

Come join us for the 2016-17 school year's

Crusader Book Club

Students in grades 2-5 are invited to meet during lunch to explore and discuss the Christian principles at work in novels focusing on an eclectic theme. We will discuss the following books:

- September:** **Because of Winn Dixie** by Kate DiCamillo
October: **The Invention of Hugo Cabret** by Brian Selznick
December: **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever** by Barbara Robinson
January: **Little Pilgrim's Progress** by John Bunyan and adapted by Helen Taylor
March: **From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler** by E.L. Konigsburg
April: **The Little Prince** by Antoine de Saint Exupery

Need a book? Public libraries have many copies of these books for you.* As a parent, I have found used online booksellers and local used book stores a useful resource for locating inexpensive books copies in a pinch.

**The only 2016-17 book club selection not readily available through the public library is Little Pilgrim's Progress (they have one copy). Written by John Bunyan and adapted by Helen Taylor, this book is a staple for every Christian home and summer readers should order it online now for \$5-\$10 (shipping included)*

What's involved with the Crusader Book Club?

1. Students read the assigned book (or have it read to them--they may also listen to an audiobook as they read, just be sure the audiobook is not an abridged version of the original work).
2. Students complete a worksheet that serves as his or her "ticket" to join the club.
3. Students attend the book club, usually every 4-6 weeks, to discuss the book during lunch.

What is it for? The purpose of the Crusader Book Club is to enhance your child's love of books. It also models for students how to understand and evaluate books from a Christian worldview.

How Can I help? Obtain the books and encourage your student to read over the summer! As an added incentive, record the books on The Summer Reading Challenge and remember--they do count for Principal's Challenge too. Look for the first book club permission slip in September.

Questions? See the FAQ on the reverse side.



FAQ 1: Should my student read the books over summer—isn't that too soon for a book club that begin in the fall?

Reading book club selections over the summer is recommended to acquaint students with the story line. Without competing homework, projects, music, and sports, students may more readily read through the novels and acquire a basic familiarity with the plot, setting, conflicts, and characters. Starting in the fall, students are then encouraged to re-read each book in the weeks leading up to book club, completing the worksheet as they go along. Just like adults, students tend to read through a book rapidly on "first pass," absorbing the "big picture" and "what happens next." On re-read, since the major plot and its ending is known, students more readily grasp details like character motives, literary devices, themes, and applications to life that are discussed in book club. For these reasons, reading the books over the summer is highly encouraged!

FAQ 2: Should my student complete the worksheets over the summer?

Book club worksheets will be created and edited over the summer and are not available until the start of school. From experience, a more vibrant discussion results when students discuss books they have recently read and thought about (i.e. the worksheet!). Therefore, worksheets will be made available approximately 4-6 weeks prior to each book club so the content is fresh in the minds of the students.

FAQ 3: What are these books about?

Here's a thumbnail of the books that are on tap for next school year:

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo [Lexile: 610; ages 9 & up; 192 pages]

The summer Opal and her father, the preacher, move to Naomi, Florida, Opal goes into the Winn-Dixie supermarket and comes out with a dog--a big, ugly, suffering dog with a sterling sense of humor—a dog she dubs Winn-Dixie. Winn-Dixie is better at making friends than anyone Opal has ever known, and together they meet the local librarian, Miss Franny Block, who once fought off a bear with a copy of *War and Peace*. They meet Gloria Dump, who is nearly blind but sees with her heart, and Otis, an ex-con who sets the animals in his pet shop loose after hours, then lulls them with his guitar. Opal spends all that sweet summer collecting stories about her new friends and thinking about her absent mother. But because of Winn-Dixie or perhaps because she has grown, Opal learns to let go, just a little, and learns that friendship--and forgiveness--can sneak up on you like a sudden summer storm.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick [Lexile: 820, ages 9 & up; 533 pages*]

Orphan, clock keeper, and thief, Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly intersects with an eccentric, bookish girl and a bitter old man who runs a toy booth in the station, Hugo's undercover life and his most precious secret are put in jeopardy. A cryptic drawing, a treasured notebook, a stolen key, a mechanical man, and a hidden message from Hugo's dead father form the backbone of this intricate, tender, and spellbinding mystery.

**Mrs. Trotter Note: This book is not as long as it appears! With more than three hundred pages of original drawings and combining elements of a picture book, graphic novel, and film, the author breaks open the novel form to create an entirely new reading experience.*

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson [Lexile: 930; ages 9-12; 128 pages]

Everyone agreed that the six Herdman children were the worst kids in the world. They lied, stole, hit little kids, talked dirty, and even the girls smoked cigars. To the other children, Sunday School was a safe haven, because the Herdmans never went there. Then one Sunday, the Herdmans show up looking for chocolate cake, hear about the Christmas pageant, and decide they want to participate. To everyone's dismay, the Herdmans manage to get the lead roles in the play. Everyone expects a disaster, but to their surprise, the Herdmans bring a fresh interpretation to the Christmas story--a story the Herdmans had never heard before until now.

Little Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan and adapted by Helen Taylor [ages 6 & up; 336 pages]

Little Christian lived in a great city called Destruction. Its streets were full of boys and girls who laughed and played all day long and on rainy days, they would listen to stories. One story the children heard many times told about a beautiful country with a good and wise King who loves children. Little Christian longed to find this land. One day, Evangelist visits and so begins the long and often challenging journey of Little Christian to the Celestial City. On his quest, Christian and a fellow traveller, Christiana, often find the straight and narrow path an extreme challenge, but the pilgrims press onward, finding strength through companions each meets along the way and thoughts centered on the King.

Mrs. Trotter's Note: Written in 1678 by Minister John Bunyan, this Christian allegory is the most widely read English book besides the Bible and up until the 20th century, was a staple in English-speaking homes. Our version, adapted by Helen Taylor for younger readers, is a MUST Family Read. Do not miss out!

From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E.L. Konigsburg [Lexile:700; ages 9 & up; 168 pages]

Claudia knew that she could never pull off the old-fashioned kind of running away. So, she decides not to run FROM somewhere, but TO somewhere—to a place that is comfortable, beautiful, and elegant. After some careful planning, she and her younger brother, Jamie, run away to the Metropolitan Museum of Art -- right into a mystery that makes headlines! What is this new Angel statue purchased by the museum for \$225? Could it be an early work of Michelangelo himself? Claudia is determined to find out. Her search leads her to Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler, the remarkable old woman who sold the statue, and in the process, leads her to some equally remarkable discoveries about Claudia herself.

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint Exupery [Lexile: 710; ages 9 & up; 83-96 pages]

One day, an aviator encounters a most extraordinary small person--the Little Prince. The Little Prince lived alone on a tiny planet no larger than a house. He owned several volcanoes, watched many sunsets each day, guarded against baobabs, and tended a special flower. This flower was unlike any in the galaxy—she possessed great beauty but inordinate pride. It was the flower's pride that drove the Little Prince to leave his home and begin an interplanetary journey that brought him to Earth where he finally learns, from a fox, the secret of what is important in life.

**Mrs. Trotter Note: This book was originally written in French and several translations are available. I have consulted both the Katherine Woods and Richard Howard translations when creating the worksheet. If you choose to read only TWO books out loud with your student this year—this is Pick #2! *The Little Prince* is a beautiful allegory written for children of all ages that is especially powerful when read aloud as a family.*

More Questions? Contact Michelle Trotter at trottercrew@gmail.com