

## Instruction Guide because I said I would Book Club

### Background:

Starting your own book club is a great way to share your love of books and encourage meaningful discussions and ideas. And, all with a group of friends! Before you get started, here are a few things to take into consideration:

- What type of people will make up the club? Are you looking for members that all have something in common? Or are you looking for a diverse group?
- Do you want to lead the club? For how long? How much time can you devote to organizing the meeting, refreshments, discussion? Is there someone else to take on this responsibility if not you?
- When and where will your first meeting be? How often will your club meet?

If you are already a part of a book club, suggest the title to your group. This book lends itself well to discussion and self reflection. It can set off the same reaction for your group as it did around the world.

### Purpose:

When you start a book club, you can determine the purpose of the club, help establish its values and expectations, and even steer it towards being something more than a gathering of book nerds. A book club can also spark new friendships, and healthy debates that would not occur otherwise.

### Getting started:

- Choosing a location might help you decide how many members you recruit. If you are meeting at someone's home, the number could be smaller than if you have a meeting room at the library.
- When you talk to prospective members, explain the purpose of the book club and the number of people you are looking for.
- Let them know that you will be reading "because I said I would" and where they can get their copy. Tell them to bring their book to the meeting.
- Share details about the meeting place and time and date. Let them know if you are having refreshments, or any other required items.
- Make the expectation for reading known. This book can be discussed in one meeting, but it is suggested to assign a chapter or two per month. The nature of the material allows a dialogue that can build momentum and continue the spread of volunteerism and character development.

### On the day of the book club:

- Greet your club members and make them feel comfortable.

- Allow time for introductions. Even if the members know each other, a simple introduction game can set members at ease and get the conversation started.
- Share housekeeping details such as the format for the discussion and restrooms.
- Having discussion questions before your book club meets will help facilitate a good discussion. Here are some guiding questions. Don't feel like you have to use all the questions. Questions are listed as intro, keep it engaging and closure to help you with the flow of the book club.
- Suggestion: For your next meeting, ask each group member to bring at least two questions.
- Request or use the printable version of a Promise card.

### Intro questions:

- Which Promise story could you relate to? Why?
- How does this book relate to your life or experiences?
- Do the issues affect your life? How so—directly, on a daily basis, or more generally? Now or sometime in the future?
- Did you connect with the subject matter? Did it make you want to read more? Did it make you uncomfortable?

because  
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Questions suggestions (Cont.)

**Keep it engaging:**

- Which person in the book would you want to be friends with? Why?
- What did you learn from this book that you didn't know before?
- Did this book change your perspective — or maybe even your life?
- What are the implications for the future? Are there long- or short-term consequences to the issues raised in the book? Are they positive or negative...affirming or frightening?
- Does the book remind you of your own life? An event? A person—like a friend, family member, boss, co-worker?
- Talk about specific passages that struck you as significant—or interesting, profound, amusing, illuminating, disturbing, sad...? What was memorable?
- Share a favorite quote from the book.
- Have you read much written about this topic before? If so, does the author bring something unique to the subject? If not, did this book pique your interest in the subject?
- Would you like to read more about this particular subject? Why?

**Closure:**

- Would you have read this book if it hadn't been a book club selection? Why would you recommend read this book?
- What have you learned after reading this book? Has it broadened your perspective about a difficult issue—personal or societal?
- If you had a chance to ask the author a question, what would it be?

**Reminder: Have at least one Promise card for each member.**

**Call to Action:**

As the club winds down leave enough time for a Promise activity.

The book, *because I said I would.*, is an attempt to describe the result of a simple action by an individual that impacted many people across the world.

"We share our stories for a single purpose: to encourage others to make and keep promises for the betterment of humanity. We are asking you to make a promise."

-Alex Sheen

Ask members to think about a cause or organization that they feel passionate about or connected to in some way. This is the opportunity to commit to volunteering to support that cause.

Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to complete a Promise card. These may be shared if the group feels it's appropriate.

As Alex says, "Write down your commitment. Fulfill your promise. Others will see the adversity of your journey. When they ask you why you kept going when others would have quit, stare them right in the eye and say . . . because I said I would."

**Sharing:**

Part of the inspirational nature of *because I said I would* revolves around sharing. Take a picture of your book club or Promise card and tag us:



Or share your story at [becauseisaidiwould.com](http://becauseisaidiwould.com)

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