



February 27, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The goal of Saint Joseph Academy is to encourage our students to become self-directed, lifelong learners while exposing them to the multiple perspectives necessary for developing compassionate leaders in a global society. Therefore, we have designed the *Learn to Love* reading program to respect students' time commitments and also challenge them to engage in academic and personal growth over the summer months.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, the Saint Joseph Academy community will be exploring the theme of “Live Unifying Love.” According to our Character of a Graduate statement, a student demonstrates unifying love through “inclusivity, mutuality, and oneness in relationships with God, others, and Earth.”

To nurture this characteristic, each student will choose one book to read over the summer from the list of titles at the end of this document. The list includes titles at various reading levels, from various genres, and on an array of topics to meet the needs and interests of our student population. The *Learn to Love Committee* chose the selections on the list from suggestions that were gathered from all members of the Saint Joseph Academy community. As always, students are encouraged to read more than one title on the list.

We are called by God to be healers and unifiers in a world of brokenness, alienation, and strife; therefore, many of the books deal with difficult and complex problems. **Parents/guardians should help their student to carefully discern which book is best;** we encourage parents/guardians and students to look at book reviews and descriptions before choosing a book to read. We invite parents/guardians to read along with their student, as well. **Visit the Nazareth Library [Trello](#) page to view further descriptions and reviews of the books.** You will also find additional links to learn more about our theme, Live Unifying Love.

Students will make a selection as to which book to read during homeroom on April 8. [Parents/guardians of incoming freshmen, please indicate which book your student will be reading by completing the Google Form by April 8. **The link will be sent in an email in the next few days.**]

Live Unifying Love Discussion Day

Early in the Fall semester of 2020, students will meet in their homerooms to further explore what it means to live unifying love by discussing the books they have read. The small-group setting allows us to deepen our relationships and pray together. Because this experience is at the heart of what it means to be a member of the SJA community, **it is an expectation that all students come prepared to actively participate in the day’s events.**

Questions to Consider While Reading and During Discussions

As you read the book, think about which passages or quotations have an impact on the way you think about living unifying love. Keep track of these as you read, and use them to prepare to discuss the following questions:

- Unifying love is demonstrated by “inclusivity, mutuality, and oneness in relationships with God, others, and Earth.” How did the characters in the book you read demonstrate living unifying love? What could have happened if they didn’t?
- Identify situations in the book you read in which unifying love was needed. How would the situation have been different if there was unifying love?
- How did you grow in your understanding of unifying love while you read the book? Or what is the most important thing you learned from the book?

- Can you identify a specific personal relationship where you could demonstrate unifying love, either at home, school or community?
- How have you been the recipient of unifying love? Who in your life demonstrates it the most?
- Identify situations in which unifying love is demonstrated in our community and our world.
- What situations in our school, community, country, and world are in need of unifying love? How could you as an individual address these unmet needs? How as a community could we address these needs?

Live Unifying Love Reading Options

Over the summer, all students are required to read at least one title from the list below that they have not read before. All books are readily available as print and eBooks from public libraries or bookstores.

Title	Author	Category
<u>Aurora Rising</u>	Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff	Science Fiction Young Adult
<u>The Book of Unknown Americans</u>	Cristina Henríquez	Literary Fiction - Immigration Experience
<u>Citizen, an American Lyric*</u>	Claudia Rankine	Poetry - African American Experience
<u>Come from Away: Welcome to the Rock</u>	Irene Sankoff and David Hein	Script
<u>Disappearing Earth*</u>	Julia Phillips	National Book Award Finalist, Mystery
<u>Gandhi: My Life is My Message</u>	Jason Quinn	Graphic Novel
<u>Love Does</u>	Bob Goff	Nonfiction, relationships
<u>River of Fire*</u>	Helen Prejean	Memoir, Sister of St. Joseph
<u>Sherwood</u>	Meagan Spooner	Young Adult Robin Hood Retelling
<u>Stargirl</u>	Jerry Spinelli	Young Adult Contemporary
<u>Super Girls and Halos</u>	Maria Morera Johnson	Nonfiction, Saints
<u>A Tree Grows in Brooklyn</u>	Betty Smith	Classic Coming of Age
<u>When the Ground is Hard</u>	Malla Nunn	Young Adult - Swaziland
<u>Where'd You Go Bernadette?</u>	Maria Semple	Fiction, Alex Award
<u>With the Fire on High</u>	Elizabeth Acevedo	Young Adult Contemporary
<u>Student Choice</u>	Be prepared to explain how the book relates to Unifying Love	

Additional Reading Opportunities

In addition to *Learn to Love*, the Nazareth Library sponsors the Sursum Libros reading program, which offers students incentives to read above and beyond coursework requirements throughout the year. Visit the Sursum Libros [webpage](#) to participate in this program and for a list of other suggested titles for students to read over the summer.

If you have any questions, please contact Nazareth Library Department Chair Mrs. Rebecca Synk (rsynk@sja1890.org).

Sincerely,

The *Learn to Love Committee*

*Denotes a more challenging reading level.