

RELIGION DEPARTMENT SUMMER READING

SUMMER 2019

SOPHOMORE READING

FROM THE BIBLE: GENESIS CHAPTERS 1 & 2. THE GOSPEL OF MARK AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A number of different editions of the Bible are available and students can use whatever edition they wish. The entire Bible is also available on line at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>

Please answer these questions as you are reading the texts. They will serve as the basis of a test when you return in September.

Sophomore Summer Reading Questions on Genesis 1 & 2, the Gospel of Mark, and the Gospel of John

1. A concept called Salvation History, which you will be learning more about this year, can be said to begin with Genesis and culminate in the Gospels. Research the concept of Salvation History. At what point in the Genesis readings does it seem to begin? How does it seem to culminate in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John? What is the significance of the ending of Salvation History?
2. How does God create and shape the world in Genesis 1? Identify the verb that is used to describe his creative acts (hint: it is not "made"). Consider chapter 1 of John's Gospel. What is John talking about? What word comes up frequently in this introduction? What relationship might be suggested between the words used by each of the authors?
3. In the Genesis readings, what does the fundamental nature of the world seem to be? What does the fundamental nature of humans seem to be? What might this tell us about God?
4. The Jewish and Christian communities celebrate what is called a Sabbath Day each week. Research the Sabbath Day. Identify, in the Genesis reading, the basis for this Sabbath Day. Do you celebrate the Sabbath Day? If so, how?
5. Look up the definition of a parable. Identify at least one parable in the Gospel of Mark. Explain what the parable you've identified tries to teach. Does the parable seem like a useful teaching device? Why or why not? Were there any parables that you did not understand?
6. You will have discovered that Mark's Jesus occasionally encourages people to be secretive about his miracles and his identity. Try to identify several places in which Jesus does this. Why do you think Jesus wanted this secrecy? Do you think anything similar occurs in the Gospel of John?
7. While reading the Gospel of Mark, try to consider what it means to be an apostle or disciple of Jesus. What are apostles called to do? How are followers of Jesus to behave? What, then, are Christians today called to do?
8. What word does the author of the Gospel of John use to describe the miracles that Jesus performs throughout the Gospel? What do you think of the choice? Does it seem appropriate? Why?
9. Carefully read John 8:1-11. Why do the Pharisees bring the woman to Jesus? What is Jesus' response to the Pharisees? What message might we take from this scene?
10. Carefully read John 13:1-20. What do you think this scene tells us about Jesus' character? In verse 15, Jesus explicitly says that he gives the apostles a "model to follow". How might Christians follow this model?