

Pope John Paul II High School

Summer Learning 2009

**All students are required to complete the Summer Learning Experience.
This year's theme is MERCY.**

This program is designed to give each student experiences in both literature and the arts. Each work will involve the theme of mercy. All students will read two books and analyze four works of art. Students are required to answer the attached questions. A written essay will be assigned and completed during the first week of school in September.

The requirements for all students are:

- 1. Read *The Power of the Powerless*.**
- 2. Read one additional book from the list provided.**
- 3. View all four works of art.**
- 4. Analyze the two books and four works of art using the attached questions.**
- 5. During the first week of school, students will be required to complete written essays regarding summer learning choices and the theme of mercy.**



READING EXPECTATIONS

All students must read:

The Power of the Powerless by Christopher de Vinck

Christopher de Vinck's novel is a true account about his severely handicapped brother Oliver. Oliver never left his bed in 33 years and was unable to see, walk, communicate, or feed himself. He outlived two of the doctors who said he would not live beyond the age of eight. *The Power of the Powerless* is a doorway into the deep lessons of life, love, and faith de Vinck learned from his brother.

All students must read one of the following:

- 1. *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom**

Corrie ten Boom was a woman admired the world over for her courage, her forgiveness, and her memorable faith. In World War II, she and her family risked their lives to help Jews escape the Nazis, and their reward was a trip to Hitler's concentration camps. But she survived and was released – as a result of a clerical error – and now shares the story of how faith triumphs over evil. For thirty-five years Corrie's dramatic life story, full of timeless virtues, has prepared readers to

face their own futures with faith, relying on God's love to overcome, heal, and restore. Now releasing in a thirty-fifth anniversary edition for a new generation of readers, *The Hiding Place* tells the riveting story of how a middle-aged Dutch watchmaker became a heroine of the Resistance, a survivor of Hitler's death camps, and one of the most remarkable evangelists of the twentieth century.

2. *The Color of Water* by James McBride

James McBride grew up one of twelve siblings in the all-black housing projects of Red Hook, Brooklyn, the son of a black minister and a woman who would not admit she was white. The object of McBride's constant embarrassment, and his continuous fear for her safety, his mother was an inspiring figure, who through sheer force of will saw her dozen children through college, and many through graduate school. McBride was an adult before he discovered the truth about his mother: the daughter of a failed itinerant Orthodox rabbi in rural Virginia, she had run away to Harlem, married a black man, and founded an all-black Baptist church in her living room in Red Hook. In this remarkable memoir, she tells in her own words the story of her past. Around her narrative, James McBride has written a powerful portrait of growing up, a meditation on race and identity, and a poignant, beautifully crafted hymn from a son to his mother.

3. *Left to Tell* by Immaculee Ilibagiza

Immaculee Ilibagiza grew up in a country she loved, surrounded by a family she cherished. But in 1994 her idyllic world was ripped apart as Rwanda descended into a bloody genocide. Immaculee's family was brutally murdered during a killing spree that lasted three months and claimed the lives of nearly a million Rwandans.

Incredibly, Immaculee survived the slaughter. For 91 days, she and seven other women huddled silently together in the cramped bathroom of a local pastor while hundreds of machete-wielding killers hunted for them.

It was during those endless hours of unspeakable terror that Immaculee discovered the power of prayer, eventually shedding her fear of death and forging a profound and lasting relationship with God. She emerged from her bathroom hideout having discovered the meaning of truly unconditional love – a love so strong she was able seek out and forgive her family's killers.

The triumphant story of this remarkable young woman's journey through the darkness of genocide will inspire anyone whose life has been touched by fear, suffering, and loss.



ART EXPECTATIONS

View the following four works of art:
All students must view the following works in full at
www.artchive.com
or www.artcyclopedia.com

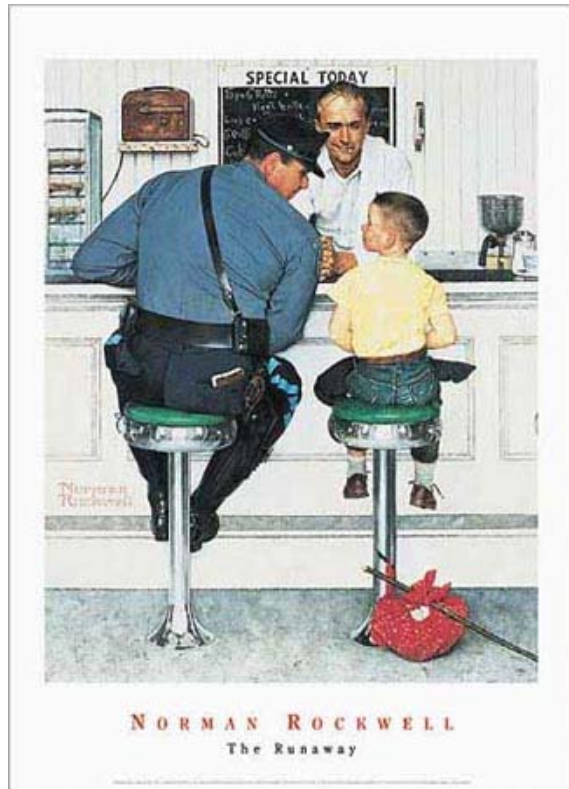
Pieta
by Michelangelo



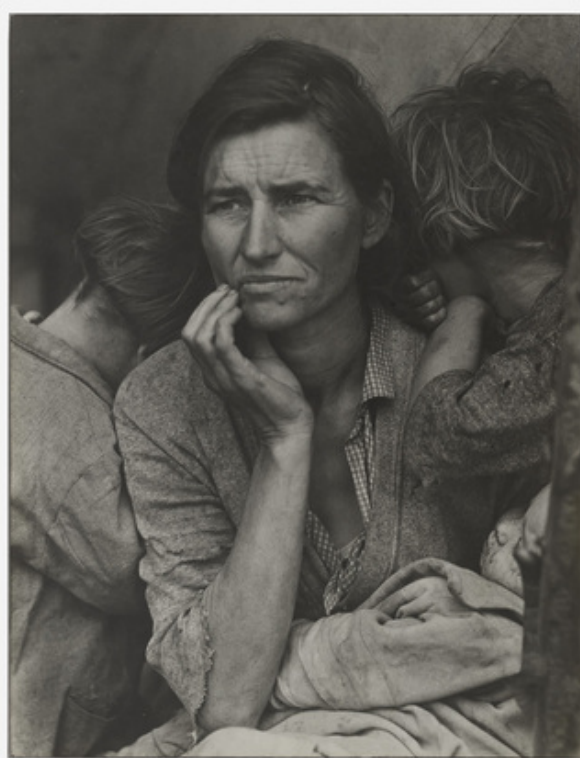
The Seven Acts of Mercy
by Caravaggio



The Runaway
by Norman Rockwell



Migrant Mother
by Dorothea Lange



Summer Learning 2009

Response Questions

1. Answer the following questions on separate sheets of paper.
2. Bring your answers to school on Thursday, September 3, 2009.
You will use **these answers** to compose written essays regarding each selection and the theme of mercy.



The Power of the Powerless by Christopher de Vinck

1. List and describe the main characters.
2. Write a summary paragraph describing the lessons of suffering and loss the author intends to communicate.
3. Why the book is titled *The Power of the Powerless*?
4. What are the book's strongest qualities?
5. What ways are acts of mercy evident or absent?

Circle One: *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom
The Color of Water by James Mc Bride
Left to Tell by Immaculee Ilibagiza

1. List and describe the main characters.
2. Write a summary paragraph describing the lessons the author intends to communicate.
3. What is the meaning of the book's title?
4. What are the book's strongest qualities?
5. What ways are acts of mercy evident or absent?



Pieta by Michelangelo

The Seven Acts of Mercy by Caravaggio

The Runaway by Norman Rockwell

Migrant Mother by Dorothea Lange

For *each* of the four assigned works of art answer the following six questions:

1. Research and write a summary paragraph describing basic information regarding the artwork. Include era, style, influences, medium, and other relevant information necessary to understand the work of art.
2. What is the first thing (the dominant impression) you noticed about the artwork?
3. What do you see when you look more closely and for longer periods of time?
4. What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?
5. What are the artwork's strongest qualities?
6. How is mercy seen in the artwork?