

Thank you for considering reading *A Flame in the Dark* for your book club. I'm both honored and thrilled that you are including it in your reading selections. Following, you will find a few ideas you might choose to use for your gathering; feel free to use all or some, or do your own thing! Either way, I'd love if you tag me in any of your social media posts so I can see how you arranged your gathering. Connect with me on social media by tagging me with the handles in the box to the right.

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Menu

Easy Does It!

- Common items during this time for quick meals would have been some sort of hearty bread (made with oats or barley), a cheese (maybe butterkese, though I'm not sure about the historical accuracy of that, but at least it's a German cheese!), and some seasonal fruits (grapes or maybe apples).

Going the Extra Mile

- Have a feast!
 - Make meat pies using chopped meat and a gravy, baked in pieces of pie crust
 - Make a hearty stew, made with a variety of seasonal veggies and some leftover meat
 - Make mulled wine (or a nonalcoholic approximation with spiced cider)

Party Games

- Nail the Theses on the Door (just as it sounds, like Pin the Tail on the Donkey...could also do a "Boar in the Vineyard" version, if your group is more familiar with the later history of Luther's life)
- Reformation Selfies (make or approximate some tie-on Reformation-era costumes for people to pose in and take a quick pic!)
- Printing Press (as simple – with stamps – or as elaborate – with a table-top printing press – as you want, it's a fun keepsake)

Discussion Questions

1. Let's talk about the characters. Who and why were...
 - ...your favorite?
 - ...your most-relatable?
 - ...your least favorite?
2. Heinrich had his life planned out, but his understanding and his future both underwent a rather drastic shift under God's leading. Has there been a time in life that God showed you a different way?
3. Marlein was caught up in what she believed to be the duty she had to her family. Was she correct in her beliefs? Why or why not?
4. Keterlyn isn't the easiest character to love at the beginning of the novel. How did you view her by the end? How might this impact your view of individuals in your life who aren't always easy to love?
5. Johan is a little less present in the novel than many of the other characters. Why do you think this is? What sort of example of husband and father do you think he is?
6. Brigita's sense of shame is evident right away. As the layers of that shame are peeled back, how did you see God's grace at work in her life, even in the midst of such a difficult situation?
7. While many of us won't experience a tragedy like Matthäus did, guilt over what we could have done or should have done can still plague us. How does God's Word speak grace into these situations? Why can it sometimes be hard to hear that grace?
8. Sifrit is a character that we're only let into his head for a brief moment, yet he possibly experiences some of the quickest growth in the book. What do you think he is like after we leave our characters, as he and Heinrich are roommates and he is now the only apprentice?
9. Emnelde is accused of something that goes against everything she holds dear. Has there been a time in your life that someone thought differently of you than was reality? How did that impact your relationships? Your faith?
10. Nikolaus never really has justice served to him for his assault on Brigita, due in part to the difficulty of leveling such a charge in the justice system of that time and place, and in part to Brigita's own unwillingness to pursue justice. Justice and grace can sometimes seem to be at odds with one another. Remembering that God desires all people to be saved, how might you have handled that situation differently than Heinrich and Brigita did?
11. By the end of the book, we see the characters realizing more fully what it means to belong to the Body of Christ, the community of believers. How do we, as the Church today, live as the Body of Christ?
12. Discuss what you think happens after we leave the characters at the end of the novel. Will Heinrich and Marlein marry? How do Matthäus and Brigita grow alongside one another? How will Johan and especially Keterlyn fare?