



Book Club Lesson Plan / Agenda **March 14, 2013**

MEDITATION – Guided meditation on calmness

GAME - “The List Game!” – Divide up into teams of three or four. Each team receives game card with columns headed with names of different characters from BOY 21. The timer is set and teams should make lists of as many words that you can think of that describe the characters of Finley, Russ, Pops, Erin and Finley’s father. The final column is for words describing the story itself. When the timer goes off, teams share lists and explain answers with details from the book. Note the words that were used most often. Are there any words that you disagree upon? Back up your opinions with scenes from the book.

BOOK DISCUSSION – BOY 21, by Matthew Quick

- What page did you get to? Why did you stop there?
- Talk about the cover? What ideas did it give you of what the book would be about? Is it a good cover? Why or why not?
- Discuss words that List Game teams came up with for what the book is about. Agree or disagree?
- What is PTSD? What causes it? (Go around room and have each person list one event that could cause PTSD) Talk about soldiers who are afflicted.
- Have you ever witnessed violence or grief yourself? If so, how did it affect you afterwards? Did you find yourself thinking about the event a lot?
- How is PTSD depicted in the book?
- Who do you think is struggling with PTSD? (Make sure to discuss Russ AND Finley)
- Is Russ’ behavior in BOY 21 believable to you?
- Read aloud from p. 37 describing Finley’s first meeting with Boy 21. How did you feel when Boy 21 started talking nonsense about space?
- Would you have been able to continue hanging out with him the way Finley did? Why do you think Finley did so, and what does it say about his character?
- Do you think Boy 21 was faking? (In other words, do you think he really believed he was a space alien? Or was he just avoiding having to actually talk about what happened to him?)
- Describe the setting of the story. What is Belmont like and why does Finley want to escape?
- Irish Mob – Have you ever heard of it? It’s one of the oldest organized crime groups in the United States, starting in the 1800’s. Discuss the role it plays in the book.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Finley says “Sometimes I pretend that shooting hoops in my

backyard is my earliest memory..." He describes himself shooting over and over. It is clear that it really isn't his true first memory though, which would be about what happened to his mother. For Finley, basketball provides him both joy and also escape from something very painful. He loves it, and it takes him to another place. Scientists have a name for activities like this—it's called "FLOW" when you do something you love and while you're doing it, you are able to think of nothing else. Sometimes people call this "being in the zone."

Write about your FLOW. You can write this in the form of a poem or narrative. What do you do when you want to just escape? Be as descriptive as you can! What does it look like, smell like, sound like, taste like, and feel like when you are "doing your FLOW?"

SHARING OUR WRITING –You may volunteer to read your pieces.

WEEKLY JOE – Each individual shares one thing that will stick with you from today's session.