

Finding Chika by Mitch Albom

Intended Audience: grades 9-12, other teachers, administrators, parents, community members

Brief Summary and Educational Significance:

Finding Chika is a memoir written by Mitch Albom about a child, Chika, who he adopted from Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Chika develops a life-threatening illness called DIPG and after years of extensive medical treatments, eventually dies at the age of seven.

The story begins over a year later. Mitch is still grieving, and Chika appears to him, encouraging him to write their story. Over a series of these appearances, he begins to write. She tells him not to stop, so she can “stay” and live on through his storytelling.

Albom vividly portrays Chika’s life in a surprisingly optimistic way, detailing the lessons he learned from her during their relatively short time together.

Purpose of Teaching and How It Will Be Used:

- “Big Read” that brings the WHS community together for a literary purpose
- Memoir as a genre
- Vocabulary and content are accessible for all levels, grades 9-12
- Discussion of relevant issues such as grief, adoption, cancer, health care, love, and loss
- Simile and metaphor analysis
- Theme identification
- Learning about another culture (Haitian)
- Cross-curricular research
- Prompt for personal writing
- Potential kickoff to Caps for a Cure fundraising

Potential Problems with the Work:

- Mitch and his family turn to their faith in God during their struggles
- Death of a child
- Supernatural vibe

Addressing Potential Problems:

- Research and discuss numerous ways that people deal with tragedy and grief
- Connect the death to the death of a WCS student who suffered from the same disease
- Discussion about what Mitch’s visions could be (ex. his imagination)