

# **Saints Peter and Paul School**

## **Summer Reading Program**

### **Entering Eighth Grade**

**Directions: Students are required to read 2 assigned books over the summer. One selection is fiction, and the other selection is non-fiction. The SSPP Summer reading selections are available at Barnes and Noble on Transit Road, Amazon.com or the public library. Students will complete a written assignment on both books in September.**

## **Fiction Selection:**

*The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton

*The Outsiders* is the story of Ponyboy Curtis—a boy growing up with his two older brothers since his parents passed away. Ponyboy's real family is the boys in his gang, the greasers. They grease their hair and wear leather jackets, but they are not the thugs society believes they are. Ponyboy gets A's in school and is in honors classes. The greasers, however, are in constant conflict with the socs—the preppy boys from the other side of town. A terrible confrontation between some of the boys leads to a heartbreaking end for both gangs. You will never forget this novel. If you have read it, you know it's worthy of a second read. Pay attention to all the symbols and the poetry in the book.

## **Non Fiction Selection:**

*Chasing Lincoln's Killer*, James L. Swanson

"This story is true. All the characters are real and were alive during the great manhunt of April 1865. Their words are authentic and come from original sources: letters, manuscripts, trial transcripts, newspapers, government reports, pamphlets, books and other documents. What happened in Washington, D.C., that spring, and in the swamps and rivers, forests and fields of Maryland and Virginia during the next twelve days, is far too incredible to have been made up." Thus begins this thriller that details the 12 day manhunt for John Wilkes Booth and his accomplices. Get all the details of this fascinating true-crime story just in time to study the civil war in Social Studies. If this story piques your interest, try *Assassin*, by Anna Myers, an historical fiction novel written from the point of view of Bella, Mary Todd Lincoln's young seamstress and John Wilkes Booth's accomplice.

## Recommendations: (Some of my favorites)

### ***Between Shades of Gray*, Ruta Sepetys**

15 year old Lina is sent by the Soviet's to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. Lina finds solace in her art, documenting these events by drawing. Risking everything, she imbeds clues in her drawings of their location and secretly passes them along, hoping her drawings will make their way to her father's prison camp. Amazing historical fiction; a story you will never forget. Try *Out of Easy*, too--an amazing historical fiction murder mystery by Sepetys.

### ***The President Has Been Shot!: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy*, James L. Swanson**

Once you finish *Chasing Lincoln's Killer*, try another great nonfiction novel by Swanson. He "will transport you back to one of the most shocking, sad, and terrifying events in American history."

### **Any *Sherlock Holmes* novels or short story collections, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

Why stop with *The Hound of the Baskervilles*? Try any of these Sherlock Holmes novels: *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of Four*, or *The Valley of Fear*. If you prefer short stories, try *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, *His Last Bow* or, if you're really ambitious, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes Short Stories*.

### ***The Scorpio Races*, Maggie Steivater**

This is a thriller along the lines of *The Hunger Games*. It happens at the start of every November: the Scorpio Races. Riders attempt to keep hold of their water horses long enough to make it to the finish line. Some riders live. Others die. At age nineteen, Sean Kendrick is the returning champion. He is a young man of few words, and if he has any fears, he keeps them buried deep, where no one else can see them. Puck Connolly is different. She never meant to ride in the Scorpio Races. But fate hasn't given her much of a choice. So she enters the competition - the first girl ever to do so. She is in no way prepared for what is going to happen. Fans of the *Shiver* series will be hooked.

### ***Wednesday Wars*, Gary Schmitt**

.A funny, smart book about 7<sup>th</sup> grader Holling Hoodhood who is relegated to Shakespeare lessons with his English teacher every Wednesday while his classmates are dismissed early for Religious Instruction. Little does Holling know his teacher actually doesn't hate him, he actually gets Shakespeare, he can defeat the class bully and he *will* survive yellow tights. This story is set in 1968 as the Vietnam war rages on, touching the lives of teachers, neighbors and his own family.

### ***If You Come Softly*, Jacqueline Woodson**

Jeremiah (Miah) who is black, and Elisha (Ellie) who is white, meet during their first year at an exclusive New York prep school and fall in love. Both teens are dealing with difficult family situations, and they must also deal with the subtle and not-so-subtle bigotry that they are subject to as a mixed-race couple. Miah and Ellie work through their problems both individually and together as their friendship blossoms. This is a tragic love story with an important social message as well. It is told through alternating voices, Ellie's in the first person and Miah's in the third.

### ***The Empty Mirror*, James Lincoln Collier**

If you liked *Things Not Seen* and *My Brother Sam is Dead*, then look no further. This novel combines historical fiction and fantasy with suspenseful results. Nick Hodges, a 13-year-old orphan with the reputation of being a troublemaker, lives with his Uncle in a New England village in 1931. His parents both died in the influenza epidemic of 1918, which the villagers are reluctant to talk about.

The story opens with Nick's waking from a disturbing dream in which he feels he has lost something. Soon he is stunned to find that he has no reflection. He continues to be seen at destructive incidents that increase in their severity. The townspeople are ready to hang Nick for murder or send him to a mental institution when he continues to insist that he is innocent. A gravestone provides the clues in this fast paced, spooky thriller.

***Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life, Wendy Mass***

The summer he turns 13, Jeremy receives a mysterious box with the engraved words "the meaning of life: for Jeremy Fink on his thirteenth birthday." The box was left by his father, who has been dead for five years. It has four locks, but Jeremy finds no keys to open them. As Jeremy and his best friend, Lizzy, embark on a quest to find the keys, they travel across Manhattan from flea markets to fancy office buildings and museums, searching not only for keys but also insights into science, religion, art, friendship, and family.

***The Book Thief, Markus Zusak***

This novel is in my top 5 all time favorites. The characters will stick with you forever. Death is the narrator of this story about Liesel Meminger, a foster child living in Germany during the Holocaust. With the help of her foster family, Liesel learns to read, love books that the Nazi's burn and keep deadly secrets. You will never forget Liesel or her best friend Rudy as they try to maintain a normal childhood in the midst of hatred, violence and war. This is the perfect novel for long summer days.

***A Separate Peace, John Knowles***

Set at a boys' boarding school at the outset of WWII, this novel tells the story of a boy's friendship with a larger-than-life classmate. The students have one final year of fun and innocence as they stare down the impending draft to serve in WWII. One irreversible choice changes their lives forever.

**If you liked *A Long Walk to Water* try...**

***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope, Bryan Mealer***

"William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science was mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* is a remarkable true story about human inventiveness and its power to overcome crippling adversity".

**Or**

***Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe***

This novel is about pre-colonial life in Africa and the tragedies caused by Europe's colonial presence. The story follows the rise and fall of a Nigerian tribal warrior as he clashes with the British forces that infiltrate his village.

**For more recommendations and peer book reviews try the following great websites:**

<http://www.yabookscentral.com/>

<http://www.readergirlz.com/>

<http://www.guysread.com/>

<http://www.teenreads.com/>