

Adelante Book schedule for 2025-26

September **Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid** (Chris = discussion leader)

A striking and surprising debut novel from an exhilarating new voice, *Such a Fun Age* is a page-turning and big-hearted story about race and privilege, set around a young black babysitter, her well-intentioned employer, and a surprising connection that threatens to undo them both.

Alix Chamberlain is a woman who gets what she wants and has made a living, with her confidence-driven brand, showing other women how to do the same. So she is shocked when her babysitter, Emira Tucker, is confronted while watching the Chamberlains' toddler one night, walking the aisles of their local high-end supermarket. The store's security guard, seeing a young black woman out late with a white child, accuses Emira of kidnapping two-year-old Briar. A small crowd gathers, a bystander films everything, and Emira is furious and humiliated. Alix resolves to make things right.

But Emira herself is aimless, broke, and wary of Alix's desire to help. At twenty-five, she is about to lose her health insurance and has no idea what to do with her life. When the video of Emira unearths someone from Alix's past, both women find themselves on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know about themselves, and each other.

October **A Different Kind of Power by Jacinda Ardern**. (Sara or Barb = discussion leader)

From the former prime minister of New Zealand, then the world's youngest female head of government and just the second to give birth in office, comes a deeply personal memoir chronicling her extraordinary rise and offering inspiration to a new generation of leaders.

What if we could redefine leadership? What if kindness came first? Jacinda Ardern grew up the daughter of a police officer in small-town New Zealand, but as the 40th Prime Minister of her country, she commanded global respect for her empathetic leadership that put people first. This is the remarkable story of how a Mormon girl plagued by self-doubt made political history and changed our assumptions of what a global leader can be.

When Jacinda Ardern became Prime Minister at age thirty-seven, the world took notice. But it was her compassionate yet powerful response to the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks, resulting in swift and sweeping gun control laws, that demonstrated her remarkable leadership. She guided her country through unprecedented challenges—a volcanic eruption, a major biosecurity breach, and a global pandemic—while advancing visionary new policies to address climate change, reduce child poverty, and secure historic international trade deals. She did all this while juggling first-time motherhood in the public eye.

Ardern exemplifies a new kind of leadership—proving that leaders can be caring, empathetic, and effective. She has become a global icon, and now she is ready to share her story, from the struggles to the surprises, including for the first time the full details of her decision to step down during her sixth year as Prime Minister.

Through her personal experiences and reflections, Jacinda is a model for anyone who has ever doubted themselves, or has aspired to lead with compassion, conviction, and courage. *A Different Kind of Power* is more than a political memoir; it's an insight into

how it feels to lead, ultimately asking: What if you, too, are capable of more than you ever imagined?

November **When we left Cuba by Chanel Cleeton** (Nancy = discussion leader)

The Cuban Revolution took everything from sugar heiress Beatriz Perez--her family, her people, her country. Recruited by the CIA to infiltrate Fidel Castro's inner circle and pulled into the dangerous world of espionage, Beatriz is consumed by her quest for revenge and her desire to reclaim the life she lost.

As the Cold War swells like a hurricane over the shores of the Florida Strait, Beatriz is caught between the clash of Cuban American politics and the perils of a forbidden affair with a powerful man driven by ambitions of his own. When the ever-changing tides of history threaten everything she has fought for, she must make a choice between her past and future--but the wrong move could cost Beatriz everything--not just the island she loves, but also the man who has stolen her heart...

January **Alive Day by Karie Fugett** (Mary = discussion leader)

Karie Fugett is living out of her car in a Kmart parking lot when her boyfriend Cleve suggests "Maybe we could get married or somethin'." Karie says yes out of love, but also out of convenience. As a twenty-year-old high school dropout who ran away from her family and recently lost her job, Karie has nowhere else to turn. Just months after they elope, Cleve's Marine unit is deployed to Iraq. Then Karie gets the Cleve's Humvee has been hit by an IED, and he's suffered severe injuries.

Karie rushes to Walter Reed, where she's told it's a miracle that her husband has survived. "Happy Alive Day, man," a fellow vet says to Cleve, explaining that the date will always be marked as the day he was given a second chance at life. Newlyweds barely out of their teens, Karie and Cleve are thrust into utterly foreign roles. Karie tries to adapt to her job as a caregiver, navigating the labyrinthine system of veterans affairs, hospital bureaucracy, and doctors who do little more than shrug when she raises concerns about Cleve's dependency on painkillers. It is clear to Karie that Cleve is using opiates to dull a pain that is more than physical. She catches his first overdose, but what if she can't save him a second time? Will she still be able to save herself?

Fugett's story depicts an oft-overlooked reality of the experience of the many thousands of caregivers and spouses—mostly women, mostly young, mostly poor—whose lives have been shattered by battles fought against enemies abroad and against addiction at home. Tender, vivid, and laced with dark humor, *Alive Day* is at once an epic and engrossing love story, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, and a powerful indictment of the sins of a nation.

February **Spell Freedom by Elaine Weiss** (discussion leader = Terri)

In the summer of 1954, Esau Jenkins and Septima Clark travelled to Tennessee's

Highlander Center, a rural interracial training school for social change founded by Myles Horton, a white educator with roots in the labor movement. There, the three united behind a shared preparing Black southerners to pass the suppressive literacy tests required to vote in the era of Jim Crow.

Together with beautician-turned-teacher Bernice Johnson, they launched the effort known as the Citizenship Schools project. By the time the Voting Rights Act was signed into law in 1965, this audacious, grassroots undertaking had grown into a subversive network of nine hundred schools, not only preparing thousands of Black citizens to vote, but creating a generation of activists trained in community organizing, political citizenship, and essential tactics of resistance and struggle.

March **The Surgeon's Daughter (Nora Brady #2) by Audrey Blake** (discussion leader = Sara or Barb)

Nora Beady, the only female student at a prestigious medical school in Bologna, is a rarity. In the 19th century women are expected to remain at home and raise children, so her unconventional, indelicate ambitions to become a licensed surgeon offend the men around her. Under constant scrutiny, Nora's successes are taken for granted; her mistakes used as proof that women aren't suited to the field.

Everything changes when she allies herself with Magdalena Morenco, the sole female doctor on-staff. Together the two women develop new techniques to improve a groundbreaking surgery: the Cesarean section. It's a highly dangerous procedure and the research is grueling, but even worse is the vitriolic response from men. Most don't trust the findings of women, and many can choose to deny their wives medical care. Already facing resistance on all sides, Nora is shaken when she meets a patient who will die without the surgery. If the procedure is successful, her work could change the world. But a failure could cost everything: precious lives, Nora's career, and the role women will be allowed to play in medicine.

April **The Mitford Affair by Marie Benedict** (discussion leader = Dotty?)

From *New York Times* bestselling author Marie Benedict—she'll have to choose: her country or her sisters?

Between the World Wars, the six Mitford sisters dominate the English political, literary, and social scenes. Though they've weathered scandals before, the family falls into disarray when Diana divorces her husband to marry a fascist leader and Unity follows her sister's lead, inciting rumors that she's become Hitler's own mistress.

Novelist Nancy Mitford is the only member of her family to keep in touch with Diana and Unity after their desertion, so it falls to her to act when her sisters become spies for the Nazi party.

Probing the torrid political climate of World War II and the ways that sensible people can be sucked into radical action, *The Mitford Affair* follows Nancy's valiant efforts to end the

war and the cost of placing loyalty to her country above loyalty to her family.