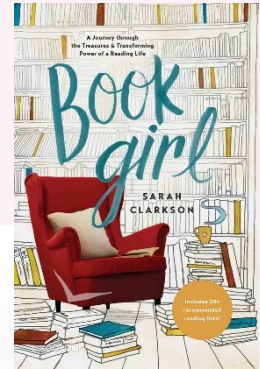




LEADER'S GUIDE

BOOK GIRL BY SARAH CLARKSON



"This book is about the dance and joy of women reading, an invitation to that wise laughter, to the grace known by all the book girls of the world who live by the delighted conviction that reading is a vital ingredient in a woman's full engagement with her faith, her creativity, and her capacity to grow in knowledge and love throughout each season of her life."

SARAH CLARKSON

THEMES

Stories

Beauty

Imagination

Lessons from Literature

Character

Personal Growth

HEADS UP! (TRIGGERS AND DELICATE TOPICS)

Some book recommendations may not appeal to all readers. We must use our discernment to decide what is and isn't appropriate for ourselves and our families.

BOOK SUMMARY

"Book girl" is a magical memoir and practical 'how to read well' guide for all book girls worldwide. Uncovering the beauty of a reading life, Sarah takes us on a journey beginning from her early girlhood reading years and through her adult life as she shares many profound and meaningful books that have imparted truth, magic, and beauty into her soul. Although "Book girl" can easily be read from start to finish, it is also a book that may be read out of order. Chapters one and two can be followed by any chapter that takes your fancy and read intermittently if desired, or you're pursuing the reading of books from Sarah's list.

The book can be loosely separated into three categories.

- Cultivating a reading life: making time and space for good books
- How to read well: discernment, and how to choose the "right" books.
- Well-crafted booklists with book reviews, personal stories, and recommendations



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. Sarah's definition of a book girl is, "A woman who reads taps into the fundamental reality that she was created to learn, made to question, primed to grow by her interaction with words. A book girl is one who has grasped the wondrous fact that she has a mind of her own, a gift from her Creator, meant to be filled and stretched, challenged and satisfied by learning for all the days of her life" (p34). What does a 'book girl' mean to you?

TALKING POINTS

Since reading "Book girl", we may have decided to;

- Read widely and expand the genres and types of books we read.
- Be intentional with our time and set aside space in our life to read more.
- Incorporate reading into our family's lives.
- Found a reading mentor or friend to help guide us in our reading journeys.
- Read more of the true living book – the Bible.
- Assessed ourselves (personality, character, morals) in light of the stories we have read and characters that have impacted our lives.

2

Q. What can hinder our reading efforts?

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- We may be so busy that we leave no time in our schedules for reading and learning.
- We may not be intentional with our time, and time slips away spent on other things (such as social media and TV).
- We may feel so burdened or drained by circumstances that we feel too tired to read.
- We may feel selfish picking up a book instead of focusing on others or tasks at hand (a common one for mothers of small children).

3

Q. If you could recommend only three books as "treasures which must be read", which three would you recommend? Why?

TALKING POINTS

You may like to consider choosing books for a range of genres;

- Spiritual Growth or Christian Living
- Biographies, Autobiographies, and/or Memoirs
- Fiction (Historical, Biblical, Romance, Modern, Fantasy)
- Classic Literature (Children's or Adults)
- Poetry

4

Q. Do you "talk" with your books to remember the life-changing things you've learnt? (writing notes, underlining quotes, memorising text)

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- I write in my books (underlining, commenting and dog-earring pages).
- I keep a notebook with my favourite learnings from the text.
- I do not do any of these things, but I would like to start.

5

Q. "What if you were the sum of the characters you've read?" (p65).

TALKING POINTS

"A book girl is story formed, shaped in her very concept of self by the characters she has encountered on the written page, by the narratives that teach her what it means to be a woman." (p66);

- As we wrestle with important questions such as, Who am I? Who should I be? What does it mean to live and love? What does it mean to be a woman? We can find encouraging and truthful answers in the lives of the noble, honest, and pure characters we read about in our cherished books.
- Good books reveal what it looks like to be good or evil, brave or cowardly, happy or tragic.
- Good books take hold of us, filling us with the capacity to learn, dream, think, and shape the world around us (p69).

6

Q. Were you shocked by the results of the "Reading at Risk" report (p41)? How do you intentionally cultivate healthy reading habits and make space for reading in your and your family's lives?

TALKING POINTS

Some suggestions to cultivate healthy reading habits;

- Be intentional with your time; choose to read above other distractions such as TV and social media.
- Create time and space to read as a family, such as; family read-aloud, quiet time in the afternoons, and/or before bedtime.
- Choose life-giving, good-quality books to develop your faith, encourage personal growth, rest your soul, and increase your knowledge.
- Read lots of different types of books.
- Prioritise the WORD above all other books and read it daily.
- "There are many things I don't do, in order to do the things that I love" (p20).

7

Q. Who has been the most influential "Book girl" in your life?

TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- Family; Mother, Sister, Grandmother
- Friends
- Mentor or Teacher

8

Q. Have you ever struggled with trying to discern what books you should or shouldn't read?

TALKING POINTS

Sarah says, "I try and choose the books that help me toward glory" (p14).

What kinds of books should we read?

- Books that help us to grow.
- Books that reflect divine beauty.
- Books that help us form ideas and learn.
- Books that encourage honourable personality traits to form in our own lives.
- Books that help show us right from wrong, good from evil and teach us biblical morals.
- Books that display true representations of "reaping and sowing".
- Books that inspire us and challenge us.
- Books that teach us empathy and compassion for others who are different to us.
- Books that renew us.

9

Q. "One of the most powerful ways that you as a book girl can be a giver, passing along the gift of the reading life, is by cultivating reading in the life of the children in your care". (p248) How are you passing along the book girl gift to the next generation or others around you?

TALKING POINTS

As book girls, we desire to share the gift of reading with others. We may consider;

- Mentoring younger women to cultivate a love of reading.
- Cultivating a love of books in the lives of children; it may be our children, spiritual children (if we are godparents or mentors), extended family (nieces and nephews, grandchildren)
- Passing along and recommending good books to others.
- Joining reading groups/classes or programs to learn and develop your book girl gift.

10

Q. Which booklist (or book) from Sarah's recommendations are you excited to read?

TALKING POINTS

Sarah's booklists;

- The Beloved Dozen (p44)
- My Favourite Books about Books (p61)
- Girlhood Classics (p98)
- The Nightstand List/Classics (p84)
- Biographies (p77)
- Girl Power (p98)
- Spiritual Classics (p107),
- The Holy Way (p207)
- Books for the Church Year (p215)

- Navigating Contemporary Culture (p121)
- Fantastical Stories (p137)
- Imagination (p144)
- Family Read-Alouds (p161)
- Books to Remind me I'm not alone (p170)
- Poetry (p183), Startled Awake (p207)
- Books about the Arts (p194)
- Books for Coping in a Broken World (p229)
- Spiritual Books for Struggling Seasons (p236)



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