



**ST. THOMAS  
AQUINAS**  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## Middle School Summer Reading 2024

### Students Entering Grades 6 - 8

Instructions: Please carefully read through the attached documents to understand what is expected of each student prior to their return to school. Each student is expected to join their grade level Summer Reading Program Google Classroom to track assignments, important announcements, and just keep in touch. Have a great summer!

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

June 2024

Dear Middle School Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

It is hard to believe, but the summer is fast-approaching! With the summer months lurking, and while fun in the sun is on our minds, learning, especially the art and practice of reading, must not take a vacation.

Learning does not end each June; rather, by continuing to engage their minds, students will arrive back to school in September feeling accomplished and in a better position to begin their next academic year. Summer reading is critical to academic growth by helping students sustain their learning while school is out. Educators and parents agree summer reading matters. According to a Scholastic *Teacher & Principal School Report*, 96% of educators agree that providing year-round access to books at home is important to enhancing student achievement. Summer reading also assists students to avoid the dangerous “summer slump” or “summer slide” by keeping their minds awake and alert.

This year, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is requiring two texts for our rising 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade students. Students will be asked to read and write critically about the novels. This is extremely important for the middle school team as a means of assessing the individual needs of every student upon their return to school in the fall. Specifically, the writing component will inform us where the “trouble spots” might be hiding, thus informing our English instruction in those first weeks of school. Additionally, having required reading allows for more structured discussions during those first few important weeks of school. In an exciting addition to the required text for each grade, we have coordinated “*One Book, One Middle School*” on the life and times of Bl. Carlo Acutis. Several months ago when I happened across this small biography, I was taken aback by the many connections our students could make to Acutis as he, like them, was a young teen with struggles and challenges among his peers. However, his faith was stalwart. Acutis’s love for our Blessed Mother, the Rosary, the Holy Mass, and Confession makes his life particularly meaningful. Upon your student’s return to St. Thomas, the middle school team will have broader character and faith discussions on the life and times of this recently soon-to-be saint of the Roman Catholic Church. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, just approved the third miracle needed for sainthood! Acutis will undoubtedly be a role model for all Christian youth for generations. Acutis’s canonization date is pending, but the excitement is building already.

Ms. Tommaselli, my ELA colleague, will co-coordinate our middle school summer reading program. We both look forward to partnering with you and your students over the summer months and greeting them in middle school this fall. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Students may communicate directly via Google Classroom to ask a question or send a message. In addition, I check my email frequently over the summer months. Please stay in touch via email: [lovollono@stasonline.net](mailto:lovollono@stasonline.net). Have a great summer!

St. Thomas Aquinas: Pray for Us.



Mr. Louis S. Vollono, Jr. MS Ed

Summer Reading Coordinator

Grade 7 and 8 ELA Instructor



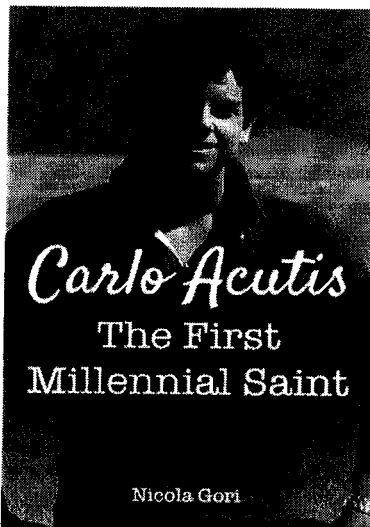
Ms. Jessica Tommaselli, MS Ed

Summer Reading Co-Coordinator

Grade 6 and 7 ELA Instructor

# *St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School*

*“One Book, One Middle School”*

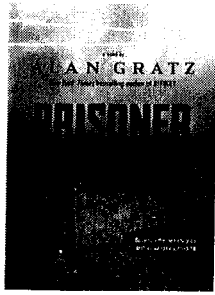


*God has written a unique and unrepeatable story for each of us,  
but he lets us write the ending. –Bl. Carlo Acutis*

Title: *Carlo Acutis: The First Millennial Saint*  
Author: Nicola Gori  
Publisher: Our Sunday Visitor Press  
ISBN-13: 978-1681929354 - Paperback, 144 pgs, \$15.95  
Genre: Nonfiction Biography, Religion, Church Teaching  
Lexile: Approximately 600-700L

“Carlo Acutis, born May 3, 1991, fully embraced the gift of life. Known as a computer whiz, he also liked to play soccer, video games, and the saxophone. He enjoyed watching his favorite police dramas and making short films with his star cast of cats and dogs. He had many friends and enjoyed spending time with them. Yet Carlo was a little “different” at school, in the pizzerias, and on the soccer field. What set Carlo apart was his constant pursuit of holiness. In addition to his fun hobbies, he spent time teaching catechism classes and serving in soup kitchens. Carlo loved to attend daily Mass and frequent Eucharistic adoration. The Word of God and the Eucharist were the center of his life. Carlo’s unwavering devotion to the Eucharist inspired him to tell the story of Eucharistic miracles through a website he created just for fun. He wanted to deepen his own knowledge of these phenomena, to strengthen his devotion to Jesus, and to invite others to grow in love for the Eucharist. The website subsequently caught the attention of people across the globe, introducing countless people to Eucharistic miracles. Carlo died from a sudden and violent illness in 2006 at the age of fifteen. In less than a decade, his story spread across Italy and around the world. After Pope Francis declared him venerable in 2018, his beatification was celebrated in Assisi on October 10, 2020. The next step will be canonization, making him the first millennial saint.” -From Amazon Reads

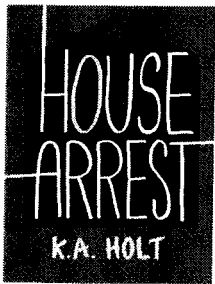
In addition to reading the novel on BI. Carlo Acutis, student in each respective grade will be required to read the following novels:



### Rising Grade 8 Required Text

Title: *Prisoner B-3087*  
Author: Alan Gratz  
Publisher: Scholastic Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0545459013 - Hardbound, \$17.99  
Genre: Historical Fiction, World War II  
Lexile: 760L

Summary: 10 concentration camps, 10 different places where you are starved, tortured, and worked mercilessly. It's something no one could imagine surviving. But it is what Yanek Gruener has to face. As a Jewish boy in 1930s Poland, Yanek is at the mercy of the Nazis who have taken over. Everything he has, and everyone he loves, have been snatched brutally from him. And then Yanek himself is taken prisoner -- his arm tattooed with the words PRISONER B-3087. He is forced from one nightmarish concentration camp to another, as World War II rages all around him. He encounters evil he could have never imagined, but also sees surprising glimpses of hope amid the horror. He just barely escapes death, only to confront it again seconds later. Can Yanek make it through the terror without losing his hope, his will -- and, most of all, his sense of who he really is inside?



### Rising Grade 7 Required Text

Title: *House Arrest*  
Author: K.A. Holt  
Publisher: Chronicle Books  
ISBN-13: 978-1452156484 - \$7.99 Paperback  
Genre: Middle Grade, Novel in Verse  
Lexile: 610L

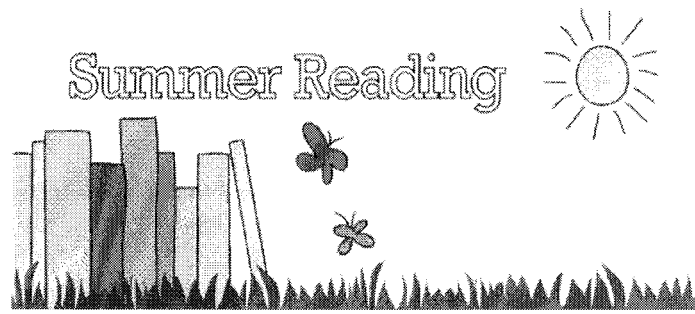
Summary: This young adult novel-in-verse tells the moving story of one boy's hard-won path to redemption. Timothy is a good kid who did a bad thing. Now he's under house arrest for a whole year. He has to check in weekly with a probation officer and a therapist, keep a journal, and stay out of trouble. But when he must take drastic measures to help his struggling family, staying out of trouble proves more difficult than Timothy ever thought it would be. Touching, funny, and always original, *House Arrest* is an ideal addition to any young adult book collection. This humorous novel-in-verse will delight reluctant readers and provide teens with motivation when it's needed most.



### Rising Grade 6 Required Text

Title: *Ghosts*  
Author: Raina Telgemeier  
Publisher: Graphix  
ISBN-13: 978-0545540629 - \$10.99 Paperback  
Genre: Graphic Novel, Fantasy  
Lexile: GN300L

Summary: Catrina and her family are moving to the coast of Northern California because her little sister, Maya, is sick. Cat isn't happy about leaving her friends for Bahía de la Luna, but Maya has cystic fibrosis and will benefit from the cool, salty air that blows in from the sea. As the girls explore their new home, a neighbor lets them in on a secret: There are ghosts in Bahía de la Luna. Maya is determined to meet one, but Cat wants nothing to do with them. As the time of year when ghosts reunite with their loved ones approaches, Cat must figure out how to put aside her fears for her sister's sake -- and her own.



## St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School - Summer 2024

Each student entering Grades 6-8 are required to join their respective Google Classrooms where students and teachers keep in touch and view assignments and important announcements.

### Summer Assignments Due Dates

**September 16, 2024** for current accepted and returning St. Thomas Aquinas students

**September 30, 2024** for transfer students

### Buying the Books

All of the required reading is readily available through Amazon.com. Please order early! Also, check your local libraries, although they will have limited copies available. However, **each student** must purchase a copy of the Bl. Carlo Acutis book to use in the classroom.

### Google Classroom Codes

Upon full matriculation and enrollment, please email me (below) for your student's Google Classroom Code at your earliest convenience.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out and contact our Middle School Summer Reading Coordinator at any time, Mr. Lou Vollono, Jr. at [lovollono@stasonline.net](mailto:lovollono@stasonline.net).

*May you have a restful and blessed summer!*