8th Grade Summer Reading:
Religion + Literature

<u>Required Religion Reading</u>: *Discernment of Spirits for Beginners* by Dan Burke and Mary Ruth Hackett

Chapter 1: The Spiritual Battle

1. How has recognizing that life includes a spiritual battle changed the way you view daily decisions and temptations?
2. What are some practical ways you can become more attentive to God's guidance in your everyday life?

Chapter 2: Knowing the Enemy

1. What are some common lies or distractions that pull you away from God?
2. How can you better identify the difference between temptation and genuine guidance from God?

Chapter 3: Knowing Yourself

1. What patterns do you notice in your thoughts, emotions, or behaviors that affect your relationship with God?
2. How can greater self-awareness help you discern God's will more clearly?

Chapter 4: Understanding Feelings and Spiritual Movements

1. When have your emotions helped you grow closer to God, and when have they led you astray?
2. How can faith, hope, and love serve as a test for evaluating your thoughts and feelings?

Chapter 5: Staying Committed to the Good

1. What spiritual practices help you remain faithful during times of temptation or discouragement?
2. How can you strengthen your resolve to continue doing good when it feels difficult or unrewarding?

Chapter 6: What to Do When You're Stuck

1. How do you typically respond when you experience spiritual dryness, confusion, or discouragement?
2. Which tools discussed in the book (prayer, Scripture, the Examen, the Sacraments, etc.) could help you move forward when you feel stuck?

Chapter 7: You Are Not Alone

1. How does knowing that God, the saints, and the Church support you in your spiritual journey affect your confidence?
2. What steps can you take to build a stronger support system for your spiritual growth?

BONUS Religion Reading

- *In the Shadows of Rome*: 6-book series (Ignatius link here)
- *The Winged Watchman* by Hilda Van Stockum (Ignatius Press link here)
- *The Shadow of His Wings: A Graphic Biography of Fr. Gereon Goldmann* (Ignatius Press link here)

Required Literature reading: *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch

The first quarter theme in Literature is "Rites of Passage": What are some milestones on the path of growing up? The following titles provide students with another perspective on the topic of rites of passage, touching on many of the ideas found within the first quarter theme.

The Last Lecture is a touching and poignant memoir and biography by Pausch, who narrates his last days after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. This is an uplifting and motivating story of a common man who suddenly finds that his living days are now numbered.

Assignment: While reading The Last Lecture, reflect on the lessons learned from Pausch's inspiring final lecture. Your responses should be typed and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

All projects must include:

1. **Cover page**: Include title, your name, and a sketch of your dream wall. It should include at least 5 things that matter to you. (You will be graded on effort and creativity. Some of us are artistically challenged; you will not be marked down for lack of artistic talent.)
2. On the **first page** (after the cover) of your project, explain each of the objects on your wall and their significance to you. (Note: Randy Rausch discusses his dream wall in Chapter 5.)
3. **"Your choice" questions**: Choose **5** of the questions to answer. They must be at least 1⁄2 page each (12-point Times New Roman Font Double Spaced). You may include artwork.
4. **Life list:** Make a list of at least 10 items that you hope to accomplish in your life. You may include artwork.

"Your Choice Questions": Choose 5 of the following to answer. Must be at least 1⁄2 page each in 12-point Times New Roman Font Double Spaced. You also may include artwork.

1. Write about one of your goals in life that seems impossible.
2. Explain one piece of valuable advice you have received from your parents.
3. "It [football] helped make me who I am today." (Page 35) – What is the "it" in your life. Describe your "IT."
   a. What is the history of "it'? How long has "it" been in your life? How was "it" introduced?
   b. Describe your commitment to "it"? How does "it" impact your life?
   c. What are the sacrifices you have made for "it"? What rewards have you received from "it"?
4. "Giving kids self-esteem. It's not something you can give. It's something they have to build... He knew there was only one way to teach kids how to develop it: You give them something they can't do, they work hard until they find they can do it, and you just keep repeating the process... He made me realize that if I work hard enough, there will be things I can do tomorrow that I can't do today." (Page 37) Describe something in your life that raised your self-esteem because you could not do it, but with hard work you accomplished it.
5. "So that was my setback. But I kept my mantra in mind: The brick walls are there for a reason. They're not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something." (Page 51-52) Describe a brick wall you encountered and the steps you took to show how badly you wanted something.

6. “Wow, this is the epitome of a person appreciating this day and this moment.” (Page 64) Identify a person who you know who “appreciates” life the most and explain why.
7. “Like many people, I had strengths that were also flaws.” (Page 67) Do a little self-reflection and evaluate yourself analyzing a strength that also might be considered a weakness. What is your greatest weakness?
8. “Go on those trips you’ve always wanted to take.” Where is someplace you have always wanted to visit and hope to get there someday? (Include picture)
9. “I’m a scientist who sees inspiration as that ultimate tool for doing good.... When you’re putting people on the moon; you’re inspiring all of us to achieve the maximum human potential, which is how the greatest problems will be solved.” (Page 132-133) What inspires you? What is your inspiration?
10. “Too many people go through life complaining about their problems...Complaining does not work as a strategy. We all have finite time and energy. Any time we spend whining is unlikely to help us achieve our goals. And it won’t make us happier.” (Page 138-139) Evaluate your level of complaining. Do you complain often or do you look on the bright side? What do you complain about? Do you think if you complain less you would be happier?
11. “Being able to work well in a group is a vital and necessary skill in both the work world and in families. As a way to teach this, I’d always put my students into teams to work on projects.” (Page 142) How well do you work with others? Do you enjoy group work? Why or why not?
12. “Experience is what you get when you don’t get what you want. And experience is often the most valuable thing you have to offer.” (Page 149) Describe an experience where you gained experience. What was the event and the lesson that was learned?
13. “There are a few key moments in anyone’s life.” (Page 173) Select a one key moment from your life and describe the moment and the significance in your life.
14. Okay. So, which one are you: a Tigger or Eeyore? And why? If you’d like to be more of a Tigger, how might you go about that?

Assignments will be collected on the first day of school and will count as a test grade.

Further reading recommendations can be found at https://goodbooksforcatholickids.com/. All books can be found at a reasonable rate at Thriftbooks.com and other online retailers. *Assignments will be collected on the first day of school and will each count as a test grade*.