



Dear parents and students,

Our English department has exciting news for you about summer reading! All students in grades 10-12 will be reading *Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Kreuger as a common read. We are thrilled to look at this text across grade levels and in a variety of ways. William Kent Kreuger offers timeless themes of endurance and discovering God's grace and wisdom in hard situations. Through his young narrator, readers get a peek into a mystery and a tumultuous summer in small town New Bremen, Minnesota.

We think students—and parents—will love this tale of an older man looking back and reflecting on one of the hardest, most confusing, and also most illuminating and formative times of his young life. We hope parents will join in on the reading!

Like most literature, there are sensitive topics tackled in this text: murder, suicide, handicaps, racial stereotypes, and unexpected, natural disasters. Because of these topics as well as some of the language that the thirteen-year-old narrator explores as he grapples with these things, we wanted to send home this letter first acknowledging the content.

Secondly, we wanted to explain why despite these topics and the language, we collectively feel that this novel holds together the brokenness of our world while also offering truth about who God is. The entire text points to God's grace regardless of the circumstances going on in the world of these characters.

Thirdly, the audiobook version is a beautiful telling; however, you should know that if you are listening as a family, there is language that young children should not hear.

Lastly, we wanted to give you an alternative option if as a parent or a student you feel that the topics are getting too difficult, hit too close to home at this time, or the language is too much. If you choose to opt out of reading *Ordinary Grace*, students will need to read Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz*. This choice needs to be made and communicated to the English teacher at the beginning of the school year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at gonder.charli@hardingacademymemphis.org.

Thank you for your partnership. Happy reading!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Melissa Ammons, Mrs. Charli Gonder,
Ms. Taylor Montgomery, and Mrs. Janelle Phipps