



## **Summer Reading & Writing For students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade**

**Read the books listed below and complete the attached Reading Guide for each book. In addition, write five journal entries from the attached list of topics. Both assignments should be completed prior to the start of school on August 31, 2009. All reading guide responses and journal entries should be completed in a black & white marble notebook/journal.**

The Gospel of Luke

*The House of Dies Drear*  
Author: Virginia Hamilton

*Surviving the Applewhites*  
Author: Stephanie Tolen

If you have any questions you can email me at [coxjm2003@yahoo.com](mailto:coxjm2003@yahoo.com)

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## **Reading Guide for The Gospel According to Luke**

### **Background Information:**

Luke is the first part of a two-volume work that includes [The Acts of the Apostles](#). This is clear from the introductions to both books (see [Luke 1:1-4](#) and [Acts 1:1-5](#)). These books together tell about the life of Jesus from his birth until he was taken to heaven (Luke), and then they report how the early followers of Jesus continued to spread the teachings of Jesus and tell about his life (Acts). The author of Luke says that he has “made a careful study of everything and then decided to write and tell exactly what took place” ([1:3](#)) concerning Jesus. The book is dedicated to Theophilus, a friend or supporter.

### **Reading Responses:**

*Please complete all reading responses in a black & white marble notebook/journal.*

1. The Gospels are sometimes called “biographies” of Jesus. More than any other books of the Bible, the Gospels provide details about the life and teachings of Jesus. How are the Gospels (a) similar and (b) different from modern biographies? What aspects of Jesus’ life seem to be most important to Luke? Which event, miracle, or teaching of Jesus impressed you the most in Luke’s Gospel? Why?
2. Luke gives “mini portraits” of the men and women who followed Jesus. Which of Jesus’ followers did you identify with most strongly? Why? How did Jesus interact with this character? What did you learn from the way Jesus treats his followers? What did you learn from the way Jesus treats those who opposed him?
3. Jesus often used stories called parables when teaching. Make a list of all the parables you find in Luke. How are parables different from other kinds of teaching? Which of Jesus’ parables is your favorite? Why? Which parables, if any, did you have trouble understanding?
4. Almost one quarter of Luke is devoted to the events of the last week of Jesus’ life. Why do you think this much attention is given to a single week? How is this part of Luke different from the earlier parts of Luke? What did you learn from the way Jesus conducted himself during his trial and execution? How do the events described in the final chapters of Luke affect your understanding of God? How do the events described in the final chapters of Luke affect your understanding of what God expects from people of faith?
5. Read the mini-article on the Holy Spirit. What events in Luke are directly attributed to the Holy Spirit? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus’ followers?

The Holy Spirit is God's presence at work in the world. The Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) declare that the spirit of God was at work in the creation of the world ([Gen 1.2](#)), giving life to plants, animals, and humans ([Ps 104.27-30](#)). The leaders of Israel were given power and direction by the Spirit, including Moses and the seventy-two leaders chosen to help him ([Num 11.24-30](#)), Gideon ([Judg 6.34](#)), and Kings Saul and David ([1 Sam 10.6-13](#); [11.6](#); [16.13](#); [2 Sam 23.1-4](#)). Earlier prophets like Elijah and Elisha ([2 Kgs 2.9-15](#), where the CEV translates "spirit" as "power") and later ones like Isaiah and Ezekiel ([Isa 61.1](#); [Ezek 2.2](#); [3.12-27](#)) were guided by the Spirit of God and given messages for the people.

The Lord promised to give his Spirit and message to his people so that they would become eager to obey God's Law and teachings ([Isa 59.21](#); [Ezek 36.24-29](#)). The prophet Isaiah reminded the people that it was by the Spirit that God guided the history of Israel from the beginning ([Isa 63.10-14](#)). If God's people disobey the Spirit, they will be punished ([Isa 63.10](#)), but when they follow the Spirit, their lives and hearts will be transformed and purified ([Ezek 36.26,27](#)). And ultimately, their hope for the future is that God's Spirit will renew them and their relationship with God ([Isa 44.3-5](#); [Ezek 11.19,20](#)), and send them a new ruler filled with wisdom and justice ([Isa 11.2-5](#)).

For the writers of the New Testament, Jesus is seen as the one who fulfills the vision that inspired the prophets. Luke reports that an angel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would come down to her, and God's power would come over her and that her child, Jesus, would be called the holy Son of God ([Luke 1.35](#)). Jesus' relationship with God is again emphasized at his baptism when "the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the form of a dove" ([Luke 3.22](#)). At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus read a passage from Isaiah to people gathered on the Sabbath. He declared that the Lord's Spirit had come to him and had chosen him to tell the good news to the poor ([Luke 4.16-19](#)). Although Jesus' enemies accused him of having an unclean spirit ([Mark 3.28-30](#)), Jesus claimed that it was by God's Spirit, not by the devil, that he was able to drive out demons ([Matt 12.28](#)). The writer of Matthew also claimed that Jesus was the "chosen servant" Isaiah said would be given the Spirit of God and bring justice to the nations ([Matt 12.15-21](#); see also [Isa 42.1-4](#)).

In John, Jesus tells his disciples he will send the Holy Spirit to help them; to teach them everything and remind them of what Jesus had already taught them; to show them what is true; and to guide them in the full truth ([John 14.15-17,25,26](#); [15.26](#); [16.4-15](#)).

After Jesus died and was raised to life, he spent forty days with his apostles. He told them that they would be baptized by the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1.3-5](#)) and that the Spirit would give them the power to take the good news about Jesus "everywhere in the world" ([Acts 1.8](#)). Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit came to the apostles who were gathered in Jerusalem ([Acts 2.1-12](#)). Acts goes on to tell of the many ways the Holy Spirit guided and strengthened the apostles as they took the good news about Jesus to other lands and people (for example, see [Acts 4.8,31](#); [6.3-5](#); [8.29](#); [13.2-9](#); [20.22-24](#)).

For Paul, it is the Spirit who sets free God's new people and who changes their lives so that they can have peace and be obedient to God ([Rom 8.1-17](#)). The Spirit gives them the ability to understand God's will, to live together in love, to see what the future will bring, and to carry out the different kinds of work that need to be done in the churches ([1 Cor 12~14](#)). The Spirit produces within them the love and the lifestyle that God wants for his people ([Rom 4.9-13](#); [Gal 5.22,23](#)).

## **Reading Guide for *The House of Dies Drear*** **Author: Virginia Hamilton**

### **Background Information:**

A huge, old, Civil War era house that was once a stop on the Underground Railroad comes alive with secret tunnels and mysterious characters. Thomas and his family are the next to discover the mysteries of this most unusual place.

### **Reading Responses:**

*Please complete all reading responses in a black & white marble notebook/journal.*

1. Prior to reading write down everything you know about the Underground Railroad. (You may not know anything about the Underground Railroad. If not, list your predictions – what you think it was.)
2. Mr. Small is a history professor who desperately wants to live in the house of Dies Drear. Upon arriving at the house what are the reactions of his family? Describe their reactions using quotes and examples from the text.
3. Who is Mr. Pluto? Describe his role in the book. Use quotes and examples to support your response.
4. What motivates the Darrows to act maliciously towards the Smalls and others who previously occupied the house of Dies Drear?
5. What secrets does the house of Dies Drear hold? How are they discovered? Who discovers them?
6. Describe how Thomas and his father are alike. Use quotes and examples from the text to support your response.

*Based on questions organized by Katie O'Dell, Reading Promotions Coordinator of the Oregon State Library in Multnomah County*

## Reading Guide for *Surviving the Applewhites*

Author: Stephanie Tolen

### Background Information:

Nobody wants Jake around. He's got a reputation as the "bad kid". When he gets kicked out of yet another school, he's given one last chance to start fresh at the Creative Academy, a home-school run by the Applewhites. Jake instantly clashes with the Applewhites, but the more time he spends there, the more he begins to change.

### Reading Responses:

*Please complete all reading responses in a black & white marble notebook/journal.*

1. According to Jake, the students, teachers, and administrators at Traybridge Middle School labeled him a "bad kid". Describe what makes him a "bad kid". Use quotes or examples from the text to support your description.
2. What effect does this label have on Jake? How does he see himself? Use quotes or examples from the text to support your response.
3. Zedediah Applewhite says the following to Jake on his first day at the Creative Academy, "The most important thing you're going to learn while you're here is who you are and what you are made of." (p.37) Does Jake learn who he is and what he's made of? Use quotes or examples from the text to support your response.
4. Before entering the Creative Academy what type of behaviors did Jake exhibit to show people who he was and what he stood for? Why doesn't this work at the Creative Academy? Use quotes and examples from the text to support your responses.
5. "Once you know what gives you joy, you will know what you want from an education and you'll be able to set your own program." (p.123-124) Based on the previous quote by Zedediah Applewhite, what kind of program would you design for yourself at the Creative Academy? Be specific in your response and explain your choices. *EXAMPLE: I would chose to design a program focused on music. I want to learn about composers and musicians so I can become a great flute player. My program would include an independent study of Vivaldi, his life and his works. I would include a unit on the geography of Italy in hopes that I may be able to visit the birthplace of Vivaldi.*
6. What event in the story changes Jake? Describe the changes (both physical and emotional). Use quotes or examples from the text to support your response.
7. Choose one character from *Surviving the Applewhites* that you most resemble or can relate to the best. Describe the character (use quotes or examples from the text in your description). State why you most resemble this character. *Remember to think beyond the physical description and into the qualities of the character.*

*Response Guide Questions based on the teaching ideas of Jaime Joyce, Educational Consultant, Brooklyn New York*

## Journal Writing Topics

***Please choose five journal topics from the list below and write a 100 word response for each topic. Label your topic choice with the number. Please write all of your journal response entries in your black & white marble notebook/journal.***

1. Black opera singer Leontyne Price once said; "If you're not feeling good about yourself, what you're wearing on the outside doesn't mean a thing." What do you think she meant? Offer at least one example from your own experience that proves the truth of this statement.
2. Calvin Coolidge, the 30<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, said: "It takes a great man to be a good listener." Do you agree? Explain your answer. Do you think it's difficult for some people to be good listeners? Explain your answer. When is it most important for you to be listened to? Explain you answer.
3. "Work is what you do that sometime you won't have to do it anymore," says Alfred Polgar. "Without work all life goes rotten," said French writer Albert Camus. Make up your own definition of work and explain your answer.
4. Do you think the philosopher Platonius, from the first century B.C. meant the same thing when he said: "If I keep good character, I shall be rich enough"? Explain your answer.
5. A familiar nursery rhyme begins:  
"Twinkle, twinkle, litter star,  
How I wonder what you are!  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky"  
List everything that is valuable or precious to you, and tell why you value it.
6. The story of "Puss in Boots' by Charles Persault ends with these words: "Puss became a great lord and gave up chasing mice except just once in a while for the fun of it." List the things that you like to do "just for the fun of it." Explain your answer.
7. Nancy Thayer once wrote, "It's never too late- in fiction or in life-to revise." Explain at least one thing you would "revise", or change, in your life.

