**Speak for Yourself**

Your concluding assignment for the novel *Speak* will be to participate in a formal in-class discussion about the book. To receive credit, you will need to participate on that day by sharing your own ideas or insights with the class. Here are some study questions to prepare you for the discussion.

* Describe some of the changes that occur in Melinda during the final marking period. Why do these changes take place?
* What do you think about how Melinda finally confesses to Rachel about Andy Evans? Could she have handled it differently? Why didn’t Rachel believe Melinda?
* David Petrakis tells Melinda, “You can’t speak up for your right to be silent. That’s letting the bad guys win…Don’t expect to make a difference unless you speak up for yourself.” (p. 159). What does he mean? Do you agree with him?
* What do you think about how Melinda finally speaks up for herself? What made her finally speak up? Why do you think she couldn’t do it before?
* Is it possible that some victims heal and recover even if they *don’t* talk about being assaulted? Should a person’s right *not* to speak be respected?
* When a tree is weak, you must cut its branches down to “make it possible for the tree to grow again” (p. 187). How does that become a symbol or metaphor for Melinda’s life?
* Why doesn’t Melinda need her closet anymore?
* *Speak* deals with serious issues such as rape, abuse, depression, and suicide. Do you think this book should be read in high school? Why or why not?
* How does your idea of the high school experience compare with Melinda’s? Does *Speak* provide a realistic view of high school? Why or why not?
* Do you like the way *Speak* ends? Why or why not?