

Books in a Box

Reading Guide

Blaine
Bookmobile
Deming
Everson
Ferndale
Island
Lynden
Maple Falls
Point Roberts
Sumas
wcls.org



Books in a Box Information

We hope you will enjoy the convenience of having multiple copies of the same title to share—either with your official book group or with an unofficial friends-and-family group!

Some general information about the kits:

- Kits check out for six weeks.
- Kits are available to reserve, but we cannot guarantee their availability for specific dates.
- One person in the group is responsible for the kits full return.
- Return kits in person at any Whatcom County library

How do I find a list of all your kits?

- Go to www.wcls.org
- ◆ Click on "catalog"
- In the Search type "book club kit"

This list includes kits owned by both Whatcom County and Bellingham Library Systems. Please note that the Bellingham kits must be picked up and returned to the Bellingham Library. Whatcom County kits can be reserved and sent to any location for pickup.

Suggested Discussion Questions

- 1. At the beginning of the book, what kind of person is Ron Hall? How would you describe him (how does he describe himself)? Why does he agree to volunteer at the homeless shelter, and what is his initial reaction in doing so?
- 2. Talk about the trajectory of Denver Moore's life. What events have landed him in the homeless shelter? Discuss the differences between his life and Ron Hall's life. What is Denver's world view?
- 3. Talk about Deborah Hall. What inspires her life? What does she think of Denver Moore?
- 4. Eventually, Denver and Ron, two men who have lived vastly different lives, become close friends. What do the two see in one another? What draws them together?
- 5. What are the symbolic implications of the conversation about how white men fish, especially their catch-and-release method? What does that conversation say about each man, and what is the underlying message that Denver is trying to pass onto Ron?
- 6. What is the meaning of the book's title, Same Kind of Difference as Me? What does it refer to?
- 7. How do both men change by the end of the book? What do they learn from or teach each other?
- 8. This is a story about how hate and prejudice can be overcome by love and grace. How difficult is that achievement in most of our lives? What can this book teach us?
- 9. Does this book inspire you? If so, in what ways?

(Questions courtesy of LitLovers.com)

Additional discussion questions reflecting a Christian point-of-view (questions provided by the publisher and excerpted from the book)

Prejudice

- 1. What are some modern examples of prejudice? Other than racial prejudice, what other kinds of prejudice are common today?
- 2. What are three things you can do to combat your personal prejudices?
- 3. What does being prejudice say about your personal self-esteem?
- 4. Read Micah 6:8. What does this verse say about the attitude we should have toward other people?

Homelessness

- 5. What is your initial reaction to encountering a homeless person or someone who is in serious financial or personal need?
- 6. If you were in that situation, how would you want others to respond to you?
- 7. Other than give money to social service agencies, what are three things you can do to provide ministry to the homeless people in your community?
- 8. Jesus' ministry was often focused on society's outcasts. Why did Jesus seek them rather than socializing with the religious elite? With which crowd are you most likely to spend time—the outcasts in your community or the religious elite? Why?

Forgiveness

- 9. Is it harder to give or to receive forgiveness? Why?
- 10. Why is it so hard for us to grant unconditional forgiveness? How can your faith help you become a more forgiving person?
- 11. What is the role of forgiveness in your personal life? In your spiritual life?

Faith

- 12. In chapter 44, Denver said, "Our limitation is God's opportunity." How has this statement been authenticated in your life?
- 13. Throughout the book, Denver's initial response to life's challenges often was rooted in his simple faith in God. Why is it so hard for society's successful people to have this kind of faith? What keeps you from having this kind of faith?
- 14. With Deborah in critical condition, the object of ministry (Denver) became the source of ministry. Denver had been through a lot and was equipped to provide for Ron's needs. Through what experiences has God worked to equip you for ministry? How has God used you to meet the needs of others?
- 15. Deborah extended the reach of her ministry by investing in the lives of others. How are you investing in the lives of others?
- 16. The memorial service for Deborah was a celebration. How can such a somber occasion be celebratory? What does this say about the faith of the one who passed away?

Author Bios: Ron Hall & Denver Moore

Source: *Catholic Library Association* (http://www.cathla.org/view-completed-guides/123-same-kind-of-different-as-me).

Ron Hall was born in Texas in 1945 and was raised in Fort Worth, attending elementary and high school there. After graduating from Texas Christian University, he joined the Army. Upon completion of his military service, he worked as a salesman for



Campbell Soup. He married Deborah Short, and returned to graduate school where he obtained an MBA and went to work as a municipal bond trader. However, he did not remain in this position but accidentally launched a successful career as an international art dealer and became a wealthy man. At this time, with his wife Debbie, he attended the Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth where she, and then he, befriended a homeless black man named Denver Moore. When his wife died in 2000, he and Denver continued to work and speak on homeless causes.

Denver Moore was born in rural Louisiana in 1937. He experienced a number of tragic events as a child, extreme poverty, and the racism of that era. In 1966, he was sentenced to 20 years at hard labor in Angola Prison in Louisiana. When he was released in 1976 after serving 10 years, he traveled to Fort Worth and spent the next 22 years homeless. He would occasionally ride the hobo trains around the U.S. In 1998, "Miss Debbie" and Ron Hall met him and it changed all of their lives. Today, he is an artist, public speaker, and volunteer for homeless causes. (Denver Moore passed away in Dallas, TX on March 31, 2012.)

Reviews

Publishers Weekly

* Same Kind of Different as Me, Ron Hall & Denver Moore. Thomas Nelson, \$15.99 (245p) ISBN 978-0061351631

An international art dealer and a modern-day slave from Louisiana become friends after the art dealer is roped into volunteering at a homeless shelter by his saintly wife. Sounds like it's got to be fiction, but that's the true story told in *Same Kind of Different as Me* by Ron Hall and Denver Moore.

"I really wrote the book to honor my wife and honor Denver, who both deserved a place in history," Hall explained. Moore told his half, and Hall wrote it and his half, rewriting the manuscript 14 times before he got up the nerve to take it to agent Lee Hough at Alive Communications.

Co-writer Lynn Vincent was brought in to help craft the story and also to vet the events of the true story. The controversy over author James Frey's embellished memoir cast a long shadow over the book during its preparation. "It made us be much more rigorous than we otherwise would have been," said Greg Daniel, v-p and associate publisher at W. "It looks like we're as clean as we can possibly be."

The authors' profits from the book will go to the Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth, which now includes the Deborah L. Hall Memorial Chapel. —Marcia Z. Nelson, Religion BookLine

Suggested Readalikes

Have a Little Faith: A True Story, Mitch Albom.

The Lost Memory of Skin, Russell Banks.

Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back, Todd Burpo.

What Difference Do It Make?: Stories of Hope and Healing, Ron Hall.

Mudbound, Hillary Jordan.

The Girl's Guide to Homelessness: A Memoir, Brianna Karp.

When Crickets Cry, Charles Martin.

90 Minutes in Heaven: A True Story of Death and Life, Don Piper.

The Help, Kathryn Stockett.

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls.

Under the Overpass: A Journey of Faith on the Streets of America, Mike Yankoski.

The Shack, William P. Young.

Web Resources

Biography of Denver Moore and examples of his art: http://www.theceruleangallery.com/Denver%20Moore.htm

Website for the book: http://www.samekindofdifferentasme.com/

Dallas Morning News article on Denver Moore's death:

http://tinyurl.com/6p53sd6