

Section B

Stories for Children of All Ages

With a Focus on Attitudes, Values, Behaviors and Relationships

Selected Children's Literature Depicting Themes in Relation to Christian Life
Themes and selections based on the work of Drs. David and Mary Ford, with additions by other contributors.

Accepting/Loving Those Who are Different

Chicken Sunday, by Patricia Polacco [N.Y.: Philomel Books, Putnam and Grosset Group], 1992) A delightful story about a Ukrainian Orthodox girl of about ten who is close friends with two black boys; she comes to deeply appreciate the love and faith of the boys' very devout Baptist grandmother, who sang the church hymns with a voice "like slow thunder and sweet rain"

Accepting Sad Circumstances

Letting Swift River Go, by Jane Yolen. A ten-year-old girl learns to accept the flooding of her hometown and the whole valley when Swift River is dammed to form a huge lake to provide water for Boston.

Appreciating Grandparents and the Elderly

Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later), by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, with paintings by James Ransome [N.Y.: Clarion Books, 1991] A story about an elderly black auntie relating stories about her life in Baltimore (each hat inspires a different story)

Oliver, Amanda, and Grandmother Pig, by Jean Van Leeuwen. The youngsters gain a whole new appreciation for their grandmother.

The Patchwork Quilt, by Valerie Flournoy. A dying grandmother is helped by her young grand-daughter in making a patchwork quilt full of memories.

Willie and May, by Judith Schachner

Bible-Related Picture Books

To Every Thing There is a Season, illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon. Illustrations of the texts of the Book of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, utilizing styles from a variety of cultures and traditions. Parents or teachers should read first the explanations of the cultural symbols to communicate properly the meaning of the text and illustrations. ISBN 0-590-47887-7.

Psalms Twenty-Three, Illustrations by Tim Ladwig. [Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. ISBN 0-8028-5163-0] A contemporary interpretation of Psalm 23, set in an urban black environment. A good book for understanding the different contexts in which others live and how the Psalm applies as a support and guide. Good basis for discussion in helping children to relate such texts to their lives.

Bravery and Courage

Mirette on the High Wire, Emily Arnold McCully [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1992] A girl of about 12 learns to walk the high wire and dramatically helps a high wire veteran overcome his fear to go back on the wire

The King's Fountain, by Lloyd Alexander [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971] - a great tale of humble bravery

Desert December, by Dorian Haarhoff [New York: Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin, 1992] - a Christmas tale set in southwest Africa, in which a ten-year old boy, with his grandfather's permission, travels alone into the desert to find his parents in a mining village

The Bravest Dog Ever - The True Story of Balto, by Natalie Standiford. An Alaskan husky and his dogsled driver heroically bring life-saving medicine to Nome, Alaska, through a raging blizzard.

To the Top! Climbing the World's Highest Mountain, by S. A. Kramer. The true story, dramatically and briefly told, of Sir Edmund Hillary's and Tenzing Norgay's ascent of Mt. Everest in 1953.

The Emperor and the Kite, by Jane Yolen. A quiet, brave little princess rescues her father from a prison-tower.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter, Arielle N. Olson. A girl of about 12 bravely keeps the lighthouse light burning during a long winter storm.

Clara Barton, by Rae Bains. Her true story, focusing on her childhood; she showed remarkable courage and vision as she overcame great shyness to dramatically serve her fellow man.

Ride on the Wind, by Alice Dalgliesh. A wonderful recounting of Charles Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927.

Cheerful Cooperation and Industriousness

The Boxcar Children series, by Gertrude Chandler Warner. Examples of cooperative, hard-working, virtuous children - though perhaps taken to an unrealistic extreme.

Courage and Repentance

The Rag Coat, by Lauren Mills [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991] A beautiful story set in Appalachia, about a poor eight year old girl who gets terribly teased by her schoolmates over her first coat, made of rags contributed by neighborhood ladies and sewn together by them. When she bravely returns to the school and tells the stories about the rags, there is great repentance by her schoolmates.

The Royal Bee, by Frances and Ginger Park [Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2000] A very poor Korean boy is so determined to learn to read and write, he stands outside the school, which is only for rich boys, day after day, and wins the support of his teacher and the students (based on a true story).

The Boy Who Held Back the Sea, retold by Lenny Hart, with magnificent oil paintings by Thomas Locker [New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1987] A mischievous boy learns responsibility unexpectedly when he realizes it's up to him to block the hole in the dike until help arrives.

Faith, Kindness, Inner Illumination, Transfiguration

Small Acts of Kindness, by James Vollbracht [Paulist Press, 1995. ISBN 0-8091-6629-1] *Ages 3 & above*. A children's picture book that illustrates how one simple act of kindness may be passed on to affect many people along the way. Illustrated by Christopher Fay.

Tell Me The Secrets: Treasures for Eternity, by Max Lucado [Crossway Books, 1993 ISBN 0-89107-730-8] *Ages 12 & above*. Stories from life about seven "secrets":

forgiveness, peace, victory, growth, love, greatness, life and death are revealed by a wise neighbor who helps three students to discover something good about themselves in their own process of growth. All are useful as good discussion starters.

Tales of Virtue: A Book of Right and Wrong, as told by Carolyn Nabors Baker. [Little Moorings, Ballantine Publishing Group, Random House, 1995. ISBN 679-87637-5] **Ages 4-8.** Part of the Beginner's Bible series, ten simplified stories from the Old Testament illustrate the themes of forgiveness, loyalty, responsibility, friendship, courage, obedience, sharing, patience, work and honesty. 96pp.

Tell Me the Story, by Max Lucado. Stories in the form of modern parables, related to biblical events and themes that are useful for reflection and discussion among young people, or with their parents or teachers.

Rechenka's Eggs, by Patricia Polacco. An Easter story set in Orthodox Russia.

Uncle Vova's Tree, by Patricia Polacco. A touching story about Russian Orthodox immigrants to America.

The Velveteen Rabbit, original text by Margery Williams, and original art by William Nicholson [New York: Doubleday, 1991] An all-time, very touching classic about a stuffed animal that becomes "real."

The Princess and the Goblin, and ***The Princess and Curdy***, by George MacDonald Magnificent tales with much spiritual wisdom.

The Narnia Chronicles, by C. S. Lewis. Incomparable allegorical tales with deeply Christian content, with four English schoolchildren as the heroes and heroines.

The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey, by Susan Wojciechowski, and illustrated by P. J. Lynch [Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 1995] A story about the inner transformation of a gloomy woodcarver.

A Lion for the King, by Meryl Doney. A young Chinese boy and a wise man follow the star in the West, leading them to the Christ-Child.

Doing What One is Good At for God, No Matter What It Is

The Clown of God, retold and illustrated by Tomie DePaola [San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1978] At the end of his life, a juggler gives his best for God.

Finding One's Calling/Vocation in Life

Hatti and the Wild Waves, Barbara Cooney. A girl of about 12 gains courage to pursue her dreams.

Boris and His Balalaika, by Esphyr Slobodkina [London and New York: Abelard Schuman, 1964] A very poor Orthodox boy finds his calling in life, playing his father's balalaika in the Russian army

Snowflake Bentley, by Jacqueline Briggs Martin. The true story of a Vermont farmboy who devotes his life to making photographs of snowflakes.

God's Miraculous Protection and Guidance

The Story of the Trapp Family Singers, by Maria Augusta Trapp [original edition published by Lippincott, in Philadelphia, in 1949] The amazing true story that is the basis for the play and movie called *The Sound of Music*

The Children's Book of Faith, by William J. Bennett. [Randomhouse Books. ISBN 0-385-32771-4] Selections on faith from "Daniel in the Lion's Den" to "The Little Lost Lamb." A collection of stories and prayers, lives of saints, advice to parents. PK-8

How the Monastery Came to be on the Top of the Mountain, by Alvin Alexsi Currier.

Good Triumphant Over Evil/Falsehood

Papa Gatto, by Ruth Sanderson [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995] A very beautiful story and pictures

Joy of Friendship

Best Friends Together Again, Alikei

Betsy-Tacy and Tib, by Maud Hart Lovelace [N.Y., Harper Trophy, 1979; originally published in 1941] A first novel, about 5 year olds; very delightful and insightful; set in Wisconsin around 1900.

The Milly-Molly-Mandy Story Book, by Joyce L. Brisley [N.Y., Kingfisher, 1996; originally published in 1928]) Another delightful first novel; and the sequel, ***More Milly-Molly-Mandy*** (set in an English village and the surrounding countryside)

Amber on the Mountain, by Tony Johnston, with paintings by Robert Duncan [New York: Puffin Books, Penguin, 1994] A story about the special friendship of two girls about eight or nine years old; set in Appalachia

The View from Saturday, by E.L. Konigsburg. [Simon and Shuster. ISBN 0-689-80993-X] The story of a group of gifted children thrown together to help a team for an academic competition. A story of friendship and love.

Tanya and Emily, by Patricia Lee Gauch

Learning to Share: Kindness and Selflessness

The Rainbow Fish, Marcus Pfister (N.Y.: North-South Books, 1992) - about an exceptionally beautiful fish who learns to share his rainbow scales; at a quite elementary level

The Cobbler's Reward, by Barbara and Ewa Reid (New York: MacMillan, 1978) - based on a Polish folk tale about a young man who breaks a witch's spell and rescues a maiden, with dramatic help from some animals and insects whom he has helped; many folktales have this basic theme, such as: ***Androcles and the Lion***, retold by Tom Paxton - a runaway slave helps a lion, who helps him in return in a time of desperate need

The Brand New Kid, by Katie Couric. [Doubleday, ISBN 0385-50030-0] The story of a new kid at school who, being different, becomes the target of tauntings. A girl decides to befriend him and finds he has many talents, especially soccer! A story of compassion and acceptance. 3-8

Love and Care

Love You Forever, Robert Munsch. [ISBN 0-920668-37-2A] tender story of the love of a mother for her child, even as he grows up and becomes a man. The story reverses when she needs his love and care. For all ages.

Crazy Lady!, by Jane Leslie Conly. [Harper/Collins Publishers. ISBN 0-06-021360-4] The story of Vernon, a junior high boy who befriends a neighborhood woman and her mentally challenged son. Unconditional love and overcoming loss.

Read for Me, Mama, by Vashanti Rahaman [Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 1997] A young mother is too ashamed to admit to her 6 or 7 year old son that she cannot read

Nature's Harmony: God's Creation and Care for All

Old Turtle, Douglas Woods. A beautifully illustrated story about the Creation of the world that focuses on a discussion by animals about who God is, the coming of people and the disintegration of unity and wholeness in the world—with a surprise ending! For all ages. ISBN 0-938586-48-3

Grandad's Prayers of the Earth. Douglas Woods. A boy learns about God's world and something about prayer during walks with his grandfather, finally understanding the wisdom of his grandfather's words with a return to the forest many years after his death. For all ages.

The Wonderful Feast, Esphyr Slobodkina [N.Y., Greenwillow Books, 1993; originally published in 1955] A number of creatures end up getting fed from the feed a farmer gives to his horse (at a quite elementary level).

Ice Bear and Little Fox, by Jonathan London, with illustrations by Daniel San Souci. [N.Y., Dutton's Children's Books, Penguin Putnam, 1998] The story of the mutually helpful relationship between a silver fox and a polar bear through the year; includes a glossary of Inuit (Eskimo) words and other terms relating to the Arctic, and an afterword giving more information about Arctic wildlife

Repentance: Overcoming Embarrassment

Read for Me, Mama, by Vashanti Rahaman [Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 1997] A young mother is too ashamed to admit to her 6 or 7 year old son that she cannot read

Repentance: Overcoming Selfishness/Self-centeredness

Candy Floss, by Rumer Godden; illustrated by Nonny Hogrogian [New York: Philomel Books, 1991; first published in 1959] A powerful story about the profound repentance of a very spoiled girl of seven; set in England at a coconut shy booth at a traveling country fair

Miss Hickory, by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. A novel about a figurine made of hardwood who learns painfully not to be so hardheaded.

King Midas and the Golden Touch. A new edition by Charlotte Craft, and illustrated by K. Y. Craft (beautifully done).

The Bad Hat, by Ludwig Bemelmans (in the *Madeline* series)

Zinnia and Dot, by Lisa Campbell Ernst. A humorous tale of two bickering hens who finally put aside their squabbles to heroically drive away the weasel who is after their eggs.

Steady Faith, Endurance, and Sacrificing for Others

Leah's Pony, Elizabeth Friedrich. A girl of about 11 is willing to sell her beloved pony so her nearly bankrupt farm-family will not have to lose their farm.

Silver At Night, S.C. Bartoletti. A very touching story about an immigrant from Italy working in the coal mines of northeastern Pennsylvania, slowly earning enough money to send for his girlfriend/fiancee back in Italy.

The Little Boat, K. Henderson. (at an early elementary level)

The Long Winter, Laura Ingalls Wilder. A pioneer family living in a new town on the South Dakota prairie survives a seven-month winter filled with blizzards.

More than Anything Else, Marie Bradley. Beautifully and poignantly describes how Booker T. Washington learned to read at about the age of 10.

Wanda's Roses, by Pat Brisson. [Honesdale, Pa.: Boyd Mills Press, 1998] A girl's faith in a scraggly bush inspires a whole neighborhood to beautify their surroundings.

The Miracle of Saint Nicholas, by Gloria Whelan. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997] A beautifully done story, about a church in a Russian village being reopened after sixty years, through the initiative of a ten-year old boy, and by the patient faith of the whole village

The Black Falcon, by William Wise (retold from Boccaccio's Decameron); illustrated by Gillian Barlow [New York: Philomel Books, 1990]

Miss Fanny's Hat, by Jan Karon. A plucky 100-year-old becomes willing to offer her favorite hat for her church's fund-raising auction.

Steady Faith, Endurance and Love, Victory over Tribulation

When the Monkeys Came Back, by Kristine L. Franklin. After the rainforest is chopped down near her home, a woman plants trees her whole life, to woo the monkeys back.

Miss Rumphius, by Barbara Cooney. An old woman in New England finds joy in spreading lupine seeds everywhere!.

The Glorious Flight - Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot, by Alice and Martin Provensen. A story about the first solo flight across the English Channel, in 1909, and about building the plane that made the flight.

Eleanor, by Barbara Cooney (based on the true story of Eleanor Roosevelt's difficult childhood)

Dragon in the Rocks. The true story about the English girl of about 12 who chipped out and assembled a great dinosaur skeleton in the early 19th century; another version of this story is ***Rare Treasures, Mary Anning***, by Don Brown

A Little Princess, by Frances Hodgson Burnett. A young girl from a wealthy family humbly and heroically endures the scorn, hatred, and jealousy of the headmistress - and some of the other students - at her English boarding school.

The Little Match Girl, by Hans Christian Andersen. A young girl from an impoverished family freezes to death as she faithfully sells matches on a city street.

Thankfulness and Gratitude

Pages of Music, by Tony Johnston, and illustrated by Tomie de Paola [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988] A composer always remembers a summer he spent as a boy on the island of Sardinia, and he returns there one Christmas morning with a magnificent gift of music

Silver Packages, Cynthia Rylant [N.Y., Orchard Books, 1997] Based on the true story of the Christmas Train coming to the Appalachian Mountains every Christmas beginning in 1943; one of the children who received a present each year returns to his Appalachian hometown years later to serve as a medical doctor.

O Christmas Tree! A story about Christmas in the Caribbean

What a Wonderful Day to Be a Cow, by Carolyn Lesser

Merry Christmas, Old Armadillo, by Larry Dane Brimner, and illustrated by Dominic Catalano

Truth Triumphant Over Falsehood

Papa Gatto, by Ruth Sanderson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995) - very beautiful story and pictures

Yielding to Temptations and Passions

The Wind in the Willows, by Kenneth Grahame (1908). Ch. 1, Mole insists on paddling the boat, and capsizes it.

By the Banks of Plum Creek, by Laura Ingalls Wilder. When Laura goes to the flooded river and is almost swept away after she ventures in just to see how it feels)

The Story about Ping, by Marjorie Flack and Kurt Wise [NY: Puffin/Penguin, 1977; originally published in 1933] A little duck gets lost on the Yangtze River in China after deciding not to return to his houseboat where he will be punished for being late.

Frog and Toad Together, Arnold Lobel [New York: Harper and Row, 1971] The chapter about Toad on stage, getting carried away with thoughts of fame and grandeur.

Peter Rabbit, Mr. Samuel Whiskers (or ***The Roly-Poly Pie***), and some others by Beatrix Potter. Stories revealing dangerous consequences for over-curiosity and disobedience.

The Hundred Dresses, by Eleanor Estes [N.Y., Harcourt Brace, 1972] Very powerful lessons about peer pressure, and not making fun of people; first published in 1944.

Miss Penny and Mr. Grubbs, by Lisa Campbell Ernst. A gardener is nearly consumed by jealousy over his neighbor's thriving garden, and everything he tries to do to subvert her success backfires)

Why? by Nikolai Popov [North-South Books, NY ISBN 1-55858-534-6] A wordless picture book that shows how simple aggression can escalate into violence (involving a mouse and a frog) that quickly results in ruin. Striking illustrations.