

GOD CAME RUNNING

BOOK CLUB GUIDE

FOR THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator's role is not to explain the novel, but to keep the conversation honest and moving.

Two practices will help enormously:

First: after each question, wait longer than feels comfortable before speaking. Let the answers gather in the pause.

Second: when someone gives an answer, make room for different responses by asking gently,

“Did anyone have a different reaction to that?”

It creates space for the conversation to deepen without becoming argumentative.

If your group prefers a shorter session, choose one question from each movement.

THE FRAMEWORK

- Opening (*15 minutes*): Questions 1–3
- Movement One (*30 minutes*): Questions 4 to 7— *choose 3*
- Movement Two (*30 minutes*): Questions 8 to 11 — *choose 3*
- Movement Three (*25 minutes*): Questions 12 to 14 — *choose 2*
- Closing (*20 minutes*): Question 15 — *optionally add Question 16*

Questions 1 and 15 should be treated as anchors.

They open with a moment of personal response and close with the unresolved question each person is carrying home. Everything in between can be adjusted according to where the conversation goes.

If the conversation stalls, return to character.

“What did you make of Lancello in that moment?” will restart almost any stuck conversation, because character is usually safer than idea—and from character, the deeper ideas often find their way back on their own.

If the conversation goes somewhere unexpected, follow it.

The guide is a map, not a script. The best sessions are often the ones that end somewhere no one planned.

A NOTE TO THE GROUP

God Came Running is not a novel that resolves everything neatly. It earns its ending—but it earns it by taking the darkness seriously first.

The best conversations about this novel will do the same: resist the rush to conclusion, stay with the difficult questions long enough to feel their weight, and trust that the room is large enough to hold different responses.

The questions are arranged in four movements, roughly following the emotional arc of the novel. You do not need to cover all of them. Let the conversation go where it needs to go.

THE SESSION

OPENING—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Allow 15 minutes.

These questions require no preparation and help everyone to settle and begin speaking early.

Question 1: What was the first moment in the novel that made you stop reading—not because you wanted to put it down, but because you needed to sit with something? What was it?

Question 2: Which character drew you in most—and which made you most uncomfortable? Those two answers are often more connected than they first appear.

Question 3: The novel holds two timelines at once—Jasmine’s present-day journey and the events surrounding the crucifixion. Which one pulled you in more deeply, and why do you think that was?

MOVEMENT ONE—THE CHARACTERS

Allow 30 minutes.

The novel’s characters carry its theology in human form. These questions move from character outward into the larger questions the novel is asking.

Question 4: Lancello begins the novel burning with what he calls righteous anger at grace given to the undeserving. By the end he weeps at the sound of a trumpet because another soul has been saved. What changed him—and was there a moment when you felt that shift begin?

Question 5: Jasmine burns her manuscript in the opening pages. The novel suggests this is both her lowest moment and the beginning of her real story. Have you ever lost hope something you had built—and looking back, what do you think that moment was actually doing?

Question 6: Namor is a murderer who asks one desperate question from a cross and receives an answer that undoes him. At the end of the novel, his is the first name written in Heaven’s record. What did you feel when you understood that? Did it sit comfortably or uncomfortably—and which response tells you more about yourself?

Question 7: Skylock watches Jasmine suffer without intervening in the ways he could. The novel frames his restraint as the costliest form of love rather than abandonment. Is such a thing conceivable? And has there been a time in your own life when what felt like abandonment might have been something else?

MOVEMENT TWO—THE NOVEL'S WORLD

Allow 30 minutes.

These questions move from character into the larger ideas the novel is exploring.

Question 8: The novel portrays the enemy not as a dramatic force of obvious evil, but as a corrupting, relentless voice that erodes hope through lies and shame. Did that portrayal feel true to your experience of how darkness actually operates—or did it feel unfamiliar?

Question 9: Jasmine's prayer at her lowest point is not "rescue me," but "ruin me before you raise me—do what You must, but never let me stop loving You." What did you make of that prayer? Could you pray it—and if not, what would stand in the way?

Question 10: The novel insists that desolation—the silence of God, the prayer that feels like a wall—is a known road rather than evidence of abandonment. Can you imagine such a thing is possible?

Question 11: The cross is rendered in the novel not as a historical event observed from a distance, but as something witnessed from the inside—by angels who cannot intervene, by soldiers who cannot explain what they have seen, by a father who helps kill his people's Messiah, by a dying thief who asks one final question. Which perspective on the cross affected you most—and why that one?

MOVEMENT THREE—THE NOVEL AND YOU

Allow 25 minutes.

These questions bring the novel's world into the reader's own.

Question 12: The novel suggests that every character stands before the cross and receives a different necessary answer—Namor needed to know something pure existed, Simon needed to know his worst day could be redeemed, Lancello needed to know grace was not an injustice. If you were in the novel, what would your necessary answer be?

Question 13: Rudolph tells Jasmine that the jasmine blossom's fragrance is strongest at night—that she was not given her name for nothing, and that her specific voice will carry life to souls she will never meet precisely because of the darkness she has come through. Do you have a sense of what your own specific fragrance is—the thing only your particular journey could have produced?

Question 14: The novel's title is delivered on its final pages not as metaphor, but as witnessed event: God came running. Has there been a moment in your own life—however you understand it—when unexpected mercy came toward you? What was that like?

CLOSING—A QUESTION TO CARRY HOME

Allow 20 minutes.

This final movement is the most important, and should not be rushed.

Question 15: The novel ends not with resolution, but with a Father still running—present tense, ongoing. What question has this novel left open in you that you were not carrying before you read it?

Let each person name their question without the group trying to answer it. The questions are the point. They are what the novel has given you to carry.

A final question for the room—optional, and only if the conversation has built enough trust:

Question 16: Is there a door in your own life that this novel suggested might be open—one you have been treating as closed?

If the room goes quiet after this question, let it. That silence may be the conversation continuing somewhere deeper.

AFTER THE SESSION

Three things are worth doing before the conversation fades:

Write down the question you named in Question 15.

Not to answer it—just to keep it. Questions that are written down have a way of working on us longer than questions we only speak aloud.

Go back and reread the passage that stopped you.

Now that the conversation has happened, it will likely read differently.

If someone in the room needs this novel, consider putting it in their hands.

The one who was quieter than usual. The one whose answer to Question 14 had something careful around it. The one who may need to carry the story a little further.