



**2020–
2021**

**Book Club
Facilitator
Planning
Pack**

***Book 1:
The Gift of Song
by Alice Parker***



Five Great Reasons to Start a GIA Book Club with Your Group

1 Read more books!

2 Continue meeting with members of your choir or music-based group even while singing is restricted.

3 Open hearts and minds with discussions about music and faith.

4 Learn more about the music you sing.

5 For those who are interested, opportunities to go beyond the original book club discussion with “Meet the Author” and other GIA webinar events.



Meeting Virtually

- Zoom is an excellent platform for meeting with small groups (5 to 15 people) and is free and easy to use. Other platforms such as Google Hangouts are also available.
- We recommend keeping the group to 12 or fewer people so that all attendees may participate in the allotted time. If your group is larger, you may want to consider creating multiple groups.
- You can find the link to slides created for both PowerPoint and Google Slides that may be shared during a Zoom event to help focus the conversation.
- Visit GIA's YouTube Channel for a webinar video explaining the process.



Planning Checklist

One month before the book club begins:

- _____ Recruit participants
- _____ Announce the book
- _____ Explain how to order/obtain the book (see purchase options)
- _____ Make sure books are ordered/distributed on time so that participants have time to read the book.

One week before the book club date:

- _____ Send a reminder of the meeting to participants (see sample email)
- _____ Decide which questions you will use during the session. Choose five general questions and five specific questions. You will mostly likely not get to all ten of the questions.
- _____ Create an agenda. You can use our sample or create your own!
- _____ If using slides for the session, download or copy the slides and remove the slides you will not be using.

One day before the book club date:

- _____ Send an email with the Zoom link to participants

The day of the book club meeting:

- _____ Make sure you have the slides/information you need readily available on your computer

Book club time:

- _____ Follow the agenda, keeping track of time for each speaker
- _____ Enjoy the discussion!



Options for Purchasing Books

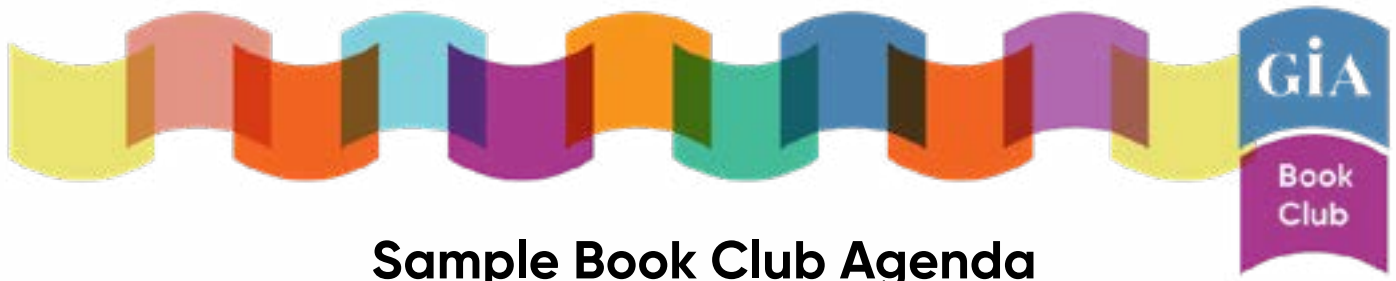
- Participants may purchase their books directly from giamusic.com and have them shipped to their homes. Allow 7–10 days for delivery plus time to read the book.
- The facilitator/group may purchase books for the entire group (paid for by the group or by individual members) and then distribute them. (Contactless pick-up via “drive-thru” or by putting books in labeled bags in an accessible area of the church/school, etc.)

Order and Contact Information

Click [here](http://giamusic.com) to order at giamusic.com

or call GIA Customer Service at 1-800-442-1358

Questions? Email interlude@giamusic.com



Sample Book Club Agenda

Welcome (10 minutes)

- If this is group that knows each other already, this can just be a short welcome with sharing of online norms.
- If this is a new group, ask each person to introduce themselves with perhaps one identifier (I'm Sharon, I'm an alto.)
- Share the Book Club Expectations

Sharing of news (5 minutes)

- Allow anyone who has big news to share, do so (weddings/illnesses/new jobs, etc.)

Book Talk 1 (20 minutes)

- Begin with general questions in this section, following norms of each person contributing for a set number of minutes (2 minutes works well), allowing everyone to speak.

Short Break (5 minute stretch and restroom break)

Book Talk 2 (20 minutes)

- Delve into the book-specific questions to jumpstart this discussion.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

- A short wrap-up with perhaps a reminder of the next group meeting.



Sample Book Club Expectations

- Read the book!
- Be ready to go on time. If you are late, slip in quietly and join the discussion when appropriate.
- While another person is talking, LISTEN. If you wish to talk, raise your hand (virtually or physically) and wait to be called on. (On Zoom, please mute yourself when you are not talking to eliminate background noise.)
- When you speak, please say your name again for the benefit of any new participants.
- Respect time constraints and finish your thoughts when the facilitator asks you to so that there is time for everyone to contribute to the discussion.
- It is okay to disagree with another member of the group, as long as it is done respectfully.
- Inappropriate behavior and/or language will not be tolerated.



General Discussion Questions

- What was your favorite part of the book?
- What was your least favorite part of the book?
- Did any ideas, themes, or stories stick with you?
- Did you reread any passages? If so, which ones?
- Did your opinion about the book change or your opinion about an idea change as you read?
- Do you think this is a book you will remember in a few months or years? Why or why not?
- Would you consider re-reading this book? Why or why not?
- What surprised you about the book?
- What question(s) do you have for the author?



Discussion Questions for *The Gift of Song*

What do songs or singing mean to you? (p. 7)

Are there hymns or folksongs you that take you right back to your childhood? Songs you know by heart? (p. 8)

What are your thoughts or feelings regarding Alice's idea "They were all so immersed in the page that they had forgotten how to listen. One student told me, 'I didn't realize there was anything to listen for except correctness.'" (p. 10)

In your opinion, what else is there to listen for besides correctness?

On the copyright page there is information about the artwork used throughout the book. After reading about the artwork, how might it relate to the text?

"The truth is: Music starts as free as a birdcall. We try to notate it, to impose order on it, but it continually struggles to regain its freedom." (p. 16)

Do you agree with Alice's statement? Why or why not?

"There is no separation here between music and dance, between tone and action." (p.18)

Do you agree with Alice's statement? Why or why not?

Read the top of page 20. If you have ever written a piece of music, what are your feelings on what should come first – the words or the music?



Read page 21. When looking at new music (for singing), do you personally read the text first or go right for the music? As church musicians, do you think this should or could make a difference? What difference might it make to a cantor?

Read pages 25-26. Begin with "The leader...." and continue through the end of the chapter. Share a particular moment when you felt this transcendence that Alice describes while singing in a group.

Read the chapter "Improvising and Inviting Responses" beginning on page 31. Over Zoom, attempt a little improvised singing session using a song everyone knows well – perhaps a Christmas carol.

After reading the chapter "SINGS" beginning on page 35, how do you think we could encourage more singing from the congregation once COVID restrictions are lifted?

"A friend watching me work with a group of new song-leaders asked me 'Do you know what you are teaching?' Amused, I said, 'No. What is it?' And she replied, 'You're teaching them to listen.'" (p. 39)

If we learn to listen better as singers, what are the wider implications?

Begin reading at the bottom of page 41. "Realize again..." through the middle of 42 "...own possibilities."

What is the "power of music" to you?

In Alice's "Summing Up" chapter (p.45-48), she writes about "factors that seem to challenge the way we hear." Do you agree or disagree with her with regard to these factors?



Questions for Wrapping Up

Would you recommend this book to others? Why or why not?

What are some ideas or questions arising from this book that might affect our group when we return to our regular group meetings?

Did you enjoy this book? Why or why not?

Are you interested in continuing to meet as a book club?



Utilizing Slides for Your Meeting

- Free slides are available to help guide you through your book club meeting.
- You can use your slides with PowerPoint or Google Slides. Slides are also available as a PDF.
- Slides are editable and should be altered for your group by deleting unwanted slides, adding slides, editing information such as the agenda, or adding information such as announcements at the end of the session.
- On Zoom, the facilitator will present the slides on his/her computer and then “share screen” on Zoom.
- Questions related to slides or packets can be directed to interlude@giamusic.com



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