



HERITAGE CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY

205-978-6001

www.hcachristian.org

6200 Lou George Loop | Birmingham, AL 35022

Entering 1st Grade

Summer Reading for Students Entering the 1st Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Frog and Toad Are Friends*** by Arnold Lobel. Once you have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- Why does Frog want Toad to get out of bed in chapter one ? How does Frog trick Toad into getting out of bed? What is inappropriate about Frog's actions? When have you been anxious for everyone to wake up so you could start a particular exciting day ?
- Why does Frog give Toad his bed in the second story ? When have you put your own needs aside to help comfort a friend ?
- What does Toad lose in chapter three? When have you lost something that was important to you ? What did you do without it, or how did you find it ?
- Why is Toad embarrassed when he and Frog go for a swim ? How do you feel about Frog and the others laughing at Toad ? When has someone laughed at you ? How did you feel, and what did you do? How should the animals have treated Toad ?
- Why is Toad sad in the final story ? What does Frog do to make him feel better? When have you received a note or letter that lifted your spirits? What did it say ? Who could you encourage with a letter today ?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.



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Biblical Tie In for *Frog and Toad Are Friends*

1. Friendship and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 17:17 - "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad demonstrate unwavering support and care for each other, embodying the idea that true friends are constant and reliable, much like the Biblical portrayal of genuine friendship.

2. Helping and Caring for Others:

- Biblical Reference: Galatians 6:2 - "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."
- Tie-In: Throughout the stories, Frog and Toad are always ready to help each other. For example, when Toad is feeling down or when one of them needs encouragement, they are there to support each other, reflecting the Biblical call to bear one another's burdens.

3. Patience and Understanding:

- Biblical Reference: Ephesians 4:2 - "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad show patience and understanding towards each other's quirks and faults. This patience is reminiscent of the Biblical encouragement to be gentle and patient with one another.

4. The Value of Simple Joys and Contentment:

- Biblical Reference: Philippians 4:11-13 - "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances... I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
- Tie-In: The stories often focus on simple pleasures and finding joy in everyday moments, much like the Biblical teaching to be content in all situations and to find strength and satisfaction in God's provision.

5. Honesty and Integrity:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 12:22 - "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."
- Tie-In: Frog and Toad's friendship is built on honesty and trust. They are truthful with each other, even when it is difficult, highlighting the importance of integrity in relationships.



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Entering 2nd Grade

Summer Reading for Students Entering the 2nd Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***The Boxcar Children*** by Gertrude Chandler Warner. Once you have read this book, consider talking about the story using these discussion questions:

- What are Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny running away from? Where do they end up? What have you run away from that was actually good for you? How did you find out that it was good for you?
- What are some ways that Henry and Jesse made do with what they had? What are some ways that you have learned to be content with what you have?
- How do the children's attitude make a difference in their adventure? What would have happened if they had grumbled and complained the whole time? If they had bad attitudes, how much would the children have loved the boxcar they were in?

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Entering 2nd Grade

Biblical Tie-In for *The Boxcar Children*

1. Orphan Care and Provision:

- Biblical Reference: James 1:27 - "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."
- Tie-In: The Alden children, as orphans, care for each other and make a life for themselves. Their ability to find safety, shelter, and eventually a home with their grandfather reflects the Biblical emphasis on caring for those without parents.

2. Family Unity and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - "Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."
- Tie-In: The strong bond and mutual support among the Alden siblings exemplify the strength found in unity and working together, reminiscent of Biblical teachings on the importance of supporting one another.

3. Perseverance and Hope:

- Biblical Reference: Romans 5:3-4 - "...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."
- Tie-In: Despite their hardships, the Alden children remain hopeful and persevere through difficulties. Their journey from living in a boxcar to reuniting with their grandfather mirrors the Biblical truth of perseverance and trusting in God in all circumstances.

4. Hospitality and Community:

- Biblical Reference: Hebrews 13:2 - "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."
- Tie-In: The Alden children are often depicted welcoming others and forming connections within their community. Their hospitality and ability to create a welcoming environment reflect the Biblical encouragement to show kindness and hospitality to all.



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Entering 3rd Grade

Summer Reading for Students Entering the 3rd Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Malcolm at Midnight*** by W.H. Beck. This book combines mystery, friendship, and adventure. Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

1. ****Character Analysis****- Discuss the main characters in the book, such as Malcolm, the small rat with big dreams, and his friends at the Midnight Academy. What are their strengths and weaknesses? How do they change and grow throughout the story? Explore the character of the antagonist, the conniving iguana named Lenny Shumway. What motivates him? How does he affect the other characters and the plot?
2. ****Themes****:-
 - Friendship: How does Malcolm's friendship with the other animals at the Midnight Academy impact the story? What does it teach him about loyalty, trust, and teamwork?
 - Courage: Discuss moments in the book where characters display courage in the face of adversity. How do they overcome their fears and challenges?
 - Acceptance: Explore the theme of acceptance and diversity as portrayed in the relationships between different animal species at the Midnight Academy. How do the characters learn to embrace their differences and work together?
3. ****Setting****:- The Midnight Academy: Describe the setting of the Midnight Academy, an old schoolhouse where the animals hold their meetings and adventures. How does the author create a sense of atmosphere and mystery in this setting?
 - The Human World: Contrast the world of the animals with the human world outside. How do the animals navigate their interactions with humans, particularly Malcolm's relationship with his human family?

4. **Plot and Conflict**:

- Identify the main conflict in the story. How does Malcolm get entangled in Lenny Shumway's scheme, and what challenges does he face in resolving the conflict?
- Discuss the suspenseful elements of the plot, such as Malcolm's secret missions and the danger posed by Lenny Shumway. How does the author build tension and keep the reader engaged?

5. **Morals and Lessons**:

- Discuss the moral lessons that readers can take away from the book, such as the importance of friendship, bravery, and standing up for what is right. How do these lessons resonate with the characters' experiences?
- Reflect on Malcolm's journey throughout the book. What does he learn about himself and the world around him? How does he apply these lessons to his actions and decisions?

6. **Author's Craft**:

- Explore the author's use of language, imagery, and humor in the book. How does W.H. Beck create a vivid and engaging narrative that appeals to young readers?
- Discuss the illustrations by Brian Lies and their contribution to the storytelling. How do the illustrations enhance the reader's understanding of the characters and events?

7. **Personal Reflection**:

- Encourage readers to share their own thoughts and feelings about the book. What aspects did they enjoy the most? Did they connect with any particular characters or themes? How has the book inspired them or changed their perspective?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

Biblical Tie-In for *Malcolm at Midnight*

1. Courage and Standing Up for What is Right:

- Biblical Reference: Joshua 1:9 - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

- Tie-In: Malcolm demonstrates courage by standing up for what is right and protecting his friends, much like the Biblical call to be strong and courageous in the face of challenges because God is with us!

2. Selflessness and Sacrifice:

- Biblical Reference: John 15:13 - "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

- Tie-In: Malcolm often puts the needs and safety of others before his own, showing selflessness and a willingness to sacrifice, akin to the Biblical principle of putting others first.

3. Community and Working Together:

- Biblical Reference: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 - "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."

- Tie-In: The animals in the school must work together and rely on each other's strengths to solve problems and maintain harmony. This reflects the Biblical teaching on the importance of community and the idea that each member plays a vital role in the body of Christ.

4. Integrity and Truthfulness:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 12:22 - "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."

- Tie-In: Malcolm values honesty and strives to act with integrity, even when it's difficult. This mirrors the Biblical commandment on truthfulness and being trustworthy.

5. Protecting the Innocent and Vulnerable:

- Biblical Reference: Psalm 82:3 - "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed."

- Tie-In: Malcolm often steps in to protect those who are more vulnerable or in danger, reflecting the Biblical call to defend and care for the weak and oppressed.

6. Leadership and Responsibility:

- Biblical Reference: 1 Timothy 4:12 - "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

- Tie-In: Despite being a small rat, Malcolm takes on a leadership role and sets a positive example for others, demonstrating that even those who might be underestimated can lead and make a difference.



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Entering 4th Grade

Summer Reading for Students Entering the 4th Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***The Year of Miss Agnes*** by Kirkpatrick Hill. *The Year of Miss Agnes* by Kirkpatrick Hill is a wonderful, heartwarming historical fiction novel. Set in 1948, it tells the story of a small, remote Athabascan Alaskan village called Fred's Creek. . Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

Character Analysis

- **Miss Agnes:** How does Miss Agnes differ from the teachers who came to the village before her? What specific actions does she take to show she respects the children and their culture?
- **Frederika (Fred):** How does Fred's perspective as the narrator shape how we see Miss Agnes? In what ways does Fred grow or change throughout the school year?
- **Bokko:** Bokko is deaf and has never been to school before Miss Agnes arrives. How does Miss Agnes help Bokko find her voice, and how does the community's view of Bokko change?
- **The Parents:** At first, many parents are skeptical about the value of school. Choose one parent (like Fred's mother) and track how their attitude toward education shifts by the end of the book.

Themes

- **The True Value of Education:** Miss Agnes teaches things that aren't just in standard textbooks. Based on the book, what does it truly mean to be "educated"?
- **Cultural Exchange and Respect:** Instead of trying to erase the Athabascan way of life, Miss Agnes embraces it. How does the book show that learning should be a two-way street between different cultures?
- **Belonging and Community:** How does the schoolroom become a microcosm (a mini-version) of a supportive community?

Setting

- **The Environment:** The story takes place in a remote Alaskan village in 1948. How do the harsh winter weather, the isolation, and the reliance on the river affect the daily lives of the characters?
- **The Classroom:** Describe the physical transformation of the schoolroom under Miss Agnes. How does the changing physical environment reflect the changing mindset of the students?
- **Setting as a Catalyst:** Would this story have the same impact if it were set in a modern, big-city school? Why or why not?

Plot and Conflict

- **Person vs. Environment:** What are some of the physical struggles the characters face just to get an education or survive the Alaskan winter?
- **Person vs. Society:** How do the traditional expectations of the village conflict with the Western expectations of formal schooling? How does Miss Agnes bridge this gap?
- **The Climax:** What is the emotional peak or turning point of the story regarding whether Miss Agnes will stay or leave, and how do the children react?

Morals and Lessons

- **Preserving Dignity:** What does the book teach us about the importance of assuming competence in people, regardless of their disabilities (like Bokko) or their backgrounds?
- **The Power of One Person:** What lesson does the book convey about the ripple effect that one dedicated, empathetic person can have on an entire community?
- **Adaptability:** Miss Agnes succeeds because she adapts to the village rather than forcing the village to adapt to her. What can we learn from her flexibility?

Personal Reflection

- **Your Own "Miss Agnes":** Think about your own life. Have you ever had a teacher, coach, or mentor who changed the way you look at the world or yourself? How do they compare to Miss Agnes?
- **The Joy of Learning:** Miss Agnes makes learning exciting by introducing map-making, Greek myths, and opera. If you could design a dream classroom or lesson plan, what elements from Miss Agnes's style would you include?
- **Stepping Into Their Shoes:** If you were one of the children in Fred's Creek, what would have been the hardest adjustment for you when Miss Agnes arrived? What would have been the most exciting?

Biblical Tie-In for *The Year of Miss Agnes*

1. Recognizing Every Person's Value (Bokko's Story)

In the book, Bokko is deaf and has been largely overlooked by society until Miss Agnes recognizes her intelligence and teaches her sign language. This mirrors the Biblical truth that every person is intentionally and wonderfully made by God, regardless of any physical limitations or disabilities.

Biblical Reference: *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."* — **Psalms 139:14**

2. Serving Others with Humility

Unlike previous teachers who complained about the remote village and lacked modern comforts, Miss Agnes serves the community with a joyful, humble heart. She meets the people where they are, reflecting the heart of a servant.

Biblical Reference: *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."* — **Philippians 2:3-4**

3. Adapting to Reach Others (Cultural Respect)

Miss Agnes doesn't try to force the Athabascan children to abandon their heritage. Instead, she learns about their lives, throws out rigid rules, and uses their culture to help them learn. This matches the Apostle Paul's approach to ministry, where he adapted his methods to connect with different groups of people without changing the core value of his message.

Biblical Reference: *"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."* — **1 Corinthians 9:22**

4. The Power of Our Words

Before Miss Agnes arrived, the children often felt discouraged and believed they weren't smart enough for advanced learning. Miss Agnes uses her words to give life, build confidence, and speak truth into their potential, showing how powerful encouragement can be.

Biblical Reference: *"The tongue has the power of life and death..."* — **Proverbs 18:21a**

5. Being a Light in the Darkness

The remote Alaskan winter is physically dark and harsh, but Miss Agnes's classroom becomes a warm, inviting beacon of light for the entire village. Her presence brings hope and joy, much like the Biblical calling to be a light to the world.

Biblical Reference: *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*
— **Matthew 5:16**

6. Loving Your Neighbor (Community Care)

The village is a tight-knit community where people must rely on one another to survive the environment. Miss Agnes quickly embeds herself into this family, showing genuine love, care, and sacrifice for her neighbors.

Biblical Reference: *"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* — **Mark 12:31**

7. Planting Seeds for the Future

Miss Agnes only stays for a season, but the impact of her teaching lasts long after she leaves. She plants seeds of knowledge, literacy, and self-worth in the children that will grow and benefit the village for generations. This beautifully illustrates the spiritual principle of sowing good seeds.

Biblical Reference: *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."* — **Galatians 6:9**



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Entering 5th Grade

Summer Reading for Students Entering the 5th Grade

Dear Students,

When we return to school, we will complete a class activity using the book ***Stuart Little*** by E.B. White. This book is a whimsical tale of adventure, friendship, and self-discovery. Here is a discussion guide to help you prepare for our class activities in August:

1. **Character Analysis**:

- **Stuart Little**: Discuss Stuart's unique character as a small but courageous mouse with a big heart. How does he navigate the challenges of being different from those around him? What qualities make him a memorable and endearing protagonist?

- **Margalo**: Analyze Margalo's character as a brave and resourceful bird who becomes Stuart's friend and companion. How does she influence Stuart's journey and help him discover his own strengths?

- **Snowbell**: Explore Snowbell's character as a mischievous and sometimes selfish family cat. How does his relationship with Stuart evolve throughout the story? What motivates him to protect Stuart despite their differences?

2. **Themes**:

- **Identity**: Examine the theme of identity as explored through Stuart's journey of self-discovery. How does he grapple with questions of belonging and acceptance in a world where he is different from everyone else?

- **Friendship**: Discuss the importance of friendship in the story, particularly Stuart's relationships with Margalo, Snowbell, and other characters he encounters on his adventures. How do these friendships shape his experiences and worldview?

- **Courage**: Explore the theme of courage as depicted through Stuart's willingness to embark on daring adventures and face formidable challenges. What fears does he overcome, and how does he demonstrate bravery in the face of adversity?

3. **Setting**:

- **New York City**: Describe the setting of New York City and its significance to the story. How does E.B. White bring the bustling city to life through vivid descriptions and memorable landmarks?

- **Stuart's Home**: Analyze Stuart's home and family environment, including his relationships with his human parents and brother. How does Stuart navigate the complexities of family life as a small mouse in a human-sized world?

4. **Plot and Conflict**:

- Identify the main conflict in the story, such as Stuart's quest to find Margalo after she disappears. How do the challenges and obstacles he faces propel the plot forward and drive his character development?
- Discuss the structure of the plot, including the rising action, climax, and resolution. How does E.B. White build tension and suspense leading up to the climax of the story?

5. **Morals and Lessons**:

- Reflect on the moral lessons imparted by the book, such as the importance of courage, kindness, and perseverance. How do these lessons resonate with readers of all ages?
- Discuss Stuart's journey of self-discovery and the message it conveys about embracing one's uniqueness and finding strength in adversity. What does Stuart's story teach us about resilience and the power of the human (or mouse) spirit?

6. **Author's Craft**:

- Explore E.B. White's writing style and his ability to blend whimsy, humor, and heartfelt emotion in his storytelling. How does he create a sense of wonder and enchantment that captivates readers from start to finish?
- Analyze the role of illustrations by Garth Williams in enhancing the storytelling. How do the illustrations complement the text and bring Stuart's adventures to life in the imagination of the reader?

7. **Personal Reflection**:

- Encourage readers to share their own thoughts and feelings about the book. What aspects of Stuart's journey resonated with them the most? How has reading "Stuart Little" influenced their understanding of friendship, courage, and the power of imagination?

Enjoy your summer! We look forward to seeing you in August.

Biblical Tie-In for *Stuart Little*

1. Courage and Overcoming Obstacles:

- Biblical Reference: Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all this through him who gives me strength."
- Tie-In: Stuart faces numerous challenges despite his small size, demonstrating courage and determination. His perseverance and ability to overcome obstacles reflect the Biblical teaching that strength comes from Christ.

2. Value of the Individual:

- Biblical Reference: Psalm 139:14 - "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
- Tie-In: Stuart's uniqueness and the acceptance he receives from his family highlight the Biblical idea that every individual is wonderfully made and valued, regardless of their appearance or size.

3. Friendship and Loyalty:

- Biblical Reference: Proverbs 18:24 - "One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."
- Tie-In: Stuart's loyalty to his friends, such as Margalo the bird, and his willingness to embark on a journey to find her, demonstrate the importance of steadfast friendship, echoing the Biblical call to be a loyal and supportive friend.

4. Stewardship and Responsibility:

- Biblical Reference: Genesis 2:15 - "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."
- Tie-In: Stuart takes on various responsibilities and tasks, such as piloting a boat and caring for his friends. His actions reflect the Biblical principle of stewardship and taking responsibility for one's environment and duties.

5. Search for Purpose:

- Biblical Reference: Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
- Tie-In: Stuart's journey to find Margalo and his ongoing search for a place where he truly belongs can be seen as a quest for purpose and meaning, akin to the biblical message that God has a plan for each individual's life.

6. Hospitality and Kindness:

- Biblical Reference: Hebrews 13:2 - "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."
- Tie-In: The Little family's acceptance of Stuart into their home and the kindness they show him demonstrate the Biblical virtue of hospitality. Additionally, Stuart's interactions with other characters throughout his adventures often involve mutual kindness and hospitality.

7. Family and Support:

- Biblical Reference: Ephesians 6:1-3 - "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—'so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'"
- Tie-In: Stuart's relationship with his family, especially their support and care for him, illustrates the Biblical principle of family support and the importance of honoring and valuing familial bonds.