**Curriculum Guide Caravaggio: Painter on the Run**

**Use of textual evidence/points of view:**

What information do you garner reading only the police reports about Caravaggio?

What can you infer about his character from his many arrests? Was he evil, greedy, careless, cruel, ambitious, hotheaded? What evidence do you have for your assessment?

What information do you garner reading only the letters/journals of the other characters (those not in Caravaggio's voice)?

How would you describe his character based on what these other people write? Do the different writers agree on Caravaggio's strengths and weaknesses? What character traits do they all agree on? Which ones do they disagree on?

What can you infer about Caravaggio's character reading only the sections in his own voice?

Now, using all the different kinds of evidence in the book, what picture do you have of Caravaggio? What are his best traits? His worst ones? Does Caravaggio have a clear view of himself?

Use specific passages to prove your points.

**Determine the major themes of the story:**

What drives Caravaggio the most throughout the book? Does he want fame? Wealth? Romance? Status? Family?

What does painting mean to him? To the others around him?

There are many descriptions of paintings throughout the book. Does the language help you see the images? What features of Caravaggio's work are most clear? How were his pictures different from the ones all around him?

How would you describe the political, cultural, religious atmosphere in Rome in the late 1500s, early 1600s? What sense do you get from the story about these aspects? Cite specific examples/scenes.

What role did the pope and the Church play in people's daily lives? In artists' lives?

Why was Caravaggio's art so controversial? Do you agree with the criticisms people made of his work? Why or why not?

Different patrons played major roles in Caravaggio's life. Who do you think was most important? Why?

What is a patron supposed to do for an artist? What is the artist supposed to do for the patron?

Artists in the late Renaissance worked in a studio system, a household with lots of assistants working on their pictures. How does this fit with our modern sense of creativity, of the artist as a unique individual working alone? Is an artist who only does part of a picture less of an artist? Can you think of a current art form that uses a similar system of many different artists all working on the same piece?

What value do you place on individuality? On creativity? What is more important, a unique masterpiece or a group project? What are the values of each?

Compare and contrast Caravaggio with Mario. With Cesare d'Arpino. With Baglione. Of all of them, who would you say is the better artist? Who would make a better friend? Who is a more responsible citizen? Use specific scenes and quotes as evidence for your judgments.