Interfaith Discussion about Holy Books

Palatine Public Library District

Adults

|

Intergenerational

Interfaith Discussion about Holy Books

Nov 16, 2017

Free

Byline

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As the central event from a series of programs focusing on South Asian culture, we presented an Interfaith Discussion about Holy Books from different religions, hosted at the Sikh Temple in Palatine. Speakers from Buddhist (Tripitaka), Christian (Bible),

Hindu (Gita), Jewish (Torah), Muslim (Qur'an) and Sikh (Guru Granth Sahib) faiths discussed their holy books, with a question-and-answer session afterward.

A tour of the Gurdwara followed the presentations, and a vegetarian meal was served by the Sikh Religious Society. This was primarily an event for adults, but teens were also welcome.

Advanced Planning

We wanted to give our community a chance to learn about their South Asian neighbors, but also a larger chance to meet and understand people from diverse faith communities outside of their own.

We created a Cultural Committee and met six months before the programming. Since participating in ALA's Latino Americans: 500 Years of History grant program in spring 2016, we decided to highlight a culture from our diverse community each year going forward. The culture of South Asia seemed like a good fit as we have many patrons who are immigrants from that area, or can trace their ancestors to that area. Additionally, we already had connections with South Asians in the community that wanted to be a part of these activities. As part of our monthlong series of events, we planned an Interfaith Discussion at the Sikh Gurdwara in our town.

The most difficult part of planning was finding experts who could talk about their foundational holy books from several of the major religions. Fortunately, our contact at the Gurdwara was familiar with Father Corey Brost who is active with interfaith groups in the Chicago area. (He is the co-founder of The Children of Abraham Coalition, a suburban Chicago nonprofit that trains Muslim, Christian and Jewish adult and teen leaders in interfaith skills.)

Marketing

The event was promoted in our newsletter along with other cultural events titled "Exploring South Asia: India and Beyond." It was one of the main events from a variety of programs that focus on and celebrate the diverse cultures of India and

South Asian countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan.

Posters, brochures and fliers were created to display in our three locations, as well as out in the community. **(View materials under Attachments at right.)** Posters about the Interfaith Book Discussion were sent to all our partners and some of their colleagues to help promote to their communities and church attendees. We featured the event on our website and digital monitors, as well.

A series of social posts were created on Facebook and Twitter for our cultural programs, with an emphasis on the Interfaith Book Discussion. We also paid $10 to boost the post, which gave us reach to 736, with 25 link clicks. We asked our partners to share these posts on their social networks as well.

We used email marketing to send reminders and information about how to prepare for a visit to the Gurdwara. They have some restrictions that we needed to make sure people were aware of.

A press release was sent to local news channels and reporters to print in their publications and online. We invited reporters to attend the event and cover it as a good outreach to the community.

We also passed the promotional materials on to all the contacts we made through our search for speakers, and asked them to help us promote the event. We were very happy with the turnout of 250.

After the event, we posted a small article on our website about how successful it was. We posted photos and a video from the event on social media, which was very popular (5,600 people reached, 2,100 video views, 11 shares).

Budgeting

We had no additional costs for this event, except for the small amount spent on social media. The Sikh Religious Society did not charge us for use of their location. Their group donated the meal after the book discussion.

All print materials were created in-house and were absorbed by normal operating costs.

Day-of-event Activity

The Gurdwara and their volunteers were very excited to be hosting the event and took care of the set-up at the Gurdwara. They made everyone feel welcome. The library put together some signs to direct vehicle and foot traffic, and several staff helped point people in the right direction as well.

The agenda was as follows:

4 – 5:30 p.m. – Holy books discussion with Q&A

- Rabbi Steve Hart, Temple Chai in Long Grove (Torah)
- Pastor Joel Lohafer, Christ Lutheran in Palatine (Bible)
- Dr. Sabeel Ahmed, Islamic Society of Northwest Suburbs in Rolling Meadows (Qur'an)
- Chirag Barot, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Chicago (The Bhagavad Gita)
- Iris Wang, Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association in Mount Prospect (Buddhist Tripitaka)
- Dr. Balwant Singh Hansra, Sikh Religious Society in Palatine (Guru Granth Sahib)

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. – Tour of Gurdwara followed by a traditional vegetarian meal provided by the Sikh Religious Society

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. – Guests could stay for religious service

Program Execution

We were thrilled with the turnout of 250 people, and received lots of positive feedback in person and via email. One person even approached our director when he was at lunch at a local restaurant to say how much they enjoyed the event!

During the book discussion part of the program, each presenter had his/her own style of presenting about their holy books. Some focused more on principles of their faith, rather than explaining specifically about the texts. As a result, attendees

learned about the holy books and more about the faith traditions and theology.

Advice

There are many interfaith organizations out there. Find a group that is already interested in interfaith relationships and ask for their help. Our partnership with the Sikh Gurdwara helped immensely because they were already active in the community with similar programs and were eager to open their facility for the event and provide volunteers. Is there a temple, mosque, church or Gurdwara that has been active in similar events in the past, or have they held open houses? Those are the people/organizations you want to get in touch with.

We experienced a high level of engagement with our partners, especially from members of the Sikh Gurdwara. They were also willing to bring in items for a display case to showcase their cultural heritage. Through this event, we have established a continuing partner in the community.

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

Supporting Materials

Document
guidelines_poster.pdf
Document
brochure.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images

Image









Image









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Oct 31, 2016
Children (9 and under)+ | □□

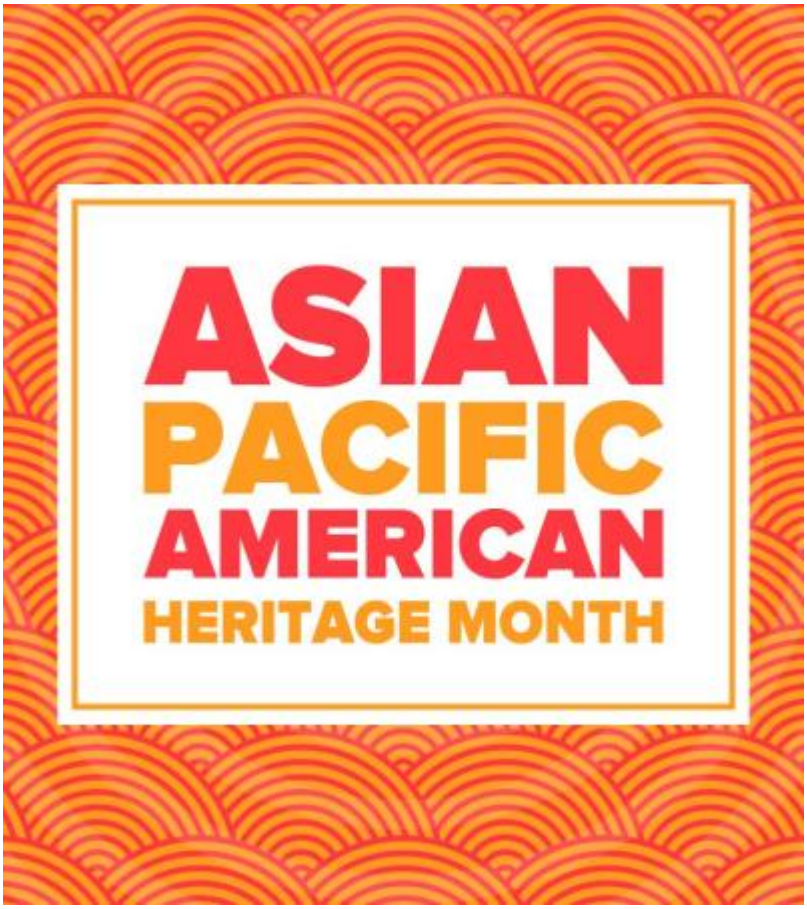
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Let's Talk About It: Reading and Discussion Series

Audiences:

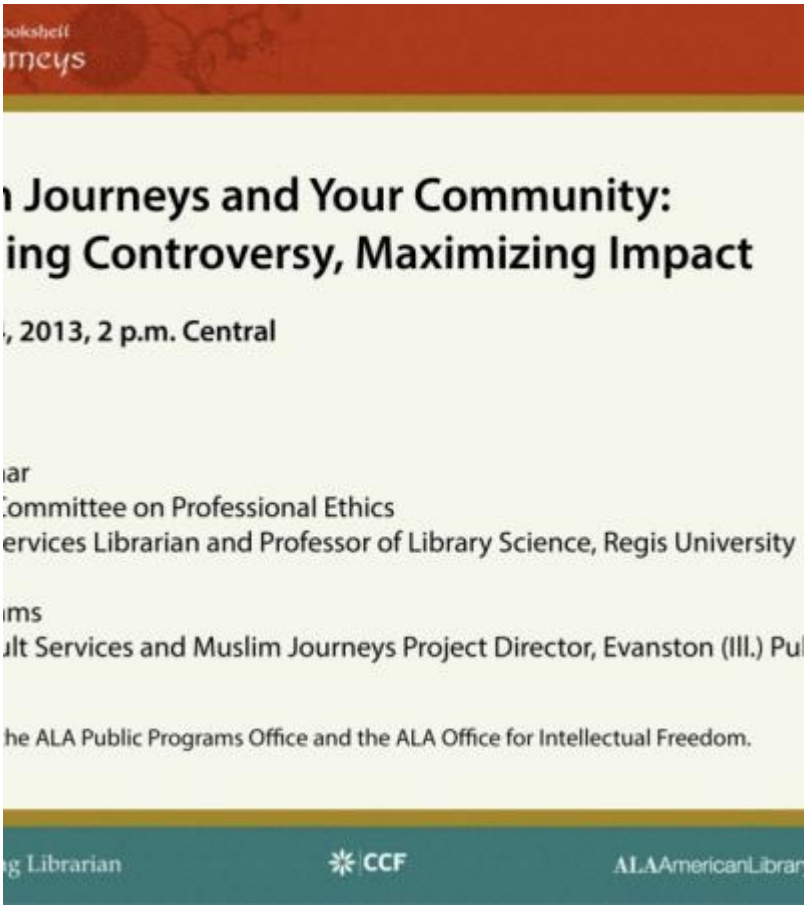
Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Apr 7, 2015
Children (9 and under)+ |
Image



Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Oct 24, 2013
+ |
Image



Muslim Journeys and Your Community: Managing Controversy, Maximizing Impact

Audiences:

Oct 21, 2016
Young Adult (17 - 20)+ | $$$
Image



American Muslims in Indiana: A Community Discussion

Audiences:

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