

Online Book Club

The Mystery at the Roman Colosseum

Bring It To Life!

1. Make a mask! You will need paper plates, glue, markers, scissors, and yarn. You might want some extras like feathers, sequins, or glitter—whatever goodies you can find to make your mask fantastic! Cut holes in your paper plate for your eyes, nose, and mouth. Punch small holes on each side for the strings, and tie a piece of string through each hole. Make sure your strings are long enough to tie in the back of your head. Decorate your mask and have a friend tie it on your head. Now it's time to party!
2. Bring geography to life! Ask a volunteer to draw a big map of Italy on a piece of poster board. Use a map of Italy from the encyclopedia to help you locate and label the cities you learned about in the book—Rome, Florence, and Venice. Trace Christina and Grant's journey across Italy. About how many miles did they travel? Draw in Italy's mountains so you can learn about the country's terrain.
3. Have an Italian feast! Ask your parents to help you make some authentic Italian food to share with book club members. Pizza, spaghetti, calzones, cheese, red grapes, olives...anything goes! You can get lots of ideas from the book. Be sure to bring napkins!
4. Bring in a guest speaker! Do you know anyone who has visited Italy? If so, ask him or her to come in and share their photographs and stories with your group. If they have some euros, ask your speaker to bring them, too. Be sure to listen closely and ask lots of questions! That's the best way to learn!
5. Create a "monumental" game! Assign an Italian tourist attraction to each book club member. Ask that person to find a picture of his or her attraction, and research three facts about it. Ask each member to present his picture and information to the group. At the end of the presentations, see who can remember the most about each attraction. Award two points for remembering the name of the attraction, and one point for remembering a fact. The person with the most points wins (of course!)



Online Information

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Fascinating Facts

Italy

- The Leaning Tower of Pisa began sinking before it was even finished! It continues to lean to the south a tiny bit more each year.
- Italy covers about 116,000 square miles. That makes it slightly larger than the state of Arizona!
- Don't you wonder where the street signs are in Venice? Street names are written on small white squares on the outside of buildings on the street.
- Bocce is a popular sport in Italy. It's a lot like bowling—the object of the game is to roll balls as close as possible to a target ball.
- Many historians believe that the first eyeglasses were produced in Italy in the late 13th century. Now, that was a great idea!
- The city of Pompeii was buried by a huge volcanic explosion in 79 AD. One historian who witnessed it described how the sea was sucked away and came crashing back over the land. Today we call that a tsunami!
- All the gondolas in Venice must be painted black unless they are the property of a high government official.



Online Quiz

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Fact or Fiction?

Write Fact or Fiction next to each question below.

- _____ 1. Grant and Christina arrived in Italy on board Papa's Mystery Girl airplane.
- _____ 2. Grant loves to eat olives.
- _____ 3. Christina became curious about an advertisement written in English but published in an Italian newspaper.
- _____ 4. Luigi is older than Maria Francesca.
- _____ 5. Grant pretended to be lost at the Leaning Tower of Pisa.
- _____ 6. Rome is named after a slave who started a rebellion and freed other slaves in Italy.
- _____ 7. Grant pushed Christina into the Trevi Fountain on purpose.
- _____ 8. Grant got in trouble with Papa when he fell out of a gondola in Venice.
- _____ 9. Christina did not have enough money to buy a Carnivale mask, but the shopkeeper agreed to sell it to her for the money she had.
- _____ 10. The men in black trench coats were international spies who didn't want to be recognized.



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TALK ABOUT IT!

1. Have you ever traveled to a foreign country? Which one(s)? What was it like?
2. Why do you think people in different countries eat different kinds of food? Do you think it might have something to do with the climate and the type of food they can grow?
3. Have you ever sent a postcard? Who did you send it to? Why do you think people like to send postcards when they visit a new place?
4. What did you think about the men in the trench coats when you first started reading about them? Did you think Christina was being overly dramatic or did you think they were dangerous? If so, why?
5. Italy has so many beautiful buildings, fountains, and interesting statues. Why do you think people build things like that in their cities?
6. Even though Grant and Christina and Luigi and Francesca were from different countries, they became fast friends. What things do kids all over the world have in common?
7. Would you like to ride in gondolas around Venice? What would be good things and bad things about living in a city with streets of water?
8. Were you surprised when Luigi stole the scooter, and said all would be forgiven because it was Fat Tuesday? What would be the consequences of stealing something like that in your town?
9. Why do you think people like to wear masks and disguises?
10. Talk about some of the jobs people do on a movie set. What job would you like to have?

