
Programming Ideas

Celebrity Readings

Invite celebrities whose books have been challenged or banned to come into the library to read excerpts from their books. This can be followed by a group discussion on the themes and ideas surrounding censorship and book banning.

Poster making

Combine a program on censorship with an artistic workshop. Invite teenagers to design and create anti-censorship posters and bookmarks. These can be displayed in the library or distributed throughout the community. Precede the workshop with a discussion on censorship and the importance of free speech.

Book discussion group

If you already have a book club, it is easy to incorporate a session on censorship. Simply assign your group a book that has been challenged. During your scheduled meetings, talk about why the book was challenged and whether the group members found the book offensive in any way. If you don't have a book club, another option is organizing a one-day workshop for teens to attend.

Books on Trial: *Alice on the Outside*



Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Alice on the Outside*. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999. 170pp. ISBN 0-689-80594-2.

Although it is easy to understand why this book has come under fire, it is a frank and realistic book that deals with a number of issues that many teen girls encounter. From sex to prejudice to homosexuality, *Alice on the Outside* brings up a number of hot-button issues.

For example, when Alice's cousin Carol comes to visit Alice's family, which consists of her father and older brother (Alice's mother died when she was in kindergarten), Alice promptly questions her divorced cousin about sex and marriage and gets some very straightforward answers. Later in the book, the storyline about Alice and Lori, a friend of Alice's who is a lesbian, is well done. While taking a stance for acceptance, the author also brings in the religious "homosexuality is a sin" point of view through Alice's friend Elizabeth. Naylor deals with this issue well, and portrays Alice defending Lori from her peers on numerous occasions.

Ultimately, *Alice on the Outside* deals with a number of big issues for teens and it deals with those issues well and with enlightenment. That said, it not be suitable for anyone younger than 14 or so due to the sexual discussions that take place.

Quiz or Scavenger Hunt

Have your participants complete a quiz about banned books. To make it more fun, you can turn it into a scavenger hunt. Have prizes for the first person with all of the completed answers. Incorporate physicality by creating answer cards and hiding them around the library for your participants to find – perhaps hide them inside challenged books or hide the books around the library.

"Censorship feeds the dirty mind more than the four-letter word itself."

~Dick Cavett
