

## ***Canon of Classic Children's Literature: Expected Reading List*** Saint Rita Catholic School

Over the course of a student's years with us, specifically between third and eighth grade, we expect him or her to read this canon of classic children's literature. More titles may be added over time. The reading can be done over the summers or school holidays, or in addition to the regularly assigned reading during the school year. Parents can read these books to their children, or the children can read them with friends or family members in informal book clubs - or feel free to get them on audiobooks for car trips!

Our school parents will be the coaches for this reading list, incentivizing, enforcing, and pacing their own children in a way that works well for their family. There will sometimes be a school assignment relating to one of these books. The titles below are all works of fiction, but we encourage parents to develop the habit of reading non-fiction, folk and mythological tales, plays, and poetry with their children as well. All of our students begin memorizing and reciting poetry in Kindergarten, so this is something they are used to and generally enjoy! Good anthologies of poetry include *The Everyman Anthology of Poetry for Children*, ed. Gillian Avery and *A Book Of Luminous Things: An International Anthology of Poetry*, ed. Czeslaw Milosz.

The school's Summer Reading Assignment, for rising 3rd to 8th graders, is to give a talk to the class on ONE of the titles in our canon. This talk will be given on the Friday before Labor Day weekend. *Children should come dressed as a character from that book and/or with props or a visual aid (poster illustration, diorama) depicting something from the book.* For that assignment, students should be prepared to do the following - and of course our expectations of the sophistication of these presentations varies according to the age of the students...

- Give the title and author of the book
- Summarize the plot and describe some of the characters
- Identify any themes (for older students) or their favorite thing about the book (for younger students)
- Explain their costuming, props, or visual aids

Most of these books can be read (or listened to) by children of all ages, but a parenthetical note is included for books more appropriate for middle schoolers.

*Oliver Twist*, by Charles Dickens (middle school)

*Chronicles of Narnia*, by C. S. Lewis (several read as part of 3rd grade curriculum)

*The Hobbit*, by J.R.R. Tolkien

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll

*Peter Pan*, by J.M. Barrie

*The Jungle Book*, by Rudyard Kipling

*Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson (read in 3rd grade curriculum)

*Heidi*, by Johanna Spyri

*Robinson Crusoe*, by Daniel Defoe

*The Swiss Family Robinson*, by Johann D. Wyss

*Ivanhoe*, by Walter Scott (middle school)

*The Three Musketeers*, by Alexandre Dumas

*The Little Prince*, by Antoine de St.-Exupéry

*Black Beauty*, by Anna Sewell

*Call of the Wild*, by Jack London (middle school)

*Gulliver's Travels*, by Jonathan Swift

*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne (middle school)

*The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, by Arthur Conan Doyle (middle school)

*Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain (middle school)

*Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett

*Anne of Green Gables*, by Lucy Maud Montgomery

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, by L. Frank Baum

*Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott (middle school)

*Little House on the Prairie*, by Laura Ingalls Wilder

*Pippi Longstocking*, by Astrid Lindgren

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred D. Taylor (middle school)

*From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, by E.L. Konigsburg (encouraged for rising 4th graders because Miss Walker is a particular fan!)

*Danny the Champion of the World, Matilda, Charlie & The Chocolate Factory, James and the Giant Peach* (by Roald Dahl)

*Charlotte's Web* and *Trumpet of the Swan*, by E.B. White

*A Wrinkle in Time*, by Madeleine L'Engle (middle school)