

## AMDG

### Senior Synthesis Summer/Christmas Reading

#### *The Shack* by William P. Young

*The Shack* explains how Mackenzie Allen Philips' young daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of his *Great Sadness*, Mack receives suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him to go back to the shack for a weekend. Against his better judgment, Mack arrives at the shack and walks back into his worst nightmare. What he finds there will change his world forever. *The Shack* wrestles with a timeless question of "Where is God the midst of my pain and suffering?"



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In order to assist you in your reading and prepare you for our class discussions on this book, we have prepared this study guide. You will be assessed on your reading of the novel when you begin Senior Synthesis, either in the Fall or in the Spring. If you are scheduled to take Senior Synthesis in the Fall, you should complete the novel and the assignment below before coming to class in August. If you are scheduled to take Senior Synthesis in the Spring, you may read the novel at any point before classes begin in January, but you must have the assignment below completed before classes begin for the second semester.

We recommend you follow these guidelines:

1. Read the following articles about *The Shack*. You might jot down some notes as you read, focusing on why the author chose to write this novel and what perspective he has on faith and religion. Follow the links below.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2008-05-28-the-shack\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2008-05-28-the-shack_N.htm)

<http://theshackbook.com/>

<http://theshackbook.com/willie.html>

<http://windrumors.com/>

<http://catholicmediareview.blogspot.com/2008/07/book-review-shack.html>

2. Read through the questions below. You will be responsible for responding to three of these questions. It would be good for you to have them in mind as you read the novel.
3. Enjoy the book!
4. When you have finished, select three questions that you wish to respond to. **You must choose one question from group one, and one question from group two. Everyone must respond to the question in group three.** Your responses must be type-written in essay format. The recommended length for each question is ½ page, single spaced. These responses should be completed and brought with you to Senior Synthesis when the semester begins.

Group One     [*respond to one from this group*]

1. Were you drawn in by the plot of *The Shack*? Explain.
2. Why do you think Mack's encounter with God took place at *the shack*?
3. If God were to invite you somewhere, where would it be? (In other words, where is the center of your doubt and pain)?

Group Two    [*respond to one from this group*]

4. Do you think suffering makes people closer to God or causes them to distance themselves from Him? What has been the pattern in your life? Were you satisfied with God's answers to Mack about suffering? Do you struggle with believing God is good in light of all the tragedy in the world?
5. How is Young's description of God different from your concept of God? What parts of his description did you like and what parts didn't you like?
6. Did *The Shack* change any of your opinions about God or Christianity? What were some of the things *The Shack* teaches about God, faith and life that you disagreed with?

Group Three    [*you must respond to this question*]

7. If you could **rewrite the ending**, would you? In other words, was the ending satisfying? Explain.