

GREAT BOOKS AND SHARED INQUIRY

Great Books discussion groups are forums for adults to discuss significant writings. We come from a variety of backgrounds to discuss important ideas and issues that have shaped civilization. Our discussions are lively, probing and enlightening. We challenge our own and others' opinions in light of the text we are all reading. The object is not one "right answer" but rather to examine questions raised in the readings, with reasoning informed by our diverse experiences.

We use the "Shared Inquiry" method, a collaborative, question-driven method of learning that helps us read actively, pose evocative questions, and listen and respond effectively. We examine the words and the possible ways to interpret the ideas and issues. To this end, we follow these guidelines:

- We read the selection before coming to the discussion.
- We support our opinions by focusing on ideas from the reading.
- We explore the ideas in the selection before going beyond them.
- We listen to the opinions of others and respond directly to them.
- We ask each discussion leader to begin the questions.

This year, we will resume our discussion of *Deadly Sins*, beginning with *Even Deadlier; A Sequel to the Seven Deadly Sins Sampler*. It is available at the Circulation Desk. The book can be checked out through the end of the readings on January 18. We will later select another title for the rest of the year.

Fifteen hundred years ago, St. Gregory the Great created a list of seven sins as a tool for contemplation, to help monks maintain their ascetic regimen of chastity, poverty, and obedience. This list is still around today. The authors in this anthology offer us different ways of thinking about sin. They don't necessarily present settled opinions on the sins themselves, but keep us thinking and imagining what the moral life might be. Socrates put it another way, his student Plato tells us, in words that ring down through the centuries with equal force: The unexamined life is not worth living.

For more information or copies of the readings, call 860/347-0196 or email ameyers@russell.lioninc.org. *Join us!*

SCHEDULE

Tuesdays, 7:00-8:20 PM, 3rd Floor Meeting Room

September 21 **Anger**
Torch Song, John Cheever
My First Two Women, Nadine Gordimer

October 19 **Sloth**
Babylon Revisited, F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Custard Heart, Dorothy Parker

November 16 **Greed**
A Woman of Fifty, W. Somerset Maugham
My Wife is a White Russian, Rose Tremain

December 21 **Gluttony**
Theft in a Pastry Shop, Italo Calvino
Fat People, Alison Lurie

January 18 **Lust**
Nuns at Luncheon, Aldous Huxley
Cowboys Are My Weakness, Pam Houston

[Further readings will be selected.]

“These stories by renowned writers, some famous and some not, amount to two stories for each day of the week, two for each of the sins pronounced deadly by Pope Gregory the Great. And what are the wages of reading and contemplating those notorious transgressions? Ah, pleasure! Pleasure without guilt or consequence and then some nonfatal glimmers of wisdom, too. “

Julia Spicher Kasdorf, professor of creative writing,
Pennsylvania State University, author of *Eve's Striptease*

Two Other Lists of Seven Deadly Sins

2005 Poll of British Adults

Cruelty
Adultery
Bigotry
Dishonesty
Hypocrisy
Greed
Selfishness

1925 Mahatma Gandhi

Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Science without humanity
Knowledge without character
Politics without principle
Commerce without morality
Worship without sacrifice



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RUSSELL READERS

Great Books Discussions

2010 – 2011

Even Deadlier; A Sequel to the Seven Deadly Sins



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