



Saint Sebastian School
"commitment to excellence"

Dear Parents,

As the summer draws near, the Language Arts Department of St. Sebastian School extends to you and your children our best wishes for a relaxing and enjoyable vacation. We hope, that as you plan your time together, you also look forward to enjoying the pleasures and adventures that reading good books can offer. We believe that summer reading should be an enjoyable pastime. We also believe that reading can expand one's personal interests. As you review the brief descriptions for each title contained in this booklet, we hope that the images, emotions, and ideas conveyed in these books will engage your middle schooler's heart as well as his/her head!

All students entering Grades 6, 7, and 8 are expected to read at least three books during the summer. We know that middle school is a time of choice and responsibility for those choices. Therefore, students should make good decisions about what is "just right" for them to read, both in interest and difficulty level. This year, we are not requiring all students to read any one title. We really want to honor responsible decision-making.

It is also expected that all titles chosen are new for the reader, that is, have not been read independently or as part of in-school reading from previous grades. We are asking the students to complete two assignments for each book while they are reading. All students will be required to complete a vocabulary log of words that they may not know. They will be asked to write down the word, define it using context clues, define using a dictionary and use it in a sentence. Students entering sixth grade will be required to make a story map for each book read. Students entering seventh or eighth grade will be required to complete a plot line. Studies show that if you are reading actively students will benefit by having a higher level of vocabulary and will work on comprehension strategies. It is our belief that the students will benefit considerably by having their Reading and English teachers process the readings when the students return to school in August. Assignments will be based on the books read.

We look forward to beginning the new school year by discussing the books your children will read this summer. We encourage you to read along with your children and enjoy the rewarding conversations that usually follow from reading a good book.

Sincerely,

Ms. Sally Weakland
7th and 8th Grade Language Arts Teacher

Mr. Michael McDonald
6th Grade Language Arts Teacher

Summer Reading 2010
Saint Sebastian School
Language Arts Department
Grade 7

You must select ONE of the following quest books to read. They are listed from easiest to most difficult and are either fantasy or science fiction (we will be covering this genre early in the school year. As you read the book, pay particular attention to the parallel quests—the outward journey to achieve a goal and the internal journey of self discovery that the character undergoes. All books have sequels which you may read for additional summer reading requirements if you enjoy the first book.

*The Book of Three Lloyd Alexander

Set in the mythical land of Prydian, this book draws together the elements of the hero's journey from boy to courageous young man. Taran grumbles with frustration at home; he yearns to go into battle like his hero, Prince Gwydion. Before the story is over, he has met his hero and fought the evil leader who threatens the peace of Prydian. First in the Prydain Series.

*A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

In this classic children's novel, outsiders Meg Murray and her brother Charles Wallace, accompanied by the basketball star Calvin O'Keefe, embark upon a journey through the galaxy in an effort to save their father—and the universe. First in a series.

Maximum Ride by James Patterson.

Genetically altered teens struggle against scientist who are trying to recapture them. In this action packed adventure the reader follows them across the country in an effort to rescue one of the flock. First in the series.

Eragon by Christopher Paolini (or *Eldest*, *Brisingsr*).

In this fantasy novel, the young author creates a vivid world of action and adventure, using rich vocabulary and description. In the novel, Eragon sets out on a quest to avenge his uncle's death and to train his newly hatched dragon, encountering unexpected adventures and allies along the way. His quest continues in *Eldest and Brisingsr*.

The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien (The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, or The Return of the King)

Tolkien creates a fantasy world blending detailed description, development of character, and suspense. In this fantasy classic, the humble hobbits find themselves at the center of a struggle for control of the kingdom as they begin a dangerous journey to destroy a magic ring. Part 1 of a trilogy.

If you enjoy these books, you may read the sequels. Otherwise, select any two books from the following list:

realistic fiction

Stand Tall Joan Bauer

Tree, a six-foot-three-inch seventh grader, copes with his parents' divorce and his failure as an athlete by helping his grandfather, a Vietnam vet and recent amputee, and Sophie, a new girl in school.

* indicates a book that is appropriate for students who receive support in reading instruction
+indicates a classic

Flush Carl Hiassen

Noah and his sister try to stop the sabotage of Florida's natural resources. This author of Hoot once again has an entertaining story with a serious message about conservation and greed.

Al Capone Does My Shirts Gennifer Choldenko

In this appealing novel set in 1935, 12-year-old Moose Flanagan and his family move from Santa Monica to Alcatraz Island where his father gets a job as an electrician at the prison and his mother hopes to send his autistic older sister to a special school in San Francisco. When Natalie is rejected by the school, Moose is unable to play baseball because he must take care of her, and her behavior sometimes lands him in hot water.. Family dilemmas are at the center of the story, but history and setting--including plenty of references to the prison's most infamous inmate, mob boss Al Capone--play an important part, too. (from School Library Journal 2005 Newbery Honor Book)

Getting Near to Baby Audrey Coulombis

This Newbery Honor book of 2000 tells the story of loss, family love, and new beginnings with a dollop of humor. While their mother is trying to cope with the death of their baby sister, 13-year-old Willa Jo and eight-year-old Little Sister are spending a few weeks with Aunt Patty and Uncle Hob.(School Library Journal)

The Wanderer Sharon Creech

Thirteen year old Sophie, who is passionate about sailing, talks her way onto her uncle's sailboat as he, his two brothers, and a couple of nephews prepare to sail across the Atlantic. Although she is brave and resourceful, Sophie is haunted by fears.

Just Ask Iris Lucy Frank

When seventh grader Iris arrives at her new home in a run-down New York City apartment building, she is determined to earn money and spend as much time outside the stuffy building as possible. But, as she begins her errand running business, she meets her neighbors and helps them solve problems. Good for girls, not a boy book

Pictures of Hollis Wood Patricia Giff

Having run away from a family that offered her a home, troubled 12-year-old orphan Hollis Wood is not about to let Social Services separate her from the elderly artist she has been living with.

Stargirl Jerry Spinelli

An amazing story about being different in high school.

fantasy/ science fiction/ suspense

Fairest Gail Carson Levine

In a sophisticated, richly drawn world of fairy tale music and magic, Asa, an innkeeper's daughter with a beautiful voice, is blackmailed by a treacherous queen. Family secrets and Asa's artistic growth add to the dramatic politics and thrilling romance. (Booklist – Editor's Choice List - Youth Fiction)

Voyage of the Arctic Tern Hugh Montgomery

A thrilling tale of voyages, treachery, honor, secrecy, and royal courts. Bruno, a

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promising young man who betrayed his village, is condemned to live on and on and on until he completes three acts of penance: save a life, rescue someone betrayed, and give away some great wealth to help the local people. These tasks take him through the centuries. (summary from Eight Cousins Newsletter) Good if you like poetry!

The Divide by Elizabeth Kay

While spending his vacation in Costa Rica, Felix stumbles into The Divide, a magical world where mythical creatures are real and human beings are only a legend. With the help of Betony, a tangle girl, he must find a way to cure his disease while staying alive while encountering creatures he never knew existed.

Gregor the Overlander by Susan Collins (first in series)

When Gregor and his sister Boots fall through a hole in the laundry room, he encounters an underground world where people ride bats and battle huge rats. He begins a quest to find his missing father.

The Ranger's Apprentice: The Ruins of Gorlan by John Flanagan

Will, an orphan, is assigned to train with the mysterious and mistrusted ranger. He soon learns that the rangers are central to the defense of the kingdom and even an apprentice has an important role to play. (You may also read the sequels, although most story arcs cover more than one book: Books 2-4, and books 5-6 tell complete stories).

*Cross My Heart and Hope to Spy (or sequels) by Ally Carter

This novel, about a school for spies in training, follows the antics of Cammie and her friends as they learn how to put their spy training to use as a teenage girl.

*Stormbreaker by Anthony Horowitz

In this novel, the teenage Alex Ryder discovers that his boring uncle was actually a super spy. Alex soon gets pulled into a life of espionage himself. Although an easier book, this is a nice example of suspense writing for boys, so I am permitting it this year.

*Black Beauty by Anna Sewell

This classic animal novel follows the life of Black Beauty as from a foal to old age. Present from the perspective of the horse, this imaginative novel is a classic for animal lovers. It is on the easier side, but I permit it because if you love animals and have not read it, it is a must read.

Other acceptable animal books: +The Black Stallion by Walter Farley which follows the relationship between a wild stallion and the boy shipwrecked with him.

+National Velvet by Enid Bagnold

14-year old Velvet Brown is inspired by her love of horses, gets the crazy idea to enter a horse in the National Hunt, even though she is too young and a girl. Follow her as she chases this impossible dream.

historical fiction

*True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle Avi

This suspenseful story set on the high seas features an unusual heroine – a 13-year-old girl sailing to America in the mid-nineteenth century with a cutthroat captain and a mutinous crew.

Nory Ryan's Song Patricia Reilly Giff

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+indicates a classic

Nory Ryan tells the story of a few weeks in her life during the potato blight in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century, when the landlord evicts his tenants, taking their remaining livestock and fishing boats. Nory's courage and self-reliance are all her family has to survive.

The Truth about Sparrows Marian Hale

Sadie's father is a terrific mechanic and a creative carpenter who can do just about anything except make a living in Dust Bowl Missouri. Resentful about leaving her home, her friend Wilma, and the beautiful table he made that eventually was to have been hers, the 12-year-old is further angered when strangers stare at her dad's polio-withered legs. Relocating to coastal Texas where the fishing industry offers opportunity, the family obtains a one-room tar-paper shack. Promised letters from Wilma fail to arrive, a homeless man living in a cardboard box disappears, and a snobbish town girl constantly humiliates Sadie, causing her to snap when the overly talkative Dollie, with whom she has a budding friendship, tries to console her. The loss of this relationship and a crisis involving the newborn sister Sadie helps deliver cause her to reevaluate what is important. (from School Library Journal)

Black Storm Comin' Diane Lee Wilson

This rip-roaring Wild West adventure begins, "On the morning of September 16, 1860, my pa shot me." That is only the first of many misadventures on an ill-fated wagon trip from Missouri to Sacramento.

+Ann of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery

In this story, a lonely orphan who finds wonder in the world around her brings life to the lonely siblings who adopt her. In her disaster filled efforts, she tries to find a place to call home. Set in the late 1800s in Canada. First in a series.

*My Name is America: Scott Pendleton by Walter Dean Myers

In this novel, we follow Scott Pendleton through his involvement in D-Day and the battles that follow.

*Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis

Set shortly before the Civil War, this novel follows the life of Elijah, the first free-born child in the Buxton Community, which was created by escaped slaves. Elijah begins to understand the struggles of those who risked everything to escape from slavery.

+The Prisoner of Zenda by Anthony Hope

In this novel of mistaken identity, Rudolf Rassendyll, who looks exactly like his cousin the king, takes his place when the kingdom is threatened.

You may not read any books you have already read. You may read sequels to novels on the list or other books by the same author. If you have questions about a book selection, you can e-mail me at : weaklands@stsebastian.org

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**Summer Reading 2010
Saint Sebastian School
Language Arts Department
Grade 8**

Required Text:

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

In this classic novel, Ponyboy must struggle to define himself in a world separated by gangs and social class. In addition to the struggles between the Greasers (Pony's group) and the Socs (the rival, rich gang), Pony struggles to find his place in his own family, in the gang, and in school. Consider the important lessons that Ponyboy and Johnny learn and what the book teaches about the tension between being true to your social group and being true to yourself. You will be tested on this in August.

realistic fiction

Hope Was Here Joan Bauer

Ever since her mother left, Hope has, with her comfort-food-cooking aunt Addie, been serving up the best in diner food from Pensacola, Florida to NYC. Moving has been tough, so it comes as a surprise to 16-year-old Hope, that rural Wisconsin, where she and her aunt are now settled, offers more excitement, friendship, and even romance (for both Hope and Addie) than the big city. (Booklist)

Ruby Holler Sharon Creech

Having suffered through a string of appalling foster homes, 13-year-old orphans and twins, Dallas and Florida, have pretty much given up on ever finding a happy home, until an eccentric older couple enters their lives. (from amazon.com)

No More Dead Dogs Gordon Korman

For his detention, an eighth grade football hero is sentenced to attend rehearsals of the school play, where, in spite of himself, he gets carried away.

Heat Mike Lupica

Michael Arroyo is a 12-year-old Cuban American who lives in the shadow of Yankee Stadium and has big baseball dreams himself.

So Be It Sarah Weeks

This is a lovely story of the life of 13-year-old Heidi and her developmentally disabled mother who speaks only 23 words.

Pigman Paul Zindel

Two lonely high schoolers form a strange and ultimately joyful relationship with a lonely old man.

historical fiction:

+Little Woman by Louisa May Alcott.

Sisters grow up during the Civil War, learning to work together as they grow from children to adults.

+The Last of the Mohicans by James Fenimore Cooper.

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Set during the French and Indian War in pre Revolutionary America, this novel follows the tracker Hawkeye and his Indian friends as they attempt to rescue a captured settler. Advanced vocabulary makes this action packed book a challenge.

+ A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens.

Set during the reign of terror, this challenging novel follows an attempt to rescue individuals from certain death, at times at great personal sacrifice. Other books by Dickens also acceptable.

+Mr. Midshipman Hornblower by C.S. Forester.

In this coming of age classic, a young boy takes a position as midshipman on a British frigate. As he learns his trade, he shows courage and determination in the face of war. The novel traces different adventures he experiences as a midshipman.

+Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery.

In this novel set in 1800s in Canada, an accident prone orphan comes to live with two elderly siblings, causing much chaos as she learns to fit in and teaches them to love. (Others in series)

Fireflies in December by Jennifer Erin Valent

Set in the South during the 1930s, Jessilyn Lassiter and her family are forced to deal with racism when the family adopts the orphaned daughter of an African American family. Despite the opposition of the town, the family follows their faith rather than the criticism of society or the threats of the Klan. (Sequel: Cottonwood Whispers continues the Lassiter story)

*My Name is America: The Journal of Biddy Owens by Walter Dean Myers

In this novel, Biddy Owens is part of one of the Negro baseball teams during the final season. The book explores baseball and racism.

Rifles for Watie by Harold Keith

This is a great novel for history lovers. It follows the activities of a young soldier in the Civil War as he struggles to face danger. The book also provides a nice overview of the war in the Territories and the views of both Northern and Southerners.

Hattie Big Sky by Kirby Larson

In this frontier novel, a young team sets off alone to homestead land in Montana. She struggles to overcome nature and opposition to make a place of her own in a harsh world.

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Sadie's father is a terrific mechanic and a creative carpenter who can do just about anything except make a living in Dust Bowl Missouri. Resentful about leaving her home, her friend Wilma, and the beautiful table he made that eventually was to have been hers, the 12-year-old is further angered when strangers stare at her dad's polio-withered legs. Relocating to coastal Texas where the fishing industry offers opportunity, the family obtains a one-room tar-paper shack. Promised letters from Wilma fail to arrive, a homeless man living in a cardboard box disappears, and a snobbish town girl constantly humiliates Sadie, causing her to snap when the overly talkative Dollie, with whom she has a budding friendship, tries to console her. The loss of this relationship and a crisis involving the newborn sister Sadie helps deliver cause her to reevaluate what is important. (from School Library Journal)

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The Dark is Rising by Susan Collins (and other books in the series)

Follow Will Stanton as he realizes that he has a special task to oppose the forces of evil.

Witch & Wizard by James Patterson

In this sci-fi novel, Whit and Wisty, two seemingly normal high school students, are arrested as a threat to society and accused of being a witch and wizard. They must find out the truth while staying alive. (story is a cliff-hanger)

Max by James Patterson and Fang by James Patterson

Follow the lives of the flock introduced in Maximum Ride Series as they become older and more responsible. If you have not read the first books of the series, you may read them also.

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