the matchmaker series:

- How did you get into matchmaking?
- How does one get into the profession?
- Talk about the part you love (in the book and in your job)!
- What did you think of the book? Does it actually sound like your job?
- Do you have a pivotal career (or pre-career) moment that greatly influenced you?
- Have you ever had a situation like what happened in the book?
- Do you work with other agencies?
- Stories! Ones that you are ethically allowed to share, of course.

Program Execution

The librarian/MC introduced the speaker, who gave brief instructions on how to return the books (there is a cart) and how to ask questions during or after the talk; it's up to the speaker. The speaker then talked for 45 minutes with visuals and opened up to questions and comments.

Advice

Give the speaker a list of topics to discuss. Come with a list of different questions to ask in case the audience lacks questions. Tell people what to expect or possible triggers (are there explicit photos or topics). Tell people that they don't *have* to read the book.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

Mar 13, 2024
Tweens (10-12)+ | □□
Image



Intergenerational Book Club

Audiences:

Tweens (10-12)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Dec 12, 2024
Intergenerational+ | □□
Image



Young Author Talk Series

Audiences:

Intergenerational
Feb 7, 2024
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $$
Image



The Book Crawl

Audiences:

Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)