

Marquette Catholic High School

The Common Experience

Book Pick-up is August 1st and 2nd

8:00 a.m. until Noon

The Richard & Louise Scholl Student Center

Introduction:

Marquette Catholic is committed to developing a college-like atmosphere at our school that promotes high expectations, rigorous and relevant studies, and a faith community for all students. In our quest for excellence, we continue to search out best practices in secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities that will support this endeavor. The “Common Experience” is a current practice modeled after many college and university freshman programs. The intent of this “book talk” is to provide a shared reading experience for all incoming freshman students and their teachers. By embracing the opportunities of reading one common text, it is hoped students and staff will begin to connect and communicate personal experiences, discuss core values, and to cultivate a positive and nurturing school culture and community. In addition, the program is intended to promote sustained, multiple conversations, on a common theme, both in and out of the classroom.

Each year, the Marquette staff has an opportunity to recommend a text that might be utilized for the “Common Experience”. After a text is selected and approved, all incoming freshman are provided a copy of the text for summer reading. A team of teachers is then selected to facilitate a format for discussion which will be implemented at our freshman orientation. The text will then be used for study in our freshman English classes.

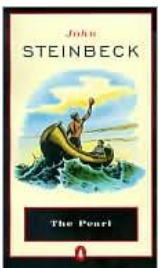
Program Goals:

We hope **The Common Experience** provides incoming freshman with...

- an introduction to academic expectations and intellectual engagement
- a common experience with peers and faculty
- opportunities for self-reflection and critical thinking
- a powerful, meaningful, and FUN experience

Marquette Catholic High School: **The Common Experience: 2011-2012**

Marquette Catholic selects John Steinbeck’s book, *The Pearl*, as the text for the 2011-2012 Common Experience. All incoming freshman students will be provided a copy of the text in June. Students are expected to read and research the text over their summer break. The text will be discussed in a “book talk” setting during our freshman orientation. All students will be expected to share ideas during our first week of school. Marquette Catholic Faculty, Staff, and Administrators will facilitate experiences.



"In the town they tell the story of the great pearl - how it was found and how it was lost again. They tell of Kino, the fisherman, and of his wife, Juana, and of the baby, Coyotito. And because the story has been told so often, it has taken root in every man's mind. And, as with all retold tales that are in people's hearts, there are only good and bad things and black and white things and good and evil things and no in-between anywhere. If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it. In any case, they say in the town that..."

The answers to the following questions should be computer-driven with your name on the front page. The book should be read, the questions answered, and students should be ready for discussion during our first class meeting on Monday, August 22nd at 8:30 AM. The guiding questions and group discussions will be used as we begin our 2011-2012 English curriculum that includes the writing of a five-paragraph essay. We will also use this novel as a springboard for opening discussion in our freshman Theology classes.

The Pearl

Guided Reading Questions

Chapter 1

1. Describe the doctor's reaction to Kino's request.
2. What details suggest that Kino and Juana are good people who live in harmony with their world?
3. What does the scorpion represent?
4. How does the doctor contrast with Kino in appearance, lifestyle, values, and culture?
5. What conflict exists between Kino's people and the doctor's people?
6. What does the doctor say and do that shows the conflict?

Chapter 2

1. What is Kino's most valuable possession and why?
2. Why does Juana feel that it is "not good to want a thing too much?"
3. What does this reveal about the people's values?
4. What "miracle" accompanies the discovery of the pearl?

Chapter 3

1. How is the town described? How does the town react to Kino's news?
2. What does Kino see in the pearl?
3. What does the description of the scene with the thief and Kino suggest has happened to Kino?
4. Contrast Kino's and Juana's reactions to the pearl at the end of the chapter.
5. How is the town infected with a poison, just as Coyotito was?
6. How do the priest, the shopkeeper, the doctor, the beggars, and the pearl buyers each react to Kino's discovery?
7. How does Kino's dream for the pearl differ from the townspeople's?
8. How does Kino change because of the pearl?

Chapter 4

1. Why are the pearl buyers excited about Kino's pearl?
2. In what ways have the pearl buyers deceived the natives for centuries?

Chapter 5

1. How has the pearl caused the relationship between Kino and Juana to deteriorate?
2. Why is the destruction of the canoe such a terrible crime?
3. What is the "turning point" in the novel where Juana realizes that the past is gone forever?

Chapter 6

1. What does Kino see in the pearl now?
2. How is Coyotito's death revealed?
3. Is Kino responsible for Coyotito's death? Why or why not?
4. How are Kino and Juana portrayed as noble and powerful when they return?
5. What does Kino gain from the pearl?
6. Why do Kino and Juana throw the pearl away?