

Dear Providence Academy Middle School Families,

Summer is a wonderful time to slow down a bit, enjoy time together, and hopefully dive into a good book! Our English department has put together a summer reading plan designed to encourage students to read engaging, age-appropriate literature that will prepare them well for the upcoming school year. Research consistently shows that students who continue reading over the summer return to school more confident, prepared, and ready to learn. More importantly, reading great literature helps students grow in imagination, understanding, and communication. I hope this can also be an opportunity for your family to enjoy reading together and to encourage meaningful conversations at home.

Our English teachers are already looking forward to discussing these novels with students at the beginning of the school year. Many of the first activities, discussions, and assessments in English classes will connect directly to the summer reading selections, so I encourage students to complete their reading before school begins and arrive ready to participate. Families will be responsible for purchasing the summer reading books for their students. However, except for upcoming ninth graders and seniors, a specific edition is not required. Please make sure students bring their copy of the book to class during the first two weeks of school.

You will find details below regarding each grade level's book selection, along with a few suggestions for how you can support and encourage your student's reading this summer.

Thank you for partnering with us and for continuing to encourage a love for learning and great literature in your children. Your support plays such an important role in helping our students begin the 2026–2027 school year successfully.

In Christ,

Sherry Chambers

Sherry Chambers
Middle School Principal

6th Grade (choose 1)

Option 1 - *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

What does it mean to grow up? What does it mean to be a child? Travel with Alice as she transitions from small to big and back again through a fantastic world filled with strange creatures, silly logic, and playful language. This book is a book to experience—to laugh at, think about, and return to for years to come. Copies of this book can be found online or at your local bookstore.

Here are some things to think about as you read and discuss with your family:

- What do you already know about *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*? If you have watched a movie version, compare and contrast it to the book.
- Is curiosity a good thing? How does Alice's curiosity affect the plot?
- What things in Wonderland seem backwards or upside down? Why do you think the author created Wonderland in this way?
- Rules in Wonderland are often confusing or illogical to Alice. Think about a time when something felt confusing or unfair. How did you handle it?
- Why do you think Alice keeps changing sizes?
- What do you expect will be different in 6th grade?
- In what ways are you growing up? What parts of childhood are good to hold onto?
- Make up a nonsense poem with your family that plays with sounds and rhyme.

Option 2 - *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbitt

Enjoy the novel that inspired the school musical for 2026, *Tuck Everlasting*. Winnie Foster feels stuck at home until she encounters the Tuck family, a mysterious family who accidentally discovered a secret way to live forever. Copies of this book can be found online or at your local bookstore.

Here are some things to think about as you read and discuss with your family:

- Why do the Tucks keep the spring secret?
- How does being immortal affect how the Tucks see the world?
- What is appealing about never growing older? What would you lose if you stopped growing older?
- Did Winnie make the right choice? Why or why not?
- How does the eternal life experienced by the Tuck family compare or contrast with eternal life we receive as believers?

7th Grade (choose 1)

Option 1 - The Wizard of Oz by Frank Baum

Be swept away to the magical land of Oz as you read the story of Dorothy Gale on her journey to find her way home. After she unexpectedly lands in Oz, Dorothy must travel to the Emerald City with the help of new friends she meets along the way, hoping the mysterious wizard can help her reunite with her family.

Here are some things to think about as you read and discuss with your family:

- What does Dorothy learn about the meaning of “home”?
- What does the Bible say about courage and trusting God in uncertain situations?
- Which of the characters do you most relate to? Dorothy, the scarecrow, the tinman, the lion, etc.?
- How do the characters change or grow as the story progresses?

If you choose to watch the film adaptation, do so after you read the book, so you can compare and contrast the musical with the novel.

Option 2 - Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

If given the opportunity to never grow up, would you take it? In *Peter Pan*, Wendy Darling travels to Neverland with Peter Pan, a boy who refuses to grow up. There, she encounters pirates, mermaids, and many other interesting characters. In the end, she must decide whether she will grow up or stay in Neverland and remain a child.

Here are some things to think about as you read and discuss with your family:

- What would be the benefits of never growing up? What would be the problems?
- Why does Peter Pan not want to grow up? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- What does Wendy’s decision at the end reveal about her maturity?
- What does the Bible say about childlike faith and growing?

If you decide to watch a movie version, do so after reading the book, and possibly with friends, so you can compare the director’s interpretation of the story to your own reading of the novel.

Option 3 - Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne

To what lengths would you go to win a bet? In a time before airplanes, Phileas Fogg bet his friends half his fortune that he could travel around the world in just eighty days. His determination to win the bet leads to crazy adventures and experiencing new cultures.

Here are a few suggestions for activities and discussions to enhance your reading this summer:

- If you travel this summer, keep a travel log like Phileas, tracking where you visit and what you see.
- Try food from different countries as mentioned in the book.
- Inventions and technological progress play an important role in Fogg's ability to win his bet, but technology has changed drastically since the time in which this story is set. In what ways does new technology make the world a better place? In what ways could new technology be harmful?
- Discuss which of the places visited by Fogg you would want to visit most. Why would you choose that place in particular?
- Discuss why Christians should be interested in learning about other countries and cultures.

8th Grade

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Have you ever had a special place you shared with only your closest friends? In *The Secret Garden*, Mary Lennox finds such a place when she moves to her uncle's large, mysterious house after the death of her parents. There she meets a few friends who work together to cultivate a secret garden that heals in unexpected ways.

Here are a few suggestions for activities to enhance your reading this summer:

- Since a neglected garden plays a big role in this story, visit some local gardens. The Biltmore has a large walled formal garden you can visit. Jonesborough hosts a ticketed garden tour day June 1 that allows you to view the hidden gardens downtown.
- You can also create your own garden this summer. If your family does not have a garden, raised bed gardening is a great way to start.
- Try sketching the garden as it is described in the book.

If you decide to watch a movie version, do so after reading the book, and possibly with friends, so you can compare the director's interpretation of the story to your own reading of the novel.

As you read, consider these questions:

- What does the Bible say about friends and friendship?
- What about Mary's attitude makes her difficult to befriend? What about Mary changes before she can become a good friend?
- What role can the outdoors play in physical and emotional health?