

BOOK CLUB TO GO!

Welcome to Kirkwood Public Library Children & Teen “Book Club To Go!” Each kit contains 6 copies of the selected title. Also included is background information about the book and author, specific discussion questions, reviews and read alike.

The kits circulate for 6 weeks. As the library patron who has checked out this kit, you will be responsible for collecting the materials and returning the full kit to the library.

Please visit our web site www.kirkwoodpubliclibrary.org/book-club-kits.asp to search for other book club kits or contact the Children’s Desk for assistance finding additional titles.

Juvenile and teen “Book Club To Go!” titles include:

Flipped by *Wendelin Van Draanen*

Island of the Blue Dolphins by *Scott O’Dell*

The Giver by *Lois Lowry*

Main Street: Welcome to Camden Falls by *Ann M. Martin*

The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs by *Betty Birney*

Boston Jane by *Jennifer Holm*

All the Way Home by *Patricia Reilly Giff*

The Alchemyst by *Michael Scott*

A Mango-Shaped Space by *Wendy Mass*

Charlotte’s Web by *E.B. White*

Wenny Has Wings by *Janet Lee Carey*

Anne of Green Gables by *Lucy Maud Montgomery*

The Moves Make the Man by *Bruce Brooks*

Cornelia & the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters by *Lesley M. M. Blume*

Yankee Girl by *Mary Ann Rodman*

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314-821-5770 kirkwoodpubliclibrary.org

So B. It by Sarah Weeks

Goose Girl by Shannon Hale

The House of the Scorpion by Nancy Farmer

Whales on Stilts by M. T. Anderson

Small Steps by Peg Kehret

Nory Ryan's Song by Patricia Reilly Giff

Discussion Leader Guide

Tips on How to Lead a Book Discussion

- Prepare ahead of time. Read the book, biographical information about the author and book reviews provided in the kit. Prepare 10-15 open-ended questions ahead of time or use the questions included with your Book Club To Go Kit.
- Hold your discussion in a comfortable environment with seating that encourages all to participate.
- Begin by introducing yourself and, if people are not all familiar with each other, have them go around and introduce themselves.
- Think of yourself as a facilitator. Use questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Your job as a leader is to keep the discussion moving.
- Be a good listener and observer. Listen for quiet members and try to draw them into the discussion. Watch for someone anxious to get into the conversation and help them to find a gap in the conversation.
- Push members beyond “I just didn’t like it” statements. Ask them to describe what they liked or disliked about the book. Books that inspire strong reactions—positive and negative—lead to some of the best discussions.
- Respect everyone's opinion. Not everyone will like the book. When there are differing views, encourage discussion about the reasons for liking or disliking a book. Let it be known that the group is non-judgmental and everyone's opinion is valued. Often the best discussions happen when there is less agreement.
- Balance the discussion between personal thoughts and responses to the book. Groups that spend a lot of time reminiscing personal reflections are no longer book discussion groups.
- Don't use the discussion questions as if it were an exam. Rather use them as conversation starters.
- Choose a favorite passage or two from the book. Reading aloud can bring a new perspective to the passage.
- Don't worry too much about short silent periods, but be prepared with your own notes to get the discussion started again.
- Be sure to end on time and thank everyone for their participation.

(Thanks to Mid-Hudson Library System)

Further Book Discussion Resources

Books

- *Book Crush for Kids and Teens: Recommended Reading for Every Mood, Moment, and Interest*, by Nancy Pearl
Kirkwood Public Library 011 PEARL Juvenile Parenting
- *Gentle Reads: Great Books to Warm Hearts and Lift Spirits, Grades 5-9*, by Deanna J. McDaniel
Kirkwood Public Library 028.55 MCDAN Juvenile Parenting
- *The Kid's Book Club: Lively Reading and Activities for Grades 1-3*, by Desiree Webber and Sandy Shropshire
Held by other libraries in the Municipal Library Consortium
- *The Kids' Book Club Book: Reading Ideas, Recipes, Activities and Smart Tips for Organizing Terrific Kids' Book Clubs*, by Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp
Kirkwood Public Library 028.55 GLEMA J
- *The Mother-Daughter Book Club: How ten busy mothers and daughters came together to talk, laugh and learn through the love of reading*, by Shireen Dodson
Kirkwood Public Library 372.41 DODSO J & 374.2 DODSO
- *Reading Raps: A Book Club Guide for Librarians, Kids and Families*, by Rita Soltan
Kirkwood Public Library 027.62 SOLTA J
- *The Teen-Centered Book Club: Readers into Leaders*, by Bonnie Kunzel and Constance Hardesty
Kirkwood Public Library 027.62 KUNZE

Web Sites

- NoveList

<http://www.kpl.lib.mo.us/information.asp> and click on the NoveList icon



- Hennepin County Library Bookspace Book Clubs

<http://www.hclib.org/pub/bookspace/BookClubsKid.cfm>

- Warren Newport Public Library

<http://www.wnpl.info/BookDiscussion/index.htm>

- Kids Read.Com

<http://www.kidsread.com/clubs>

- Teen Reads.Com

<http://www.teenreads.com/clubs/index.asp>

Background about the Book – Nory Ryan’s Song

Nory Ryan's family has lived on Maidin Bay on the west coast of Ireland for generations, raising a pig and a few chickens, planting potatoes, getting by. Every year Nory's father goes away on a fishing boat and returns with the rent money for the English lord who owns their cottage and fields, the English lord bent upon forcing the Irish from their land so he can tumble the cottages and clear the fields for grazing. Times are never easy on Maidin Bay, but this year, a terrible blight attacks the potatoes. No crop means starvation. Twelve-year-old Nory must summon the courage and ingenuity to find food, to find hope, to find a way to help her family survive.

Barnes and noble.com

About the Author



"I want to see children curled up with books, finding an awareness of themselves as they discover other people's thoughts. I want them to make the connection that books are people's stories, that writing is talking on paper, and I want them to write their own stories. I'd like my books to provide that connection for them." --Patricia Reilly Giff

Patricia Reilly Giff has received the Newbery Honor for **Pictures of Hollis Woods** and **Lily's Crossing**, which is also a Boston Globe–Horn Book Honor Book. **Nory Ryan's Song** was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and an ALA Notable Book.

"I always start each day by writing. That's like breathing to me," says Patricia Reilly Giff. In fact, this bestselling author admits: "I wanted to write from the first time I picked up a book and read. I thought it must be the most marvelous thing to make people dance across the pages."

Reading and writing have always been an important part of Patricia Reilly Giff's life. As a child, her favorite books included **Little Women**, **The Secret Garden**, the Black Stallion books, the Sue Barton books, and the Nancy Drew series. Giff loved reading so much that while growing up, her sister had to grab books out of her hands to get Giff to pay attention to her; later, Giff's three children often found themselves doing the same thing. As a reading teacher for 20 years, the educational consultant for Dell Yearling and Young Yearling books, an adviser and instructor to aspiring writers, and the author of more than 60 books for children, Patricia Reilly Giff has spent her entire life surrounded by books.

After earning a B.A. degree from Marymount College, Giff took the advice of the school's dean and decided to become a teacher. She admits, "I loved teaching. It was my world. I only left because I was overwhelmed with three careers--teaching, writing, and my family."

During the 20 years of her teaching career, she earned an M.A. from St. John's University, and a Professional Diploma in Reading and a Doctorate of Humane Letters from Hofstra University. Then one morning, Giff told her husband Jim, "I'm going to write a book. I've always wanted to write and now I shall." Jim worked quickly to combine two adjacent closets in their apartment into one cramped workspace and, as Giff jokes, she "began [her] career in a closet."

Giff tries to write books "that say ordinary people are special." She says, "All of my books are based in some way on my personal experiences, or the experiences of members of my family, or the stories kids would tell me in school." Therefore, when she runs out of ideas for her books, Giff says, "I take a walk and look around. Maybe I spend some time in a classroom and watch the kids for a while. Sometimes I lie on the living room floor and remember my days in second grade or third. If all that doesn't work, I ask Ali, or Jim, or Bill"--Giff's children, whose names often appear in her books.

When she's not writing, Patricia Reilly Giff enjoys reading in the bathtub and going to the movies and eating popcorn. She and her husband reside in Weston, Connecticut. They have three children and five grandchildren. In 1990, Giff combined her two greatest loves--children's books and her family--and, with her husband and her children, opened The Dinosaur's Paw, a children's bookstore named after one of her Kids of the Polk Street School novels. This store is part of Giff's quest to bring children and books together. She and her family are trying to "share our love of children's books and writing and to help others explore the whole world of children's books."

www.randomhouse.com

Reviews – Nory Ryan’s Song

School Library Journal Review

Gr 5-8-Set at the beginning of the Irish Potato Famine in 1845, this survival story is told by lively, 12-year-old Nory Ryan. She shares a small dwelling with her family, hens, and a pig in a subsistence-farming village on the country's west-central coast. They are anxiously awaiting the return of their Da, who has gone to sea to earn money. Their English landlord is evicting tenants who cannot pay rent, forcing them into the streets, and destroying their thatch-roofed huts. Hunger is common before blight destroys the potato crop; with no potatoes, the people face starvation. The Ryans are eager to join the lucky ones who have obtained passage to America. Nory's observations of the land, cliffs, sea, and people in her community are woven with poignant memories and realistic conversations that vividly recreate this tragic period in Ireland's history. The child grows in strength and courage as she seeks food for her family and friends. The fast pace might occasionally force readers to pause and assimilate the details she shares, and to seek out more information. The book opens with a list of Irish words with definitions and pronunciation guide. Today's readers will appreciate this compelling story with a wonderful female protagonist who is spirited and resourceful, and has a song in her heart.-Laura Scott, Baldwin Public Library, Birmingham, MI Copyright 2000 Cahners Business Information.

From Booklist

Gr. 4-7. From the first scene on a cliff's edge, the characters in Giff's latest novel balance perilously between survival and loss. Set on the west coast of Ireland during the great famine, the story belongs to 12-year-old Nory, who lives with her grandfather, two sisters, and a small brother in a tiny, earthen-floor home. Like most of their neighbors, the Ryans eke out a subsistence living, but when the potatoes begin to rot, that tenuous stability disintegrates, the family disperses, and Nory is left behind to care for her younger brother. Nory fights against starvation, scaling cliff walls for bird eggs, battling violent townspeople, and making broths with Anna, an aging local herbalist with whom Nory becomes exceptionally close. At the last moment, tickets for America arrive from Nory's father, and she leaves for her new life. The finely paced novel balances the physical and emotional horrors of famine--described in visceral detail--with Nory's courage and intelligence, the love she has for her family, and her close friendship with Sean, a local boy. No notes are provided, so children with some basic historical background will glean the most from the story. But Giff brings the landscape and the cultural particulars of the era vividly to life and creates in Nory a heroine to cheer for. A beautiful, heart-wrenching novel that makes a devastating event understandable. *Gillian Engberg*

Amazon.com

Read Alikes *Nory Ryan's Song*

Angel on The Square by *Gloria Whelan*

Betsy and the Emperor by *Staton Rabin*

The Braid by *Helen Frost*

Greener Grass by *Caroline Pignat*

Maggie's Door by *Patricia Reilly Giff*

Discussion Questions: Nory Ryan's Song

1. How do you feel about Maggie leaving the family to go to America? Is that the right thing to do? Why does she do it?
2. Had you ever heard of the Irish potato famine before? What did you know about it? What did you learn through reading this book? What questions do you still have?
3. How does the potato famine affect Nory's family? Do you think they will ever be reunited?
4. Describe Anna. What kind of a person is she? Why is she willing to give her coin to Nory? Why is Nory unwilling to leave her?
5. What skills will Nory bring with her to America? Is that possibly a gift from Anna to Nory?
6. Is music important to Nory? How?
7. How did you feel when the package Nory waited so long to get is stolen from her?
8. To what lengths does Nory go to feed her family?
9. What is Nory's most courageous moment? Why?
10. Do you have hope for Nory's future? Why or why not

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be applied to any book. You can tweak the questions for your specific book. They can be cut into strips and passed around in a basket to help facilitate discussion.

My favorite part of the book was...

A better title for this book would be...because...

(Name of character) reminds me of myself because...

My least favorite character was...because...

If I were (name of character, -----) I would (wouldn't) have...

(Name of character) reminds me of someone I know because...

I changed my mind about...because...

I would (wouldn't) like to read another book by this author because...

This book made me think...When I finished this book, I still wondered...

This book reminded me of...

I'd like to tell the author...

What happened in this book was very realistic (unrealistic) because...

This book was better (worse) than the movie version because...

When I started reading his book, I thought...

I didn't like...because...

This book made me realize...

If I could talk to (name of character), I would say...

One thing I have noticed about the author's style is...

If I could be any character in the book I would be...because...

I was surprised when...

I think the main thing the writer was trying to say was...

The most important thing about this book is...

I predicted that...

I think the writer must be ...because...

I would change the ending...