English I and Honors English I
Instructor: Staff
Summer Reading Assignment
A Separate Peace by John Knowles
Contact information: ckolich@sjakeepingfaith.org

This novel, set during World War II, is told from the point of view of Gene Forrester, a teenage boy attending Devon Prep School. Gene becomes best friends with another boy attending the school even though the two adolescents seem to be polar opposites. Much of the novel describes their friendship throughout one summer.

When Finny is in an accident, Gene must come to terms with the role he may or may not have played in Finny’s life-changing injury. Gene goes through a period of intense soul searching, and he and Finny also struggle to repair their friendship. This is a novel about adolescents finding themselves, finding each other, and coming to terms with their own actions.

Students are to read and annotate the entire novel for the following elements:

**Themes**
- Friendship
- Transformation
- Reflection
- Individuality
- Conscience
- War and Peace

**Symbols**
- Summer vs. Winter
- Finny’s Fall
- The War

**Faith Connections**
- The Search for Truth and Good
- Rights and Responsibilities
- The Golden Rule
- Absolution

**Annotations**—A copy of annotated pages 9 and 10 is included. Please read the Frequently Asked Questions document about annotations or contact Mrs. Kolich at ckolich@sjakeepingfaith.org

**Assessments:**
- Classroom activities and discussions
- Test
- Written responses
- Annotations

**Procedures:**
1. Purchase your own copy of the novel.
2. While you are reading, highlight passages/lines relating to themes, character development, symbols, faith connections, literary techniques, and your own personal questions. Make notations in the margins about the passages/lines you highlighted.
3. Bring your annotated copy of the novel to the first day of class.
Annotations
Frequently Asked Questions

❖ Am I just highlighting?

   ○ No. Highlighting is not annotating. A thoughtful notation relating to the
     areas assigned must accompany each highlighted text: literary terms,
     character development, theme development, faith connections, and
     personal or world connections.

❖ How much do I have to annotate?

   ○ Each page should have annotations that show your interaction with the
     text. Your thought process should be evident.

❖ Why does annotating slow me down? Can’t I just read the book?

   ○ Even though annotating may seem difficult, it is a necessary step in your
     development as a critical, life-long reader. This is a valuable skill for
     success in all academic disciplines.

❖ How do I know if I am annotating correctly?

   ○ You are just beginning to develop this skill, and this first step. As a
     beginner, every effort will be acknowledged but continually challenged
     and refined throughout your academic career at St. James Academy.