1. *Wolfie the Bunny* by Ame Dyckman and illustrated by Zachariah OHora (children’s book) - “HE’S GOING TO EAT US ALL UP!”

2. *A Million Miles in 1000 Years: How I Learned to Live a Better Story* by Donald Miller (autobiography with reference to religious faith) - “The truth is, if what we choose to do with our lives won’t make a story meaningful, it won’t make a life meaningful either.”

   Read-aloud selection:
   Ch. 9: How Jason Saved His Family
   “I pictured his daughter flipping through the channels of life, as it were, stopping on a story that seemed most compelling at the moment, a story that offered her something, anything, because people can’t live without a story, without a role to play…. Jason decided to stop yelling at his daughter and, instead, created a better story to invite her into.”

   Writing prompt:
   - What role would you like to play in creating a better story for your life?

   Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:
   - *Beatrice’s Goat* by Page McBrier and illustrated by Lori Lohstoeter - “Beatrice spent her days helping her mama hoe and plant in the fields, tend the chickens, watch the younger children, and grind the cassava flour that they would take to market to sell… Mama came to her with dancing eyes. ‘Beatrice, some kindhearted people from far away have given us a lucky gift… a goat.’”
   - *Give A Goat* by Jan West Schrock and illustrated by Aileen Darragh - “How can reading a picture book in one country make a difference to a family in need living thousands of miles away?… The story was about a real-life girl named Beatrice who lived in Uganda… Everyone in class seemed to have the same idea… ‘We want to give a goat!’”
   - *Our Heroes: How Kids Are Making a Difference* by Janet Wilson - “The children in this book never set out to be heroes or to be famous, but in acting on the kindness in their hearts, they have made a difference. They all have planted seeds of compassion and love.”

3. *Scary Close: Dropping the Act and Finding True Intimacy* by Donald Miller (autobiography with reference to religious faith) -

   Read-aloud selections:
   Ch. 3: Everybody’s Got a Story and It’s Not the One They’re Telling
   - In compelling movies, there’s a similar plot: “The hero is always weak at the beginning and strong at the end, or a jerk at the beginning and kind at the end, or cowardly at the beginning and brave at the end.”
   - “Sometimes the story we’re telling the world isn’t half as endearing as the one that lives inside us.”

   Ch. 4: Why Some Animals Make Themselves Look Bigger Than They Are
   - Donald Miller learned, “… Acknowledging those early memories of shame and rewriting the story from a more gracious, adult perspective could help us heal.”
   - “I stood up and said to the whole class it was my coat, a dog had peed on my coat. I took off my coat … but then realized the class could see my crotch. I ran out the door and across the playground and hid behind a tree…. My life was over and I was only seven.”
   - Donald Miller later said, “That was my first act, the invisible act. I didn’t show my true self to anybody and I got terrific at not being noticed.”

   Ch. 12: Great Parents Do This Well
   - “… Half the battle to healing the soul was finding a safe place where people could tell the truth about who they were.”

   Writing prompts:
   - Write about anyone you consider a hero.
   - Write a true story about yourself that you don’t usually tell people.
   - Write a comforting letter to your childhood self from you as an adult now.
   - Write about a time when you felt like you were invisible.
   - Write about a place or a person that makes you feel safe enough to tell the truth about yourself.
   - What were some of the stories your parents told you about themselves?

   Additional activity:
   - You may also want to read-aloud from *Heroes for My Son* and *Heroes for My Daughter* by Brad Meltzer.
Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:

- **One Day, The End: Short, Very Short, Shorter-Than-Ever Stories** by Rebecca Kai Dotlich and illustrated by Fred Koehler - “For every story there is a beginning and an end, but what happens in between makes all the difference.”
- **The Invisible Boy** by Trudy Ludwig and illustrated by Patrice Barton - “Nobody ever seems to notice him or think to include him in their group, game, or birthday party . . . until, that is, a new kid comes to class.”
- **Desmond and the Very Mean Word** by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams and illustrated by A.G. Ford - “Father Trevor bent down until he was looking directly into Desmond’s face. His smiling eyes always made you feel like you were the most important person in the world. ‘You can tell me anything.’”

4. **The Last Lecture** by Randy Pausch with Jeffrey Zaslow (autobiography) - “… I have ten tumors in my liver and I have only a few months left to live. I am a father of three young children, and married to the woman of my dreams. While I could easily feel sorry for myself, that wouldn’t do them, or me, any good. So, how to spend my very limited time?”

Read-aloud selections:
- Ch. 4: The Parent Lottery
  “… kids - more than anything else - need to know their parents love them. Their parents don’t have to be alive for that to happen.”
- Ch. 15: Pouring Soda in the Backseat
  “My message: People are more important than things. A car, even a pristine gem like my new convertible, was just a thing.”
- Ch. 16: Romancing the Brick Wall
  “Brick walls are there for a reason. They give us a chance to show how badly we want something.”

Writing prompts:
- If you were told you had months to live, how would you spend your time?
- What was one of your childhood dreams?
- What were your parents like?
- What is a “brick wall” in your life that gives you a chance to show how badly you want something?

Additional activities:
- View Randy’s last lecture (1 hr 16 minutes) at [http://www.cmu.edu/randyslecture/index.shtml](http://www.cmu.edu/randyslecture/index.shtml)
- Check out the billboards (including Randy Pausch’s ad for motivation), stories behind them, and the videos at [http://www.values.com](http://www.values.com) (especially the inspiring behind-the-billboard video about Alferd Williams and literacy).

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:

- **The Rag Coat** by Lauren Mills - “‘It is not just a bunch of old rags!’ I said. ‘My coat is full of stories, stories about everybody here.’ … Then I showed them the feed sack inside my coat and told them how it made me feel my papa’s arms again.”
- **Knock Knock: My Dad’s Dream for Me** by Daniel Beaty and illustrated by Bryan Collier - “And then one day the knock never comes. I wait, but Papa’s not there …” - Be sure to view Daniel Beaty’s powerful Def Jam Poetry performance at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTZrPVqR0D8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTZrPVqR0D8)
- **Ask Me** by Bernard Waber and illustrated by Suzy Lee - A celebration of a father and daughter’s love for each other as they walk and talk, asking and responding to each other’s questions
- **How to Cheer Up Dad** by Fred Koehler - “Little Jumbo’s dad is having a bad day. Little Jumbo has no idea why. Luckily, he does know just how to cheer up Dad with some of his - ahem, his dad’s - favorite things!”

5. **Carry On, Warrior: The Power of Embracing Your Messy, Beautiful Life** by Glennon Doyle Melton (autobiography with reference to religious faith) -

Read-aloud selections:
- Building a Life (pp. 1-8) - “When I got sober . . . I looked closely at humanity and all of its brokenness and decided to forgive it and myself . . . I decided that I had nothing to be ashamed of: I’d done the best I could with what I had. I’d do better now. Mostly.”
- Holy Holes (pp. 13-21) - “It is not my job to fill myself. It’s just my job to notice my emptiness and find graceful ways to live as a broken, unfilled human.”
- Day One (pp. 27-31) - “To My Friend on Her First Sober Morning…”
- Unwind (pp. 105-107) - “Because love is not something for which to search or wait or hope or dream. It’s simply something to do.”
- A Little Advice (pp. 117- 119) - “There is really only one way to deal gracefully with being human, and that is this: Forgive yourself.”
Brave Is a Decision (pp. 121-123) - “Brave is not something you should wait to feel. It is a decision that compassion is more important than fear, than fitting in, than following the crowd.”

Officer Superhero (pp. 155-159) - “He said, ‘Being a parent. It’s a tough gig sometimes.’”

On Gifts and Talents (pp. 161-164) - “A child can survive a teacher or other children accidentally suggesting that he’s not okay, as long as when he comes home, he looks at his mama and knows by her face that he really is okay.”

Writing prompts:
- How are you doing with forgiving yourself for being human?
- Write about a loving action you could do (or have done) for someone else.
- Write about a brave thing you could do (or have done) for yourself.
- If you are a parent, write about a tough time with your child when you could have used a superhero.
- Did your mother show or tell you she had faith in you? How?

Additional activities:
- You may also want to read aloud Glennon’s blogs at http://momastery.com/blog/.
- Check out Momastery’s Together Rising - http://togetherrising.org where “small gifts given with great love are changing lives.”
- You may want to direct students to An Elephant In the Living Room: The Children's Book by Jill M. Hastings and Marion H. Typpo. This workbook is designed to be read aloud to children (elementary-aged through teen-aged) by a counselor, but the information will also educate adults affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:
- The Day I Lost My Superpowers by Michaël Escoffier - “My knee started to hurt and I began to cry. Mom came running. She gave me a magic kiss . . . I feel all better . . . I think my mom has superpowers too!”
- Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah by Laurie Ann Thompson and illustrated by Sean Qualls - “In Ghana . . . a baby was born . . . Most people thought he would be useless, or worse - a curse . . . But his mother had faith . . . [She] told him he could have anything, but he would have to get it for himself.” You may also want to show the film, Emmanuel’s Gift (1 hour 19 minutes), narrated by Oprah Winfrey.
- The House on Dirty-Third Street by Jo S. Kittinger and illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez - “Mom said starting over would be an adventure, so I imagined a tropical island with palm trees and buried treasure. Not this.” . . . “Try looking at it through eyes of faith,” said Mom.

6. Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion by Gregory Boyle (autobiography with strong emotional content and many references to religious faith) - “We started serving gang members . . . seeking employment, tattoo removal, mental health counseling, case management, and legal services . . . Homeboy Industries is not for those who need help, only for those who want it.”

Read-aloud selections:
- Introduction: Dolores Mission and Homeboy Industries (pp. 1-17) - “The place has become the ‘United Nations’ of gangs. When enemies work with one another . . . “
- “Lula grew up in our office…” (pp. 47-50) - “Simone Weil was right: ‘Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in this world, but people capable of giving them their attention.’”
- “I give credit for most of my gray hairs to a kid named Speedy…” (pp. 55-60) - “But what could be tinier in the scope of human relations than the tender mercy of this stranger, rubbing salve on the wounds of this kid’s hopeless heart? You can almost hear the armor fall away and clank to the ground.”
- Ch. 3: Compassion (pp. 61-82) - “Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it.”
- Ch. 5: Slow Work (pp. 109-128) - “There is no force in the word better able to alter anything from its course than love.”

Writing prompts:
- Is there someone (or are there some people) who seemed like an enemy to you until you got to know him or her (or them) better?
- Write about a stranger who showed you (or you showed him or her) kindness.
- What has made you want to get help and to change?

Additional activities:
- Read more about Homeboy Industries at http://www.homeboyindustries.org/why-we-do-it/.
- View the film G-Dog (1 hour, 32 minutes) to see Father Greg in action.

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:
- Enemy Pie by Derek Munson and illustrated by Tara Calahan King - “You need to spend a day with your enemy. Even worse, you have to be nice to him. It’s not easy. But that’s the only way that Enemy Pie can work.”
Grandfather Gandhi by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus and illustrated by Evan Turk - “Everyone stared - How could he, a Gandhi, be so easy to anger? their eyes seemed to say. I dropped the rock and ran . . . straight to Grandfather’s hut.”

7. Strength in What Remains: A Journey of Remembrance and Forgiveness by Tracy Kidder (biography with strong emotional and violent content)

Read-aloud selection:
Part 1 - Flights (pp. 3 - 145)
“A young man arrives in a big city with two hundred dollars in his pocket, no English at all, and memories of horror so fresh that he sometimes confuses past and present. . . . And then, two years later, he enrolls in an Ivy League university. How did this happen?”

Writing prompt:
- Have you ever moved to or visited another city or country? How did it feel?
- Have you tried to communicate in another language? How did it go?
- What were your grandparents like?

Additional activity:

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:

- Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan by Mary Williams and illustrated by R. Gregory Christie - “You must tell me your story - what has happened to you since war came to your country…. Your story can help prevent war from creating more lost children, and you can help find a home for yourself and your brothers. Your words will move caring people to help.
- My Name Is Sangoel by Karen Williams and Khadra Mohammed and illustrated by Catherine Stock - “The wise one said as Sangoel prepared to leave the refugee camp. . . . ‘Remember, you will always be a Dinka. You will be Sangoel. Even in America.’” Check out the teacher guide at http://www.karenlynnwilliams.com/files/sangoel_guide.pdf
- 14 Cows for America by Carmen Agra Deedy and illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez - “Because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.”

8. Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Pipher, Ph.D. (informational text) -

Read-aloud selection:
Ch. 13: What I’ve Learned from Listening - pp. 248-259 - “I believe that talking to a listener with an accepting, empathic and nonjudgmental stance is healing.”

Writing prompts:
- According to Mary Pipher, “The most important question for every client is ‘Who are you?’” In order to help her clients know who they really are and what they truly want, she encourages them to think about the following questions:
  - How do I feel right now? What do I think? What are my values? How would I describe myself to myself? How do I see myself in the future? What kind of work do I like? What kind of leisure do I like? When do I feel most myself? How have I changed since I entered puberty? What kinds of people do I respect? How am I similar to and different from my mother? How am I similar to and different from my father? What goals do I have for myself as a person? What are my strengths and weaknesses? What would I be proud of on my deathbed?
- Mary Pipher teaches clients “to sit with their pain, to listen to it for messages about their lives, to acknowledge and describe it rather than to run from it.” Is there pain in your life you want to write about in order to learn from it?
- She also teaches clients “to look within themselves for validation. . . . to record victories and bring these in to share . . . . Victories are actions that are in keeping with their long-term goals.” What are some of your long-term goals? What are some of your victories? Write them down and share them if you like.
- Mary Pipher writes, “Time travel is another survival skill. All of us have bad days, lost days. Sometimes on those days it helps to go into the past and remember happy times or times when problems were much worse. Sometimes traveling to the future helps. It reminds [us] . . . that certain experiences will not last forever.” Write about past experiences or future events to remind you that you are not always going to be where you are right now.
- She also writes, “I teach the joys of altruism. Many . . . are self-absorbed. . . . It makes them unhappy and limits their understanding of the world. I encourage [them] to find some ways to help people on a regular basis. Volunteer work, good deeds for neighbors and political action help. . . . They feel good about their contributions and they rapidly become less self-absorbed.” What are some ways that you have or could help other people on a regular basis? How did you feel about it?
Additional activities:
- Have students choose one of the “Who are you?” questions above to write about in class. Set a timer for three or four minutes and have them write non-stop, putting their thoughts into words on the paper without trying to edit them. Challenge them not to stop writing until the timer goes off (if students want more time, you can give it to them). Ask them if they were surprised at what came out and onto their papers. Did the writing seem helpful?
- Encourage students to respond to more of the questions above by repeating this free-writing exercise at home.

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:
- Anh’s Anger by Gail Silver and illustrated by Christine Kromer - “‘You’re upset,’ said Grandfather. ‘Please go to your room and sit with your anger. I’ll come in when you’re calm and able to talk.’”
- One of Those Days by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and illustrated by Rebecca Doughty - “Some days are just not as great as others. Some days are one of those days. And the thing is, there isn’t just one kind of one of those days - there are tons . . . .”
- The Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson - “‘Sometimes when you’re surrounded by dirt, CJ, you’re a better witness for what’s beautiful.’”

9. Miss Julia Stands Her Ground by Ann B. Ross (fiction) -
Read-aloud selections: Some or all of Chapters 15 - 30
“I’d had several months of serious jolts to my system, what with Wesley Lloyd’s sudden and unexpected departure from this vale of tears and the even more unexpected appearance of his longtime mistress and their peaked and unattractive little son.”

Writing prompts:
- Little Lloyd said, “… This is shaping up to be the best Christmas we ever had,” but Miss Julia said, “For me, Christmas was just another lonely time to get through . . . .” What is one of your Christmas memories?
- Lillian told Miss Julia, “It look like to me you have a better Chris’mas yo’self if you make a better Chris’mas for somebody else.” Write about a time when you felt good because you helped someone else to feel better. Or write about a time when someone helped you to feel better.
- Miss Julia reminded herself, “… A lot of things start out a far cry from what they end up being. In a lot of cases, the end results are remarkably better than the way they start out - penicillin, for one, and bacon for another. And perhaps Julia Springer Murdoch, for a third.” What is one way you have ended up being better than the way you started out?

Additional activity:
You may want to let students participate in reading aloud portions of the text. They can take on the roles of characters in the story, and when their characters speak, they can read their “lines” (in quotation marks). The instructor can narrate the story by reading the words and thoughts of Miss Julia.

Recommendations for English language learners, struggling readers, and family literacy:
- The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey by Susan Wojciechowski and illustrated by P.J. Lynch - “The village children called him Mr. Gloomy. . . . One day in early December, there was a knock at Jonathan’s door. Mumbling and grumbling, he went to answer it. There stood a woman and a young boy.”