



Book Club Kit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Father Tim says that he's "beyond serving the mission field" but realizes that his own town is a mission field. Managing the Local for a desperately ill Avis Packard, he sacrifices several months of his time and energy. Think of your own life—have you ever had to make sacrifices for someone you love? What was most challenging about the experience?
2. Do you believe Sammy can one day forgive his mother? Have you ever had to forgive a deep wound?
3. Do you think Sammy let Pauline win the pool game? If so, why would he do that?
4. All three generations of Kavanaghs seem eager to verbally express their love for each other. For example, there's Dooley's "I love you big," and their classic family exchange of "Love you!" followed by the familiar "Love you back!" What are other ways of expressing love? How do you express love to your family and friends?
5. Jan Karon loves animals, and has a special affection for dogs. In *To Be Where You Are*, dogs and cats seem to sprout in nearly every chapter. Father Tim resisted having another dog; he felt betrayed when Gus was pressed on him. Have you ever learned to love an unwelcome gift? Do you believe animals can be good for our health? Have you had an experience in which your pet helped you in some way?
6. Is anyone in your family or circle of friends an artist, budding or accomplished? Do you support and encourage their gift? How can encouragement affect creative work?
7. In *To Be Where You Are*, the three generations live their lives within the same time frame, just twenty minutes away from each other. What do you think the older generation owes the younger, and vice versa?
8. Father Tim and Cynthia's Christmas observance this year is rich, but comparatively simple: a tree,

an oyster pie, midnight mass, and two gifts each. What is your ideal way to enjoy Christmas?

9. Toward the end of the book, Brooke Logan listens to but rejects Father Tim's counsel on forgiveness. He doesn't pursue her reasoning, but lets her know she can call him anytime. Has anyone ever resisted your help when you tried to lend them a hand? What happened, and why do you think they reacted the way they did?
10. If you are among the readers who have followed Tim and Cynthia through the Mitford series, you know them like family. Where do you think they will go on this major vacation . . . other than to Henry's wedding?

Th' Dooley Dance

In *To Be Where You Are*, there's a good bit of celebration, of singing, and even of dancing, especially in a scene set at Meadowgate.

In this scene, there is a country dance at the Crossroads Co-op, just up the road from Meadowgate. The Ham Biscuits, a group of five string musicians, are playing:

The Biscuits segued into a tune of their own and a local favorite, "Do You Want Mustard On That?"

Cheers. Everybody dancing, taps talking.

The local vet decided that even though he didn't know what he was doing, he would give it all he had.

"What's that dance your husband's doin'?" said Linda Pritchard, who taught seventh grade in Mitford and commuted. "Th' buck dance? Th' Virginia reel? What is that?"

"That's Th' Dooley," said Lace.

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Can you do Th' Dooley? Make it up with your book club and post a video to Jan's Facebook page!



Esther's Orange Marmalade Cake



Preparation

CAKE: Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit. Lightly butter three 9-inch round cake pans, line them with parchment paper, then lightly butter and flour the paper, shaking out any excess.

Sift flour, baking powder, and salt twice in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, beat butter on medium for about 4 minutes. Add sugar steadily with mixer running; beat until light and fluffy. Add eggs and yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition; scrape down sides of mixer bowl at least once. After eggs are added, continue to beat on medium for 2 minutes; add oil and beat for 1 minute on low.

In another bowl, combine orange zest, vanilla extract, and buttermilk. With a rubber spatula, fold in half the dry ingredients. Scrape down sides of bowl, add half the buttermilk mixture, and repeat. Pour batter in pans, smooth surface, rap pans on counter, and place in oven. Bake for 30–35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Let cakes cool in pans on racks for 20 minutes.

ORANGE SYRUP: In small bowl, stir together orange juice and sugar until dissolved. While cakes are still in pans, use a toothpick or skewer to poke holes at ½-inch intervals in the cake layers. Spoon syrup over each layer, allowing syrup to be completely absorbed before adding more. Let layers cool completely in pans.

FILLING: Heat marmalade in a small saucepan over medium heat until just melted. Let cool for five minutes.

FROSTING: In a chilled mixing bowl, whisk heavy cream with sugar until stiff peaks form. Add sour cream slowly and whisk until mixture is a spreadable consistency.

TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE: Invert one cake layer on a cake plate and peel off parchment paper. Spread a third of the marmalade over the top, smoothing into an even layer; repeat with second cake layer. Place third cake layer on top, remove parchment, and spoon remaining marmalade onto the center, leaving a 1¼-inch border around the edges. Frost sides and top border, leaving the marmalade on top of the cake exposed. Or frost entire cake first, adding the marmalade as a garnish on top. Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

Ingredients

CAKE

1 cup unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing the pans

3 ¼ cups cake flour, plus more for dusting the pans

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

2 ⅔ cups granulated sugar

5 large eggs, at room temperature

4 large egg yolks, at room temperature

⅔ cup vegetable oil

1 tablespoon grated orange zest

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature

ORANGE SYRUP

1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice

¼ cup granulated sugar

FILLING

1 (12-ounce) jar orange marmalade

FROSTING

1 cup heavy cream, chilled

4 tablespoons granulated sugar

1 cup sour cream, chilled