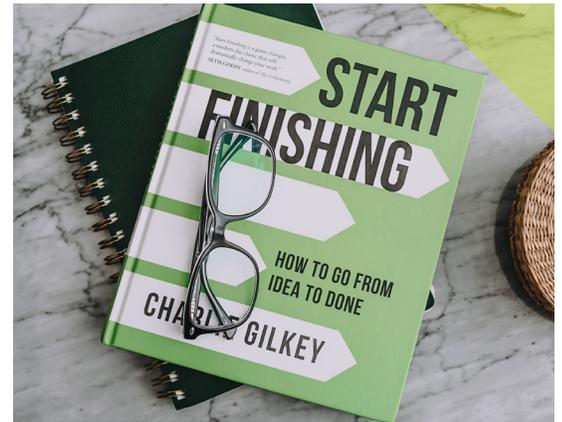


Your Virtual Book Club: A Guide for Leaders

Because sometimes in-person book club gatherings aren't possible, we've put together some additional guidelines for starting and leading a virtual book club. Use these in addition to the support provided in the Event Field Kit and Facilitator's Guide.



Right size your group: Just like with an in-person club, the size of your group is important for a virtual group as well (perhaps more important). Too few people and you risk sitting alone on book club night. Too many will mean additional coordination and scheduling, plus additional facilitation energy and focus to make sure all members are participating, contributing, and being heard. Much like mastermind or accountability groups, book clubs tend to work best with at least five, and at most 10 or 12 participants.

Determine how you'll communicate with everyone: This is important for in-person groups as well, but is a critical component for virtual groups. Email can work just fine for this, but there are lots of other options out there, many of them free to use. Whether it's a group on a social media platform like Facebook, or a "forum" platform, or some other location (there are even dedicated book club websites), find a tool that's easy for your group to use and stick with. Ideally the tool will have *polls* (for selecting your future reads and doing other check-ins), some sort of *calendar* for the group to keep track of meetings, and a discussion board where your group can have conversations on various topics outside your meetings.

Select your virtual meeting tool: Again, there are a number of free options available for this. Make sure you select the tool that's easiest for you to host in, and that isn't a barrier for your members to join calls. Doing a quick web search for "best free virtual meeting software" or similar will pull up lists of options for you. *Note: Some providers offer free plans with limits (either in time of call, or number of participants). Make sure you select a software that fits your group size and the planned length of your book club meetings.*

Look for fun and interesting ways to engage your group in conversation: Virtual meetings can be almost as fun as in-person gatherings, with a little forethought and creativity:

- Come up with a theme for the meeting, like hats or pets or family photos (based on the book you're reading is even better!), and encourage your members to participate.
- Have everyone make their favorite beverage to drink at the meeting, and even share the recipe.
- Here at PF we love our virtual dance parties! Have one of your members DJ, and you can all get your groove on before or after the book talk.

Most of all, **ask your book club members what they'd like to do** and see more of. And give them opportunities to co-create, co-host, and co-facilitate with you. It'll take some of the burden off you, and it'll keep them inspired, engaged, and coming back!