

June 2018

Dear Middle School Students and Families,

The middle school teachers have chosen four books for students to select from for this summer's reading assignment. All four books have strong characters who find themselves in challenging situations across the globe from India in 1947 to Cuba in 1994. The themes focus on persecution because of ethnicity and religion. These themes tie directly into our Catholic Social Teaching of *Solidarity*: "The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict." (usccb.org) Throughout the year the middle school students focus on *Solidarity* through prayer and service to the community. When students return in the fall, they will be engaging in a multi-grade level book discussion about the book they chose to read.

Middle school students are expected to choose **at least one** of the selections below:

A Night Divided by Jennifer Neilsen: "Gr 5–8—It's August 13, 1961. Young Gerta wakes up to see that the Berlin Wall has been built overnight, dividing not only her city but her family. Her father and brother Dominic went looking for work on the west side of the city and now they cannot return home. Gerta, her mother, and brother Fritz are trapped in East Berlin. Years pass and resentment of Russian oppression and her family's separation make the now 12-year-old more than ready to take a dangerous chance when her father's smuggled clues encourage her to dig a tunnel to freedom...—Marybeth Kozikowski, Sachem Public Library, Holbrook, NY" (see Amazon.com for a more detailed description)

The Night Diary by Veera Hiranandan: "Gr 5–8—Nisha writes to her Muslim mother, who died giving birth to her and her twin brother, Amil, in a diary she receives on their 12th birthday. Through her diary entries, Nisha documents the changes brought about by India's independence from the British. Nisha and Amil live with their Hindu father, paternal grandmother, and the family's Muslim chef, Kazi, and they must flee their city after independence. —Hilary Witt, Sullivan University, Lexington, KY" (see Amazon.com for a more detailed description)

Refugee by Alan Grantz: "Gr 5–7—Grantz presents three interrelated stories about surviving. The tales center on children and their families who are driven from their homes by war, violence, and unrest. Josef must leave Nazi-controlled Germany with his mother, his sister, and his mentally broken father (just returned to them from Auschwitz). He sails across the Atlantic Ocean on the ill-fated St. Louis only to be turned away from Cuba and returned to Europe. Isabel and her family live in Cuba and escape on a makeshift raft during the exodus in the 1990s. They flee the

repression and poverty of Fidel Castro's rule. Mahmoud, a Syrian boy, and his family seek refuge from the ongoing war and violence in their home city of Aleppo. They board a dinghy in order to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece.—Patricia Feriano, Montgomery County Public Schools, MD” (see Amazon.com for a more detailed description)

The Marrow Thieves by Cherie Dimaline: “Gr. 7-12 Humanity has nearly destroyed its world through global warming, but now an even greater evil lurks. The indigenous people of North America are being hunted and harvested for their bone marrow, which carries the key to recovering something the rest of the population has lost: the ability to dream. In this dark world, Frenchie and his companions struggle to survive as they make their way up north to the old lands. For now, survival means staying hidden—but what they don't know is that one of them holds the secret to defeating the marrow thieves.

The middle school summer reading assignment is (check off after completed):

_____ Choose one of the four books described above. It is best if the book is purchased so students can refer to them during the book group discussions.

_____ Answer discussion questions prior to school beginning in the fall in preparation for the book group meeting when school resumes.

_____ Read at least two more books of your choice (**8th grade needs to read either Forge or Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson for one of their choices**)

_____ Fill out reading log and turn in September 4, 2018 (the first day of school) All three books read over the summer should be included on the reading log.

Please reach out to your homeroom teacher with any questions: Mrs. Schalk gschalk@ollseattle.org; Mrs. Hawk shawk@ollseattle.org; Mrs. Pierson epierson@ollseattle.org

Discussion Question

- Answers to these questions should be either typed or neatly hand-written.
- Each answer should be at least 2-3 sentences and include examples from the text to help you during the book group discussion. Page #'s are expected.
- Your paper should include a full heading.
- These will be due on September 4, 2018, the first day of school.

1. Describe in detail the setting/setting of the book. Make sure to use specific examples from the text to support your answer.

2. Describe the main character/characters in the book. Include age, gender, other characteristics that help describe your character. What are some words that describe your character? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

3. Describe the main problem or conflict in the book. Use examples from the text to support your answer.

4. Which character in the book would you most like to meet and why? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

5. What feeling did this book evoke (bring to mind) as you read it?

Name: _____

SUMMER READING LOG

	Book Title and Author	Total # of Pages	Date Started	Date Completed	Parent Initials	Comments About the Book
	<u>The Mark of the Thief</u> by Jennifer Nielsen	339	8/15/2018	8/22/2018		Loved the characters, surprising turn of events in the story. Can't wait to find out more about ancient Rome.
1						
2						
3						
4						