

***Finding Chika* - Theology Summer Reading Project
St. John Paul II School, High School Division**



Finding Chika tells a beautiful but tragic story. It's the true story of a little girl born into abject poverty who is adopted into a family in the United States. Some students will be deeply moved by this book and may need support as they read it. It might be a good opportunity for an all family read–reading together and discussing it as you go.

All students will be required to complete the following assignment and hand it into their Theology teachers on the first day of classes.

Essay response: In a well written two-page essay, respond to the following prompt.

Kate Bowler interviewed Mitch Albom on her podcast. Mitch is the author of *Finding Chika: a little girl, an earthquake, and the making of a family*. In this interview, he shares a thought on one of his other books, *The Stranger in the Lifeboat*:

“And the answer is, why is it that when people die on earth human beings say, why did God have to take them? Maybe a better question would be why did God give them to us? You know, what do we do to warrant or merit their sweetness, their love, their attention?”

Now that you know a little about Chika, think about her contributions to the life of Mitch and Janine. What do you think was God's purpose in placing Chika in the lives of Mitch and Janine? What gifts did she bring to their lives? How were they all changed by the *sweetness, love and attention* of their family? How are Mitch and Janine's lives different because they spent time with this little girl? Also, how have you been changed by reading this book? What do you know now that you didn't know before?

Having read this book, you might be moved to make a donation to support the work of Have Hope Haiti Mission and Orphanage. If so, clip your donation to your assignment and hand it to your Theology teacher. If you prefer, you can make a donation on the organization's website: <https://havefaithhaiti.org/>. Thank you for your generous response.

ENGLISH LITERATURE READING

Students in Pre-AP, Honors, and CP classes will complete the following work over the summer (AP Seminar and AP Language students will receive separate assignments). Each class has been assigned a book to read over the summer. Books, Google Classroom codes, and assignments for each class are listed below.

- On the first day of classes, students will submit responses to summer writing assignments about the book. These are printed below, and may be found in the Google Classrooms listed below for sophomores, juniors and seniors.
- On the second day of classes, students will be assessed on their summer reading.
- Following these activities, class time will be spent working with the book that was assigned. Students will be expected to have a **physical copy** of the book (paperback or hardcover) and participate in class discussions and activities. Following the unit of study, an additional assessment will be given.
- Rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors can access a Google Classroom dedicated to Summer Reading 2023 resources for their class.

FRESHMEN PRE-AP & CP

*All freshmen are encouraged to attend a **Summer Reading Review Session**. These sessions (approximately two and one-half hours long) are designed to help students review the book and understand the expectations for our Day Two Assessment. Registration is required. This year's sessions will be held at **10:00 am on August 15th, 17th, and 24th**.*

Book: *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore

FRESHMAN SUMMER READING STUDY GUIDE

- *Discussion Questions:* Consult the discussion questions provided at the back of the book. Think about how you would answer each question if you were asked to write a short-answer response to them on a test. **In particular, develop your thinking about Questions #2, 4, 5, 6, 10, and 11.**
- *Structure:* What does the author do to indicate which parts of the book are about himself, and which parts are about the Other Wes Moore? Why does the author decide to emphasize certain years in their lives? Why does the author alternate their stories moment-by-moment?
- *Environment:* What are the environments surrounding each Wes Moore like? How do these environments change and/or remain the same? How do these environments affect them?
- *Mothers:* What does each mother do for her son? Is one mother “better” or more successful than the other? What factors seem to influence each mother’s ability to guide, protect, teach, and love her son?
- *Turning Points:* What seem to be the key moments in the life of each Wes Moore? What opportunities did they have to succeed or fail, and how did they respond to those opportunities?

IDEAS FOR TAKING NOTES

- List the names of the people important to each Wes Moore, along with a short description of how they are related to him, and/or what they mean to him.

- Construct a chart (like this) to keep track of what happens to each Wes Moore, and when. This exercise is helpful for seeing the similarities and differences in their experiences.

YEAR	AUTHOR WES MOORE	OTHER WES MOORE

SOPHOMORE HONORS & CP

Google Classroom Code: 6a6qwxt

Book: *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch

ASSIGNMENT

If you had to put together a list of lessons you've learned from your life, something to pass on to another generation, what would they be?

What's your dream? What do you live to do every day even when the world around you isn't quite right? What would you do to be able to do it throughout your life?

What is a lesson that someone has taught you that you have taught to someone else? Describe being taught the lesson, teaching the lesson, and compare the differences between.

What is something in your life that inhibited you from doing something yet may have been the bigger opportunity you didn't know you needed?

In anything, your attitude about something will be the defining characteristic of the experience. Provide two examples: 1) a time you reacted negatively to something that happened to you in school and 2) a time when you reacted positively. Try to make them a similar “thing.” To end, consider the following: which personal self (you as 1, or you as 2) do you like better? Who do you want the world to see?

Discuss a time when you “put in the work” and saw the results for it. Also describe a time in which you could have done a little more and how it can help you for the future. In the 2021-2022 school year, what are you going to put the work in for?

JUNIOR HONORS & CP

Google Classroom Code: kbubiyw

Book: *The Color of Water* by James McBride

ASSIGNMENT

Your answers to the following questions are due on the first day of class in your assigned English Google Classroom. Make sure to support your answers with evidence from the text. Please remember that the printers may not be working on the first day of school; you need to bring a printed copy of your answers with you.

Discuss Ruth McBride Jordan’s refusal to reveal her past and how that influenced her children’s sense of themselves and their place in the world. How has your knowledge (or lack thereof) about your family background shaped your own self-image?

Several of the McBride children became involved in the civil rights movement. Do you think that this was a result of the times in which they lived, their need to belong to a group that lent them a solid identity, or a combination of these factors?

“It was in her sense of education, more than any other, that Mommy conveyed her Jewishness to us.” Do you agree with this statement? Is it possible that Ruth McBride Jordan’s unshakable devotion to her faith, even though she converted to Christianity from Judaism, stems from her Orthodox Jewish upbringing?

While reading the descriptions of the children’s hunger, why do you think Ruth McBride Jordan did not seek out some kind of assistance?

Do you think it would be possible to achieve what Ruth McBride Jordan has achieved in today’s society?

SENIOR HONORS & CP

Google Classroom Code: 6jkauma

Book: *Chasing My Cure: A Doctor's Race to Turn Hope into Action* by David Fajgenbaum

ASSIGNMENT

In his memoir, David Fajgenbaum describes two moments when he is inspired by a quote that his mother carried with her from a homily by Pope John Paul II. In the first instance, he founds an organization to help college students who have lost parents. In the second, he decides to take on the illness that has nearly killed him. This second effort ultimately directs his career path and enables him to create an organization that has benefited thousands. The full quote is here:

Dear young people, whether you are believers or not, accept the call to be virtuous. This means being strong within, having a big heart, being rich in the highest sentiments, bold in the truth, courageous in freedom, constant in responsibility, generous in love, invincible in hope. Happiness is achieved through sacrifice. Do not look outside for what is to be found inside. Do not expect from others what you yourselves can and are called to be or to do.

After reading the book, please respond to the following questions (each response should be 1-2 paragraphs). Your work is due in the Google folder by the first day of classes; we will have additional assignments on the book during the first two weeks of school. All students are required to have a hard copy of the book with them for class, beginning on the first day of school.

Based on the author's description and your own experience, how would you describe what it means to be "invincible in hope"?

The author regularly refers to his ADHD as an advantage, because it gives him the ability to hyperfocus, even though it isn't always helpful. Think of one habit, characteristic, or behavior that you have usually thought of as a problem, and explain how you could instead see it as a tool to be used to your advantage.

Think of a challenge you have faced that feels too big to handle. Using the author's experience as an example, identify the steps you could take and the resources available to overcome this challenge.

Why do you think so many people wait for others to solve their problems? What advice would the author give to help them change this behavior?