

YouthREAD 2025

Grades 9-12

High School Book Selection



CommunityREAD

Bend in the Road

Written by Sara Biren

Gabe's life is a mess and he's desperate to come up with the money he needs to fix a major screw-up. The only place he can be free to do so is the family farm—the farm that Juniper's family has managed since before she was born. When Juniper learns that Gabe's about to inherit the farm, she worries that he'll sell it. She comes up with a plan to get close to him and stop that from happening. At first, Juniper and Gabe couldn't be more at odds, but the more time they spend with each other, the more they grow to like each other. Can they set aside their differences to do what's best for the farm—and each other?

Join our CommunityREAD by reading and sharing this book, then enrich the experience with these questions and activities.

Discussion Questions

- The book is written in alternating chapters from Gabe's and Juniper's perspectives. Why do you think the author chose to use a dual point of view?
- Both Juniper and Gabe try to live up to family expectations. In what ways does this hold them back? In what ways does it guide their paths? How do the experiences of their parents influence their choices?
- The title of the book comes from a song by Chris Cornell. At what point do Juniper and Gabe come to their respective bends in the road?
- The book takes place on a farm in northern Minnesota, and the farm is a key element in the plot. How does the setting play a role in the story?
- Talk about the element of mental health in the book. Some ideas to start: Gabe's panic attacks and his resistance to the idea of seeing a therapist, his parents' history of addiction, Juniper's grief after her dad's death.

Activities

- Stone & Wool Farm has 5 “Rules”:
 1. Always tell the truth.
 2. Act as a steward for the animals, the earth, and our livelihood.
 3. Plant with hope, grow with heart, harvest with gratitude.
 4. Give, and it shall be given unto you. - Luke 6:38.
 5. Live in the sunshine, swim the sea, drink the wild air. - Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Create 5 “Rules” for the life you hope to live.

- Music plays an important role in the story. Create a playlist of songs that have played an important role in your life.

Scan the QR code for a Spotify playlist put together by the author of all the songs mentioned in the book, either outright or woven into the narrative.



These discussion questions and activities were provided by the author, Sara Biren.

Share what you did with the library!

Facebook ([facebook.com/FHCPL](https://www.facebook.com/FHCPL)) or Instagram (@FHCPLteens)

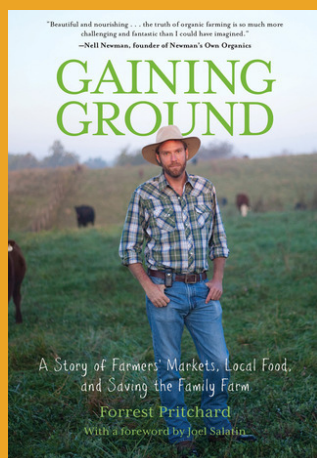


CommunityREAD

What is CommunityREAD?

CommunityREAD is a month-long community event that encourages reading and discussion. Each year, a different CommunityREAD book is chosen, along with a selection of YouthREAD books that explore similar topics and themes for younger readers.

The 2025 CommunityREAD book is *Gaining Ground: A Story Of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, And Saving The Family Farm* by Forrest Pritchard. The author will present at the Marathon Center for the Performing Arts on March 20, 2025.



2025 YouthREAD Titles

- Preschool: *Here Are the Seeds* by JaNay Brown-Wood
- Grades K-2: *Amara's Farm* by JaNay Brown-Wood
- Grades 3-5: *Stepping Stones* by Lucy Knisley
- Grades 6-8: *The Labors of Hercules Beal* by Gary D. Schmidt
- Grades 9-12: *Bend in the Road* by Sara Biren