



**MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**2023 SUMMER READING**

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# FPD SUMMER READING

## THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

God has given us language as a means of learning about creation, and a way to communicate with and about God. God has chosen to communicate to us in writing through the Bible. Through written text, we learn empathy for the world and enjoy vicarious experiences by exercising our God-given imagination.

We expect all FPD students to develop the ability to learn from written text as well as find written genres they enjoy. Our reading program will help equip the student to develop cognitively, communicate with and about God, care for and appropriately use the resources around us, and act redemptively in our world. To this end, we encourage our students to read and to discuss the texts that are read. Research has shown consistent connections between proficiency with reading comprehension and certain activities, for example:

- The availability of reading material in the home.
- Parental modeling of good reading habits.
- Parental help with monitoring homework and television/tablet viewing.
- Reading and/or being read to regularly for enjoyment.
- Discussing what you have read with someone or otherwise responding to what you have read.

Our summer reading program at FPD is designed to encourage students to read appropriate selections that can challenge and improve their reading comprehension. We have also incorporated a great degree of choice (both Christian and appropriate secular) while still requiring students to respond to what they read. This summer we are also including faculty reads to generate discussion when school begins next fall. We hope each student will find these reading assignments will enhance their summer experience.

## SUMMER READING OVERVIEW

Our *Summer Reading Program* is designed to provide a great degree of choice for the student, encourage a variety of selected texts and responses to the reading, and inspire spreading the reading over the summer. Each middle school student will **read two (2) books**.

SIXTH GRADE: **Book One:** Faculty selection **Book Two:** *Among the Hidden*

SEVENTH GRADE: **Book One:** Faculty selection **Book Two:** *My Name is Tani*

EIGHTH GRADE: **Book One:** Faculty selection **Book Two:** *The Outsiders*

### Faculty selection

- In the spring, students select a book from the Faculty Selection List to read over the summer. The students will have the opportunity to go to the media center with their English teacher to peruse the books on the list and make their choice. They will sign up for the book at that time.
- **New MS students** will have a faculty selection chosen for them by the Middle School Principal.
- Our recommendation is that students read this book first.
- Students will read this book and meet at the beginning of the school year to participate in a small group discussion about the book led by a faculty or staff member.
- No separate assignment is required...simply be ready to discuss!

### English class selection

- Our recommendation is that students read this book later in the summer as it will be studied as the first unit in their English classes.
- See page 9 for more information.

## How are Reading Selections Made?

From the time of the Reformation, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on literacy for all people. The reformers believed that everyone should be able to read the scripture, and thus understand and teach others. They believed that all students needed to read and study literature and history so that they “hear of the doings and sayings of the entire world, and how things went with various cities, kingdoms, princes, men, and women, etc. They could in a short time set before themselves in a mirror the character, life, counsels, and purposes—successful and unsuccessful—of the whole world from the beginning; on the basis of which they could then draw the proper inferences and in the fear of God take their own place in the stream of human events” (Martin Luther).

Clearly, reading is an important part of our lives. It is important in a practical everyday sense but also in a cultural sense. We have the responsibility of caring for creation and redeeming our culture (Genesis 1:26-31). God has chosen to communicate to us through the written word in the Bible. God has also chosen to give us written communication by which we pass down history, communicate arguments and worldviews, and express our humanity creatively and imaginatively. There is no better way to understand what someone believes than by studying what they have written.

In recent years, educators have been concerned that reading is declining in our society. In response, they have re-emphasized reading comprehension in our schools and expectations of strong reading comprehension in higher education. There are a variety of strategies for helping students develop strong reading comprehension skills. However, ultimately all include (1) regularly working through appropriately challenging texts and (2) discussing, thinking about, and writing about what you read. The path to strong reading comprehension, cultural literacy, understanding and impacting our world, and, yes, even strong verbal SAT scores include becoming a strong reader who has experienced a variety of literature.

Keeping these ideas and the goal of developing strong widely read students, the faculty of FPD put a significant amount of work into choosing reading selections. Most often the process begins with the classroom teacher. The teacher makes selections in consultation with his or her department that are appropriate for the level of students and the curriculum concerns being addressed. As Curriculum Director, I work with departments when questions arise or if teachers desire help finding the right choice. As

I look over the big picture of the curriculum, I make sure we do not have duplications, that we are not missing a particular genre, etc. As we look at required reading selections, we take the following concerns into consideration (1) relevance to the curriculum, (2) importance or cultural significance, (3) readability, (4) objectionable content, and what I call (5) the big picture.

### RELEVANCE TO CURRICULUM

Our students should work through a *comprehensive variety* of literature including different time periods, genres, author backgrounds, purposes, places of origin, worldviews, and traditions. Understanding that “all truth is God’s truth” and thus that we ultimately deal with one integrated curriculum, we often make *interdisciplinary selections*. In elementary school, for example, we often select literature related to topics in science or regions the students are studying in geography. We may select books because of the *issues raised*. *Frankenstein*, for example, is an excellent vehicle for raising current biological science issues such as cloning and stem cell research. In addition, we always point back to our Christian Worldview in what we read. We ask the question, “how does the book relate to my Christian worldview of Creation, Fall, Redemption, Hope.”

### CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

We read so that we might understand God and His works, ourselves and our relationship and responsibilities to God and our fellow men, and our culture and world around us. Understanding our culture involves not only experiential participation in the current but also knowledge of the past. *Recognized classics* in literature help us to see where our culture has come from and why we are where we are today. Classics give us a rich vocabulary of images and common knowledge that helps us communicate vivid ideas. Consider ideas like an Achilles’ heel, Pandora’s box, Icarus flying too high, Sisyphus rolling his stone to the top of the hill for eternity, the tortoise and the hare, or David and Goliath. Ideas from classical literature and the Bible find their way regularly into our common discourse.

Studying *works of modern importance* help us to learn to understand and engage our culture. Most of our students will attend secular universities and have to encounter texts that are sometimes openly and often subtly hostile to the Christian faith. The best way to learn to recognize and confront these ideas is with the help of a competent Christian parent/guardian, pastor, mentor, or teacher. Thus, particularly in the junior and senior years, our students read important contemporary works.

## READABILITY

Reading selections should also be on an appropriate reading level. There are a number of readability measures that take into account various characteristics including grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and content. According to standardized measures, a large majority of our students read at least two grades above grade level. With few exceptions, required reading selections are no more than two grade levels above the grade the selections are assigned for. Sometimes books with a lower readability score are used when the content is important for a particular class. At other times, books with a readability score for a particular grade will not be used because of content deemed inappropriate for that grade. A good example is Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* which has a readability score around the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level when content is not taken into account. Content would make this book more appropriate for older students. A number of resources exist to verify the appropriateness of reading selections for particular grade levels. These resources include readability rating programs like Accelerated Reader and widely used comprehensive programs like Core Knowledge, Mortimer Adler's *Paideia Proposal*, and various home school and classical school programs. The National Endowment for the Humanities surveyed public and private schools nationwide and published a list of the most commonly assigned reading selections for each grade level. The College Board Advanced Placement English reading list is also an important resource. We look at a range of sources to make sure each selection has an appropriate level of challenge for the students.

## OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT

Our students need to be prepared to engage our culture in redemptive ways. They need to be able to recognize and challenge ideas raised up against their faith (II Corinthians 10:4, 5). The best way to learn to confront these situations is to address them with a competent Christian parent/guardian, pastor, mentor, or teacher. We do have students in the upper grades read texts that may even be opposed to a Christian world-and-life view. We understand the movement in our culture against our faith. Furthermore, we understand that for many secular writers to be published, they must attempt to appeal to all beliefs and agendas. However, this does not mean any text would be open for our use in the classroom or in the summer. **The reading selection should not contain objectionable material that is present for no other purpose than for its own agenda. Further, the material should not be excessively explicit. This is where we need your support! We understand and recognize that all parents/guardians may have a different definition of what is "objectionable material" or reading that is "excessively**

explicit.” As parents/guardians, you know the maturity level of your child. Thus, we ask that you partner with us to determine what is best for your specific child. We humbly ask that you consider reading the Faculty Selection text first or, at a minimum, researching the book through one or all of the following: [Common Sense Media](#), [Focus on the Family's Plugged In](#), [Novelist Plus](#), [Redeemed Reader](#).

Generally, the teacher will be aware of any objectionable material before assigning the text, will have an explicit purpose and set of objectives for the text, and have a plan for helping students deal with any objectionable material through the view of a Christian worldview.


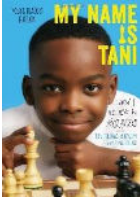
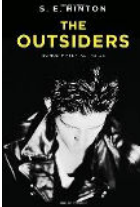
## THE BIG PICTURE

In addition to these considerations, we place reading assignments in the context of the big picture. The length and difficulty of reading assignments are weighed against the student’s overall workload. For example, our outside reading requirements in social studies, science, and mathematics are spread over different quarters. Students need to work through books that are challenging because of their reading level, the issues raised in the content, and at times the length of the book. We also understand students should read for enjoyment as well. We choose some selections with this in mind and are currently working to incorporate more self-selection during the school year and especially during the summer.



## ENGLISH CLASS REQUIRED BOOK

The required book for each English class will be studied in class at the beginning of the school year. Each teacher will assess student comprehension with quiz, test, and/or a writing assignment.

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|    | <p><b>Sixth grade</b><br/> <i>Among the Hidden</i><br/>         Margaret Peterson Haddix<br/>         In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke, an illegal third child, has lived all his twelve years in isolation and fear on his family's farm.</p>   |
|    | <p><b>Seventh Grade</b><br/> <i>My Name is Tani, Young Reader's Edition*</i><br/>         Adewumi, Tanitolutoluwa<br/>         Tani Adewumi won the 2019 New York State Chess Championship after playing the game for only a year. His family, fleeing Boko Haram's reign of terror in Nigeria, came to the United States and when Tani began attending school, he joined the chess program.</p> |
|  | <p><b>Eighth Grade</b><br/> <i>The Outsiders</i><br/>         Hinton, S.E.<br/>         Rivalry between rich and poor gangs in 1960s Oklahoma leads to the deaths of three teenagers and intense soul-searching for one of the kids involved, a sensitive 14-year-old writer named Ponyboy.</p>  |

**FPD HONOR CODE PLEDGE**

*I pledge to abide by the FPD Honor Code and, accordingly, not to lie, cheat or steal. I agree to do whatever possible to discourage lying, cheating and stealing around me. I pledge to maintain strict confidentiality about honor offenses. I pledge, "On my honor I have neither offered nor received help on this work, and I will not discuss this work with anyone."*

**SUMMER READING PLEDGE**

*I have chosen a book for my Faculty Selection reading that I have not read before May of this year or seen the movie.*

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN DAY SCHOOL**

5671 Calvin Drive  
Macon, GA 31210

Phone: 478-477-6505  
[www.fpdmacon.org](http://www.fpdmacon.org)

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