

May 24, 2021

Dear Parents of Incoming Eighth Graders:

Today, I spoke to the incoming eighth grade class about summer reading and Confirmation service hours. Below is a summary of summer reading and some information on service hours. Summer reading will be sent home today.

1. **All students must have read *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton for the first day of school.** I gave out hard copies of this book today. Students should read or reread this book close to the start of school. It will be our immediate focus at the beginning of the year. There is a character analysis activity attached to this assignment.

2. **Students should also have read *Thrift Store Saints* by Jane Knuth for the first day of school.** I introduced them to this book today. *Thrift Store Saints* is about service, which is a major theme of Confirmation preparation. We will use it as our purpose-setting book at the beginning of the year in religion.

I am also asking you as parents, and the first and best teachers of your children, to read a portion of this book (as chosen by your son or daughter) and to write them a reflection about it. That assignment is included here as an attachment.

3. **Students who read a total of three more books over the summer (for a total of five including *The Outsiders* and *Thrift Store Saints*) will receive a non-uniform pass and five bonus points in literature during Trimester 1.** Please verify the books read on the form attached. Students should bring this form with them on the first day of school. Handwritten notes from parents are also acceptable if the form is lost.

4. **All students are required to do 20 hours of service as part of preparation for Confirmation. At least five of those 20 hours need to be outside the parish/school community.**

Students can submit up to 10 service hours from the summer when we return to school. (For your planning, Christ the King's Confirmation is scheduled for February 26, 2022.)

Five "outside" service hours are required during the 2021-2022 year as a way to stretch students' comfort zones and to actively involve them in living the corporal works of mercy. Students need help in finding these activities, and parents are the key individuals. A copy of the service hour form is attached. Please feel free to photocopy/reprint. **Parents can always sign off for their students.**

5. **Please also fill out the attached Diocesan Form.** Students can return the form on the first day of school.

Thank you so much in advance for attending to these things. Eighth grade is an exciting, rewarding, and Spirit-filled year. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you as the year unfolds! May you be blessed with an enjoyable and renewing summer.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Erica Varo
8th grade Language Arts/Religion
evaro@ckslex.org

Attachments: *The Outsiders* Character activity
Summer Reading Form
Confirmation Service Hour Form
Thrift Store Saints Assignment
Diocesan Form

Any other comments or questions? My email is evaro@ckslex.org.

NAME _____ DATE _____

As you read *The Outsiders*, please do the following prior to the first day of school:

1. Read the book.
2. Complete **ONE** character analysis organizer, for the protagonist (main character). Use the attached model based on *The Grinch* to see how to fill out this organizer. NOTE: Pay close attention to the topic headings in the boxes as they are not all the same. Also, be sure to answer questions #4 and 5 briefly. You will elaborate on Question #5 in the paragraphs you write.
3. For each character, write a well-developed paragraph (8-10 sentences) in response to this question:
“How does the writer use this character to convey a message or lesson?”
Give EVIDENCE to support your argument.

GRADING NOTES: This is a 50-point assignment.

_____/20: ONE character analysis organizers

_____/30: ONE well-developed paragraph

NAME _____ DATE _____

CHARACTER ANALYSIS ORGANIZER FOR: The Grinch (MODEL)

For each box below, respond to character analysis questions 1-3 in phrases. Then UNDERLINE any items that are related. Finally, answer questions 4 and 5.

1. What do we know? OR, What can we safely infer?
2. How does it affect the character? (NOTE: No matter what we know, it affects the character.)
3. Why is it important? What does it reveal about his/her character?

Family background/Upbringing	How s/he is treated vs. how s/he wants to be treated
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We aren't told much about The Grinch's family; he seems not to have any family left. He is alone except for his little sidekick. <u>We can infer he didn't receive much love growing up because he seems very bitter and unhappy.</u> 2. At least in the beginning in the story, The Grinch is bitter and unhappy. 3. The Grinch's bitterness infects his behavior: <u>he seems not to be able to care about anyone else</u>, so he plots to steal from the townspeople, to ruin their Christmas (possibly because he believes his Christmas will be lonely and unhappy, and he is lashing out). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The Grinch is alone</u> except for his little sidekick, who simply obeys him (not having any other choice). It's not clear at the beginning of the story how he wants to be treated since <u>he's not used to dealing with people</u>, but later, <u>the townspeople welcome him and treat him with the love he was missing.</u> 2. <u>Though at first alone, selfish, greedy, and bitter. The Grinch grows a bigger heart (literally and figuratively) as a result of how the townspeople treat one another and him.</u> He becomes a happier person as a result of the way they treat him. 3. <u>We learn that people—even those who seem mean and unhappy—can grow and change and become happier as a result of their interactions with other people.</u>
Work	Philosophies/Values
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no mention of The Grinch's work. If he does anything, we can infer that it is not too meaningful or helpful to others because he does not seem to care about other people—at least, at the beginning of the story. 2. Not having work he loves may be a factor in why The Grinch seems so unhappy at the beginning. 3. <u>Not having work he loves seems to poison The Grinch's character. Also, he does not know how to deal with other people constructively. He lacks people skills.</u> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At the beginning of the story, <u>The Grinch values material goods more than relationships with other people.</u> 2. The Grinch plans to steal the Christmas presents of the townspeople. 3. At least initially, The Grinch is selfish and greedy. Later, he learns a lesson and changes.

4. What ideas might this character represent?

First, The Grinch represents greed, selfishness, and unhappiness. Then he represents growth and potential.

5. How does the writer use this character to convey a message or lesson?

Dr. Seuss uses The Grinch to show us that even people who seem mean or unhappy can grow and change and become happier as a result of their interactions with other people; we can all help one another become better, happier people.

YOUR NAME _____

Protagonist: _____

“How does the writer use this character to convey a message or lesson?” Give EVIDENCE to support your argument. Write a well-developed paragraph (8-10 sentences).

Thrift Store Saints Parent/Child Assignment

[Parents—Please note—only one parent needs to do this. If both of you would like to, so much the better!]

Students: As you read *Thrift Store Saints*, be thinking of what three chapters you liked the best or found the most interesting and/or powerful. Also remember what we have read at the beginning (and end) of the book about the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the author's description of how she found God "on the job and in the street...when the language is rough, the labor is mindless, and everybody is wearing old clothes." Then:

Write your parents a three-paragraph (or more) letter asking them to read three (or more) chapters of *Thrift Store Saints* which you have selected.

--Tell them first a little bit of background about the book—about the St. Vincent de Paul Society; about Jane and how she came to work there; about how she changes as she becomes more involved.

--Then tell them why you chose the chapters you chose—such as, the characters were interesting; the stories involved things you never knew or thought about; they made you think about the teachings of Christ and the Church in a new way, etc.

--Finally, ask them to write you a letter back, reflecting on these stories and sharing their thoughts. Remember—**only one of your parents needs to respond**—it does not have to be both.

Letters should be typed, 12 font, one-inch margin. Length: at least one page.

Parents: Read your child's letter and the three (or more) chapters he or she has chosen for you two to share. Write a letter back to him or her, reflecting on each of the chapters and what you gained from them.

Submit: Both letters as a unit on the third day of school.

Point value: 25 pts. per letter (50 pts. total) Religion.

Summer Reading Verification (Note: you may include *The Outsiders* and *Thrift Store Saints* as your first two books.)

Book

Author

Parent Signature

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

(if you've read more, keep on going!!!)

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

Student Information:

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone _____

Birthdate _____ Religion _____

Parish or church student attends _____

Parent Information:

FATHER

Name _____

Address _____

Workplace _____

Workphone _____ Cell phone _____

Email address _____

Occupation _____ Religion _____

MOTHER

Name _____

Address _____

Workplace _____

Work phone _____ Cell phone _____

Email address _____

Occupation _____ Religion _____

SIBLINGS Names and Ages/Grade Level _____

Christ the King Parish
Confirmation Service Hours
Verification Form

I, (name of supervising individual) _____,
of (name of organization) _____,
certify that (name of student) _____
has participated in _____ hours of service on this date ____/____/____.

Signature	Title/Position	Phone or email address
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Student Reflection

Describe the service you performed and reflect on how this service affected your faith.

This completed form is to be placed in your Confirmation portfolio.