

## Tinker Online (Virtual) Book Club

If you have never been to Oklahoma City, you will be surprised at how large and spacious the city is. It consists of numerous counties and cities within its boundary. Tinker AFB is located just a little south of the epicenter of the city and not many Canadian families choose to live nearby. Instead, many live north of the city, in Edmond, or south of the city, in Moore/Norman, which results in some Canadians residing up to an hour drive away from each other. Why am I telling you this? Well, you can see how getting together with other Canadians for a Book Club gathering can be a challenge preventing interested people from joining, if you have to drive 2 hours in one evening. So, when the CanOkie community showed interest in starting a Book Club, the idea of having the discussions online was presented.

How does this work? Great question! The Book Club meets online, from the comfort of the member's own homes, monthly using WebEx. WebEx is very easy to use and all that is needed is a computer and headset. The meetings are scheduled by the MFS Virtual Program Coordinator on WebEx, and then an email with a link to the meeting is sent to all participants. At the time of meeting, all attendees just click on the link and are directed into the meeting. It truly is that easy!

Do you think an online, virtual meeting sounds lame? It may to some, however let me tell you how an online Book Club meeting works. The Book Club has a volunteer host who develops a small PowerPoint presentation with a little ice breaker game at the beginning (always brings laughter to meeting), followed by discussion questions about the book. Once you login and enter the meeting, you will see the presentation on your screen and the names of the attendees at the meeting. It flows the same way an in person book club meeting would, right down to the chatting, discussions about opinions, laughing and drinking (most participants come prepared to the meeting with their drink of choice...tea, coffee or wine). The WebEx platform allows for participants to send private written messages to others during a meeting (like whispering with a friend sitting beside you) and there is never any pressure to participate if you don't feel comfortable (you can sit and listen the entire meeting if you choose).

Why I am telling you about the Tinker Book Club, especially if you don't live in OKC? The Tinker Online Book Club started as a local group with just a few members and was working great. A few months after starting came posting season. A few members moved back to Canada and their lives changed with other commitments. The local members decided to advertise the group to all Canadians residing in the US. A few original members continued to attend the meetings from Canada and some new people from various locations joined. The group changed it's name to Tinker Book Club and Friends ☺. With this last posting season behind us, the Book Club is recruiting again and the current members are eager to get started.

There are so many reasons to join this Online Book Club. I suggest you give the group a try if you:

- Like to read
- Like Book Clubs
- Always wanted to join or try a Book Club
- Are looking to meet new people
- Want to connect with other Canadians while you are residing in the US

- Need an excuse to drink a glass of wine ;)

If you have any questions about the Online Book Club or WebEx, please contact [Joanna Church](#) the virtual program developer.

One last note. I want to mention that the whole idea of an Online Book Club was developed by a volunteer community member. If you have an idea that you think would work on a virtual platform to connect Canadians while residing in the US, please contact Joanna Church and share your idea.

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