

Parish School of Religion – High School Reading Selection List

Choose one book, Audio, or Video source from your grade's list. If possible, discuss the book with others in your class, as a group study. On your own, write a **half-page (or longer) summary** of your take-aways from the book, audio, or video presentation. In addition, choose one key point of learning to share with the larger class in about 3-5 minutes, when we gather in September.

As you read, consider some questions you might be able to answer easily:

- What resonates with you in the book? What sparks you to connect more closely with God or Jesus, or to feel/see the presence of the Holy Spirit more in your life?
- What do you learn new about the Christian faith, the Church, the Bible that surprises you or reshapes how you think about it?
- What are some contemporary trends that might disagree with any points in the book, and how did the author address those trends of thinking or acting?

Details:

At least one book from the selection is required reading; but consider reading more to understand the reasons behind our Christian Faith!

The books are listed grade-specific, but feel free to pick-n-choose. Especially 10th & 11th can choose from the 9th-grade list as well as their own.

Several of the books are available in ebook and audiobook format, in case that's easier. (Consider the App "Hoopla" or "Libby" for audiobooks available through the local library, for free.) If there's another book you'd like to propose, please let us know. Similar presentations are available off of Formed.org on our "Religious Education" webpage; feel free to propose a substitute options if you'd like.

If for any reason you feel you are not able to give priority to this project, please contact Fr Steve at sdardis@arch-no.org or through the parish office. All feedback is welcome.

INCOMING 9TH GRADERS' LIST:

- Catholic Answers to Fundamentalists' Questions (2005 edition)
https://www.amazon.com/Catholic-Answers-Fundamentalists-Questions-Referenced/dp/0764813412/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=catholic+answers+to+fundamentalists+questions&qid=1619977759&s=books&sr=1-3
- Did Adam & Eve Have Belly Buttons? And 199 Other Questions from Catholic Teenagers, by Matthew Pinto
 - This book offers 200 clear and insightful answers to questions about the Catholic Faith. It directly addresses concerns, misconceptions, and challenges expressed by many Catholic teens.
 - Available through: Amazon (Paperback, Kindle); and other bookstores.
- The Search, by Chris Stefanick
https://www.amazon.com/Search-Chris-Stefanick/dp/1950939235/ref=pd_sbs_2?pd_rd_w=afFMV&pf_rd_p=2419a049-62bf-452e-b0d0-ca5b7e35a7b4&pf_rd_r=0G7QYJRHNH5T86N9H437&pd_rd_r=8add5444-90e6-4cea-923b-7b7306b63ee3&pd_rd_wg=1K62p&pd_rd_i=1950939235&psc=1
- Yes or No? Straight Answers to Tough Questions about Christianity, by Peter Kreeft
 - In a series of imaginative "dialogues", Sal the Seeker and Chris the Christian deal with the profound mysteries of the Gospel. The result is a book that is both engaging and profound, a book that leads readers to initial faith--or to deeper faith. The stakes in these dialogues are high. Christianity is God's marriage proposal to the soul, says Kreeft, and the answer must be "yes" or "no". We can evade the claims of Jesus Christ for a while, but death brings evasion to an end. It is wiser to look at Christianity honestly now. Yes or No? shows the truth of Jesus' promise that those who sincerely seek the truth shall find it.
 - Available through: FREE at Formed.org (search for "Yes or No?"); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle); and other bookstores.
- What is the Bible? How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything, by Rob Bell <https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Ancient-Transform-Everything/dp/0062194267>
 - Reading the Bible can be challenging: its stories can be confusing; its messages tough to understand; its themes difficult to see. The book "What is the Bible?" uses many passages from the Bible to help readers understand them in their own time & context so you can grasp what was *really* going on. It shows how you cannot usually take the words at face-value in today's day without first applying the lens of the time it was written. It also portrays the over-arching message of transformation that is woven into the history and evolution of mankind and our relationship with God, as shown in the bible. It is also quite funny! You will never think of the Bible the same way again after reading this book.
 - Available through: FREE via St. Charles Parish Library (check online for audiobook, ebook, or hard copy location); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, Audiobook); and other bookstores.
- The Case for Christ, by Lee Strobel
 - An atheist journalist responded to his wife's conversion to Christianity by launching an all-out investigation into the facts surrounding the case for Christianity. He read books, interviewed experts, analyzed history, explored archaeology, studied ancient literature, and picked the Bible apart verse by verse. Through all that exploration, Strobel builds a captivating case for Christ's divinity.
 - Available through: FREE via St. Charles Parish Library (check online for audiobook or ebook); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, CD, Audiobook); and other bookstores.

INCOMING 10TH GRADERS' LIST:

- Blessed are the Bored in Spirit, by Mark Hart <https://www.amazon.com/Blessed-Are-Bored-Spirit-Catholics/dp/0867166770>
 - “My image of God the Father, enthroned in heaven in flowing white robes, was overshadowed by my certainty that he didn't want me to have any fun. God was all about rules.” Too many young Catholics experience their faith that way: rarely miss Mass even if they don't understand it; have a Bible but never read it; go to confession even if not particularly repentant. This book helps people like this to forget about a dreary life of mindless obedience to rules you don't understand, and see a path to enter into the transforming light and love of your Creator.
 - Available through: Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, or Audiobook); and other bookstores.
 - What is the Bible? How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think and Feel About Everything, by Rob Bell <https://www.amazon.com/What-Bible-Ancient-Transform-Everything/dp/0062194267>
 - Reading the Bible can be challenging: its stories can be confusing; its messages tough to understand; its themes difficult to see. The book “What is the Bible?” uses many passages from the Bible to help readers understand them in their own time & context so you can grasp what was *really* going on. It shows how you cannot usually take the words at face-value in today's day without first applying the lens of the time it was written. It also portrays the over-arching message of transformation that is woven into the history and evolution of mankind and our relationship with God, as shown in the bible. It is also quite funny! You will never think of the Bible the same way again after reading this book.
 - Available through: FREE via St. Charles Parish Library (check online for audiobook, ebook, or hard copy location); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, Audiobook); and other bookstores.
 - Perfectly Yourself: Discovering God's Dream For You, by Matthew Kelly <https://www.amazon.com/Perfectly-Yourself-Discovering-Dream-Revised/dp/1635820111>
 - This life-changing book addresses the opportunities and obstacles we encounter when we decide to ask life's BIG questions: Who am I? What am I here for? Full of powerful and practical lessons, Matthew Kelly shows us how to find lasting happiness in a changing world.
 - Books by CS Lewis: *Mere Christianity*, (Also, *The Screwtape Letters*; and *The Great Divorce*)
 - In the 1940's, CS Lewis gave a series of talks over the radio explaining the concepts of Christianity in terms intended to be understood by people of any faith (or non-faith) background. It was later made into a book, due to high demand, and CS Lewis added sections based on feedback he got after the talks. He starts by talking about how it is completely natural as a human to believe in a higher power and leads step by step into the realm of Christianity as the way to understand that power. This book stands the test of time, and many people today will have good “aha!” moments reading this.
 - Available through: FREE via St. Charles Parish Library (check online for audiobook, or CD or hard copy location); [Amazon](#) (Paperback, Kindle, Audiobook); and other bookstores.
 - The Case for Jesus, by Brant Pitre <https://www.amazon.com/Case-Jesus-Biblical-Historical-Evidence/dp/0770435483>
 - This book is about one big question: Did Jesus of Nazareth claim to be God? It walks through common claims/misconceptions about Jesus and the Bible, and explains how Jesus really did claim to be God in ways that made sense to the people of the time. The book also articulates the evidence that we should believe he actually was God in a way that is easy to understand and thought-provoking.
 - Available through: Amazon (Hardcover, Kindle, or Audiobook); and other bookstores.
 - Formed.org also includes a 45 minute [audio presentation](#), and a [video series](#).
-

INCOMING 11TH GRADERS' LIST:

EITHER read the book, OR watch/listen to the full list of talks. Type a half-page summary of what you took away from the reading or listening, and also why you want to be confirmed Catholic.

- Don't Be Afraid to Say Yes to God!: Pope Francis Speaks to Young People, by Pope Francis and Fr. Mike Schmitz
 - In this collection of short excerpts of Pope Francis' talks from around the world, he speaks to the best instincts of young people, inviting them to do their part to build a better, more just world. He encourages teens and young adults to say yes to all that God is asking of them, even while acknowledging that following the Lord wholeheartedly involves risks as well as rewards. The excerpts are in bite-sized portions, followed by reflection questions posed by Father Mike Schmitz.
 - Available through: FREE paperback through St. Charles Parish Library (check online for availability and location); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle); and other bookstores.

- Between One Faith and Another, by Peter Kreeft
 - How do we make sense of the world's different religions? In today's globalized society, religion is deeply intertwined with every issue we see on the news. But talking about multiple religions can be contentious. Are different faiths compatible somehow? And how can we know whether one religion is more true than another? In this creative thought experiment, Peter Kreeft invites us to encounter dialogues on the world's great faiths. His characters Thomas Keptic and Bea Lever are students in Professor Fesser's course on world religions, and the three explore the content and distinctive claims of each. Together they probe the plausibility of major religions, from Hinduism and Buddhism to Christianity and Islam. Along the way they explore how religions might relate to each other and to what extent exclusivism or inclusivism might make sense. Ultimately Kreeft gives us helpful tools for thinking fairly and critically about competing religious beliefs. If the religions are different kinds of music, do they together make harmony or cacophony? Decide for yourself.
 - Available through: Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, Audiobook); and other bookstores.

- The Screwtape Letters, by CS Lewis
 - In this book, CS Lewis writes fictitious letters from one of Satan's demons to his nephew, a "junior tempter". It is a genius writing from the perspective of how Satan attempts to tempt us away from God – and it shows how it can be much more subtle than we realize. It was written during World War 2, and uses formal English, but is still extremely relevant today for people who aspire to live a Christian life and get into Heaven.
 - Available through: FREE via St. Charles Parish Library (check online for audiobook, or hard copy or CD location); Amazon (Paperback, Kindle, or Audiobook); and other bookstores.

- Theology of the body for Beginners (2018 Edition), by Christopher West
 - Introduction in the book tells about his curiosity about why human sexual desire is so strong, and why it is so difficult to "control" it or why it is perceived to be "bad". Study started to reveal more – that our earthly desires are a yearning for the infinite, Christ doesn't want to repress our desires but to redeem them, to redirect them to perfect love/unity with God. The author later learned that much of his studies were similar to Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body teachings, and this book is a retelling of those teachings for today's audiences.
 - Available through: FREE ebook access through St. Charles Parish Library online; Amazon (Paperback, Kindle); and other bookstores.

- Forty Reasons I Am a Catholic, by Peter Kreeft
 - The 40 reasons are as profound as "Because I need dogmatic certainty about God, and Christ and salvation" all the way down to "Because of the nouns" and "Because of cathedrals." The book is brilliant in its very simplicity. It boils all the theological down to extremely attractive, thought-provoking and strong bullet points that can be easily remembered and shared with people in real life and online where the attention span is severely lacking.
 - Available through: Amazon (Paperback, Kindle); and other bookstores.

- Formed.org: Jesus Is... <https://watch.formed.org/jesus-is-by-fr-mike-schmitz>
- More than Words: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvOvz1-nPVo&t=183s&ab_channel=FOCUSCatholic
- The Hour that will Change your Life: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwwilkrLxTM&t=9s&ab_channel=FOCUSCatholic
- Formed.org: True Worship <https://watch.formed.org/videos/true-worship-by-fr-mike-schmitz>
- From the "Focus Equip" App: Audio Presentation [I disagree ≠ I Hate](#)
- Formed.org: Confession by Father Larry Richards <https://watch.formed.org/videos/confession-by-fr-larry-richards>