

## A NOTE TO PARENTS ABOUT THE BOOK CHOICES

We would like to take a moment and share with you our thoughts on developing our reading lists and requirements.

The books on the list have a varied content, and deal with a variety of life themes and worldviews. Some books are overtly Christian, while others are not. All the books have been chosen because they, in some way, address the deep questions that humanity has been asking itself for centuries. They are also frequently taught in colleges and universities, and as such, they form part of our cultural literacy.

It is West-Mont's belief that the view of the world set forth in scripture, and applied to our culture, is a compelling argument for the wholeness of a Christian worldview. We also believe that a Christ-centered worldview, when compared to other views of the world, demonstrates the inadequacy of these worldviews. With this in mind, it is clear that the Christian worldview should, and does, bring discernment to all of our reading and learning.

Furthermore, the most effective Christians are those who have taken the time to understand others, regardless of the other's worldview. Scripturally, we see this modeled in the time and care the apostle Paul takes in speaking with the Greeks at Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17:16–34). Paul makes an effective defense of the hope within him by reaching into the Greek culture and proclaiming Christ there. He would not have been able to do this so skillfully without his knowledge of Greek thought and culture. We desire to raise up students who will make an effective defense of the hope within them to the culture around them, and who will know that Christ is able to fully answer the deepest questions and meet the deepest needs of all people. It is our desire to raise up students who worship God with their hearts and minds, and see all of human history and thought in the light of God's incredible love for humanity. Our learning is useless unless it brings glory to God.

West-Mont's desire is to promote truth and a Christ-centered worldview at every opportunity, and to examine the cultures around us with a critical and knowledgeable perspective. Teaching or discussing worldviews other than Christian is never done for the purpose of promoting those worldviews. Instead, it is our desire to show how thoroughly a Christ-centered worldview holds up against others. At West-Mont, the purpose for this is always to deepen a student's commitment to the truth of God in all of life. In this spirit, when students return in the fall, they will be asked to analyze the worldview of both books that they read over the summer, and respond by comparing and contrasting the worldview of the book with a Christian view of the world.

You can encourage your student's critical thinking this summer by discussing the books with the student, and by helping the student to see the worldview present in the text. Thank you so much for partnering with us in building critical thinking, and more importantly, discernment.

## **Nonfiction**

*Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson  
*What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew*, Daniel Pool  
*Gods, Graves, and Scholars*, C. W. Ceram  
*The Mother Tongue*, Bill Bryson  
*A Walk in the Woods*, Bill Bryson  
*A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson  
*Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman  
*Kon Tiki*, Thor Heyerdahl  
*A Short History of the Twentieth Century*, Geoffery Blainey  
*Why We Can't Wait*, Martin Luther King, Jr.  
*Abraham Lincoln/Speeches and Writing 1859-1865*, Abraham Lincoln  
*The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, Richard Rhodes  
*The War Between the States*, John Dwyer  
*Marco Polo/His Notebook*, Susan Roth  
*The Hot Zone*, Richard Preston  
*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Rebecca Skloot  
*A Voyage Long and Strange* Tony Horwitz  
*Skeletons on the Zahara* Dean King  
*In the Heart of the Sea: the Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* Nathaniel Philbrick

## **Autobiography/Biography/Memoirs**

*The Story of My Life*, Helen Keller  
*Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard  
*An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard  
*Letters from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer OR  
    *Bonhoeffer*, Eric Metaxis  
*The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom  
*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X  
*Autobiography*, Agatha Christie  
*Walden*, Henry David Thoreau  
*Journals of Lewis and Clark*, John Ordway and Charles Floyd  
*Of Plymouth Plantation*, William Bradford  
*Up from Slavery*, Booker T. Washington  
*Out of Africa*, Isaac Dinesen  
*October Sky*, Homer Hickam  
*My Story*, Rosa Parks  
*Black Like Me*, John Howard Griffin  
*All Creatures Great and Small*, James Herriot  
*The Color of Water*, James McBride  
*The Bible Smuggler*, Louis Vernon

A biography of at least 200 pages on any of the following scientists:

Francis Bacon, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Alfred Nobel, Niels Bohr, Nikola Tesla,  
Marie Curie, Lise Meitner, George Washington Carver, Michael Faraday,  
Johannes Kepler, Enrico Fermi, Galileo Galilei, Robert Boyle, Francis Collins,  
Gregor Mendel, and Nicholas Copernicus

