

## Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School

### Middle School Summer Homework – Grades 6–8

#### ELA with Mrs. Kalyan

Summer 2025

Dear Middle School Students and Families,

I am truly so excited to be teaching ELA next school year! One of the best parts of reading is how it connects us—not just to stories and characters, but to each other. To help us build a strong foundation across all of middle school, students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade will all begin the year reading the same novel: *\*The Giver\** by Lois Lowry.

This powerful story is appropriate for all three grade levels, and each class will explore it in a way that is unique and developmentally appropriate. Reading a shared novel will allow us to build school-wide connections, set common expectations, and launch into deeper discussions across the middle school grades. After this first book, each grade will move on to their own novels throughout the year.

This summer, you will complete two small ELA assignments to help us prepare for an amazing year of reading, writing, and thinking.

These two assignments are due on the first day of school and will each count as a formative grade worth 25 points.

#### Assignment 1: Learning About Lois Lowry

We will be starting the year by reading *\*The Giver\**, but before we open the book, let's learn a little about the author: Lois Lowry. Getting to know an author's background and interests helps us understand why they write the way they do.

- What to Do:
- Type or neatly handwrite your answers using complete sentences, proper punctuation, and correct grammar.

Answer the following:

1. Who is Lois Lowry?
2. What are some other books she has written?
3. What topics or themes does she write about often?

4. After reading the back cover or summary of \*The Giver\*, what do you think this book might be about?
5. Why do you think this book is read by so many schools and students across the country?

### Assignment 2: Author's Purpose Reflection

Every author writes with a purpose—to share a message, teach a lesson, make readers feel something, or help us think differently about the world. Understanding why an author wrote a book is one of the most important reading skills you will build in middle school.

As Catholic readers, we also look at stories through the lens of our faith. Even in fictional stories, we can find truths about courage, compassion, forgiveness, family, service, and hope. When we understand an author's purpose, we grow not only as readers—but as people of faith.

- What to Do:
- Read the book assigned to your grade level:

6th Grade – Holes by Louis Sachar

7th Grade – Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

8th Grade – The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Then, write a typed, double-spaced reflection that is at least one full page long.

This is not a summary of the book. Instead, explain what you believe the author's purpose was, and use specific examples from the book to support your thinking.

Reflection Questions (to guide your writing):

- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What message, lesson, or truth did the author want readers to take away?
- How do specific characters, events, or scenes in the book support that message?
- What did this story help you understand about people, the world, or even your faith?
- How does this book connect to Catholic values like compassion, courage, forgiveness, or hope?

### Sample Paragraph: What Author's Purpose Looks Like

Let's say you were writing a reflection on \*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone\* by J.K. Rowling. Here's what a strong paragraph might look like:

I believe J.K. Rowling wrote \*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone\* to show readers that love, friendship, and bravery are more powerful than fear or hatred. One example is when

Harry, Ron, and Hermione risk their lives to stop Voldemort from stealing the Sorcerer's Stone—not for fame, but to protect others. Another important moment is when Harry chooses to stand up to Draco Malfoy, even though he's scared, showing that doing the right thing often requires courage. Rowling also uses Dumbledore's words—"It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends"—to remind readers that being brave doesn't always look like fighting monsters. This story teaches us that loyalty, courage, and selflessness are more powerful than evil—and those values connect strongly with our Catholic faith.

### **Due Date**

Both assignments are due on the first day of school and will be your first formative grades in ELA.

### **Grading Rubrics**

#### **Assignment 1: Lois Lowry Research (25 Points)**

All 5 questions answered in complete sentences – 10 pts

Information shows thought and effort – 5 pts

Answers are written neatly or typed – 5 pts

Proper punctuation, grammar, and spelling – 5 pts

Total – /25

#### **Assignment 2: Author's Purpose Reflection (25 Points)**

Reflection is at least one full typed, double-spaced page – 5 pts

Clearly identifies the author's purpose – 5 pts

Uses specific examples and evidence from the book – 10 pts

Proper punctuation, grammar, and spelling – 5 pts

Total – /25