

# Recommended ...

## Children's Books

for

## Christadelphian Families



**Part 2:**  
**Chapter Books**  
**for Younger Children**  
**Michael Widemann**



A Wilderness Voice Publication

***Recommended ...***

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*for*  
**Christadelphian Families**

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Part 2:

**Chapter Books**  
*for*  
**Younger Children**  
**(5–8 year olds)**

**Mishael Widemann**

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# Chapter books for younger children (5–8 years)

“Please Dad! Just one more chapter. Please?”

It’s evening time, the fire is crackling, and my brother and I are lying on the floor listening to another adventure from the *Little House on the Prairie* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Mum is sitting there, too, and Dad is in his armchair reading the story with all the different voices to boot. Usually we got our request for another chapter — I suspect because our parents were just as keen as us to find out what happened next.

It’s one of my favourite memories of childhood — the evening read-aloud. It wasn’t just the book. It was the totality of the experience: the fire, the cosiness, the bonding of everyone sharing the story together. Laughing in the funny bits and crying in the sad bits. It is said that when an emotion is tied to an event it creates a memory, and this is certainly the case for me. That half an hour of listening to a story every evening is a powerful childhood memory because it is associated in my mind with peace and contentment and warmth.

There comes a time in a child’s life, around five or six (if not earlier), when they are able to not just appreciate picture books, but also chapter books. When you read accounts of life in “the olden days”, the habit of reading aloud seemed to be quite a common one. Without all the entertainments that are readily available today, families would sit in the evening while one person read and everyone else did lovely creative things like knitting or whittling sticks. This idyllic picture has been shattered by the modern age of technology and distractions, but it’s still possible to create a little of that culture in our homes.

This habit of reading aloud more than anything else can spark a *love* for reading in the life of a young child. This has nothing to do with reading levels, or comprehension tests, or how well Johnny can read by age seven. It’s not being able to decode that will turn our children into readers; it’s about giving them *a love of literature*.

And why is the love of reading important for the saints? Because God has given us His message of Truth in a book: The Bible. Our brethren through the generations have written wonderful books on the Word that will only have power in our lives if they are *read*. And if no one is reading the Word, or the literature of the Truth, all that power to change is lost. After all, “faith cometh by hearing, and

hearing by the Word of God" (Rom 10:17). Our faith is formed, not by some miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but by the daily assimilation of the *Word of God*. That's the real reason why we want our children to love reading — so that when they are older, they enjoy sitting down to meditate on the Word of God or reading a work of the Truth.

## Why are stories important?

All human beings love stories. Our Lord knew this when he taught through parables; each parable teaches a lesson that lies behind the story. Story is a powerful medium, and when used correctly, can be a power for good in our children's lives. Sarah Mackenzie, in her book, *The Read Aloud Family*, page 48, says that stories give our children "practice dealing with life-and-death situations, practice living with virtue, practice failing at virtue". Through story, children are forced to contemplate values such as honesty, truthfulness, kindness, humility, compassion. These are the same values that they can learn through picture books, but when encountered in a chapter book, the lesson can be deeper and fuller because the story is more complex. When you read *Mary on Horseback* by Rosemary Wells, you cannot but feel compassion for the people who lived in such poverty in the Appalachian Mountains. And when children listen to *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, they are forced to look at their own attitudes to those who are less well-off or different in some way. The lesson flows naturally out of the story itself. This is the power of story.

## What kind of stories?

Ruth Sawyer said, in, "*The Way of a Storyteller*" (New York: Viking Press, 1962, page 157):

"Stories that make for wonder. Stories that make for laughter. Stories that stir one within with an understanding of the true nature of courage, of love, of beauty. Stories that make one tingle with high adventure, with daring, with grim determination, with the capacity of seeing danger through to the end. Stories that bring our minds to kneel in reverence, stories that show the tenderness of true mercy, the strength of loyalty, the unmaawkish respect for what is good."

These are the best kind of stories of all. The ones that evoke some sort of emotional reaction, that stay with you once you've closed the book. These are the books that we want to lead our children gently towards. The kind of book that you enjoy reading just as much as an adult as you enjoyed listening to or reading as a child.

We also want to choose books that are not morally ambiguous. The rights and wrongs of a book ought to be clear to the young mind. Sarah Clarkson in her book, *Read for the Heart*, page 150, wrote, "stories play powerfully in the development of an inner conception of morality, so for me to call a book good, it must clearly distinguish between goodness and evil". In today's world of confusion and calling evil good (see Isaiah 5:20), it doesn't help our children if a book is ambiguous as to what is right and wrong.

## So ... what about ... 'series books'?

In the early reading years, my children have gravitated to candy-floss type books, like *Rainbow Magic* or *Geronimo Stilton*. I am no fan of this kind of book. The plots are trite, the language is mediocre — hardly the great literary fare we hope they will go for. You can take a variety of approaches to these types of books, at the very least monitoring their consumption. Perhaps the one thing we don't want is for our children to develop *solely* a taste for that kind of book. What I have noticed, however,

is that by exposing children to other good literature, the taste for the 'junk' type book wanes over time and the enjoyment of nourishing literature increases. It's a little like food: children will naturally gravitate towards the junk, but if nutritious food is presented in a tasty way, it will, over time, create in the child a taste for the good. It's our job as parents to expose our children regularly to nutritious food; it's equally our responsibility to introduce them to quality literature. "Children don't stumble onto good books by themselves" (Gladys Hunt, *Honey for a Child's Heart*, page 17).

I would suggest that the reading of series books, overall, is a positive thing for our children. I began my journey into books through the Famous Five books by Enid Blyton, and my eldest two children have also cut their reading teeth on this series. Although the language is not very sophisticated, the great benefit of series books is that they hone the reading skills, they whet the appetite for more, and by the sheer volume of what is read, the emerging reader begins to fall in love with books. Jim Trelease in his book *The Read Aloud Handbook* says, "the important thing about series books is they make a pleasure connection with the child" (page 121). If we want our children to enjoy reading the Word and the literature of the Truth, we want them to see reading as pleasure, not work. At the end of this book list are some recommended series books for children to read — particularly helpful if you have a child that reads like a combine harvester.

"Comic books are a frequent childhood choice of people who grow up to become very fluent readers" (Jim Trelease, *The Read Aloud Handbook*, page 99). I happily consumed all the Asterix and Tintin books as a child, and, particularly for boys, these books are another way of making a pleasure connection with reading. However, many other comic books that my children have wanted to get out of the library I have found to be wanting. The language used is cheap and crass, and I've noticed that the illustrations often portray females in a suggestive way. Vetting every comic book is a must.

## Reading aloud benefits

### Benefit #1: Exposure to rich and sophisticated language

I'm not sure about you, but I find that the vocabulary I use with my children on a daily basis doesn't tend to be overly sophisticated. "Shoes on! Get in the car NOW! Have you got your drink bottle? Has everyone been to the bathroom?" Chances are, the vocabulary children are exposed to from their peers is not much better. In fact, most conversation is made up of what is known as the 'Basic Lexicon': the 5000 most commonly used words. The 'Common Lexicon' includes the 5000 words from the 'Basic Lexicon' as well as an extra 5000 words. It is *printed text* (books) that contain the *rare* words. It is *printed text* that contains the richness and sophistication of language.

When we read aloud, we expose our children to rich, sophisticated language. Even when they cannot yet read sophisticated books on their own, their listening comprehension is much higher. They don't have to sink all their energy into decoding the text; they sink it into listening and enjoying. That is the beauty of reading aloud a wonderful chapter book to our young listeners. What's more, because we are reading the book out loud, the more descriptive passages (that fast readers tend to skip over to get to the action or dialogue) are also heard by the young listener. The young child then builds up a wealth of vocabulary by listening to excellent books read well.

Why is this important? Firstly, when a child has listened to excellent literature, when he or she comes to writing, they have the words and expressions right there in their brains to use! But more importantly, it trains the mind and ear to listen to and understand the Word of God. The Word of God, particularly in the King James Version, is rich, detailed, complex, poetic and sophisticated. What's more, think of *Elpis Israel* or *Christendom Astray*. How many people today find those works difficult

to read and understand? Could part of the reason be that people are not training themselves from a young age on literature that is rich and complex?

## Benefit #2: Building of knowledge

You could read a passage in a textbook on World War Two. It might tell you that France was occupied by the Germans and a little information about what the war was like in France. But that experience is a meagre one compared to reading *Twenty and Ten*, (a 'living book' by Claire Huchet Bishop), the story of some French children who take on the task of hiding ten Jewish children in their school. The paragraph in the textbook will be forgotten. But the book will be remembered. Moreover, it's not just a 'head' knowledge that happens, it's a 'heart' knowledge, too. Listening to *Twenty and Ten* doesn't just impart the bare facts of history. It creates an awareness of the fear and danger and difficulty those children lived with. And it might even awaken our children to how fortunate they are in today's world.

In this way, reading aloud excellent books builds our children's knowledge of the world. They learn about geography and history in a real way, in a way that brings them right into that time period or culture. T. David Gordon in his book, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns*, writes on page 105, "Language brings the past close to us, and it facilitates our sense of human similarity to others. But images do just the opposite; an old, grainy, sepia-toned photograph of a Civil War soldier makes him appear very distant". It is the power of story that gives us the ability to experience the past, and to make connections between an era gone and the present day.

## Benefit #3: Creating a love for reading

Jim Trelease writes in his book, *The Read Aloud Handbook* on page 9: "What phonics cannot do is motivate. Nobody has a favourite vowel or blend". How true. The job of learning to decode as a young child can feel like ... work. And if it feels like work, children will resist it. As humans we move towards pleasure and away from pain. Which makes it unsurprising that even though children may successfully learn how to read, the process has been so fraught with frustration and pain, that they don't choose to do it in their free time. It is not associated with pleasure.

Here comes the beauty of read aloud time. No pain and frustration for the child; just a great story to listen to. It may take some time to hit on the right book, especially if reading aloud is a new experience, but the attraction of humans to story is sure to win out eventually! Whether they have started the process of decoding or not, we have the opportunity to choose quality literature to read aloud and help them to fall in love with books. And if our child is a budding reader who is consuming large amounts of 'candy-floss' books, then reading aloud creates a taste for better fare. "Children easily gravitate to junk — it's like they have built-in junk magnets. Our job is to lead them eventually to the better books by reading aloud to them" (*The Read Aloud Handbook*, Jim Trelease, page 121).

Many of the books in the list below are suitable for reading aloud to young children and you'll probably find, (like I have in my family), that when their own reading skills are improved, they'll go back to the books you've read and read them over again for themselves.

## Benefit #4: Providing a role-model

It is true that in the parenting journey "more is caught than taught". What kind of a role model do we present to our children? Are we constantly on our phones and computers? Or, are we seen by our children to read? Perhaps, if our schedule is busy, we may not have a lot of time to read for pleasure in front of our children. But if we read aloud to them, we are still modelling our own enjoyment of books while reaping all the other benefits listed above.

## Some final thoughts

Reading aloud has always looked quite peaceful to me when my husband is reading. With me ... not so much. I sit down to read aloud ... and the baby needs a nappy change. Or, as happened to me once, I set everyone up with smoothies to drink during read aloud ... and one minute in, someone knocked their glass over, and I found myself cleaning up smoothie off the table, chair and floor instead of reading. Or, I've just begun reading, the phone rings, and by the time I get back ... the kids have all disappeared. It doesn't look perfect. But it's worth it anyway. It's worth it to cultivate a love of books, and particularly a love of good books. It might only be ten minutes. But it's ten minutes well spent.

As Jim Trelease says in his book, *The Read Aloud Handbook*: "The least expensive thing we can give a child outside of a hug turns out to be the most valuable: words".





# TEN TIPS FOR READING ALOUD

1. Ten minutes every day is better than one hour once a fortnight. Kids need some consistency to sustain interest in the story.
2. Choose a book with rich language, above their own reading level to read aloud. Leave them to practice their reading skills on lighter/series books.
3. Peg read-aloud to a time of day (e.g., with afternoon tea, before/over dinner, after the Bible readings) and do it consistently.
4. Don't read too fast, and make sure there are enough pauses.
5. Try out different voices and accents for the characters. Make it fun!
6. Let your children use their hands while listening (Lego, colouring, hand crafts, painting, drawing). Studies show children often listen better if they can occupy themselves while listening.
7. Let kids have a snack while they listen — extra pleasure connections!
8. It works well to read the first book in a series to whet their appetites (e.g., Beezus and Ramona) and then leave them to read the rest of the series on their own.
9. Re-reading books children have already listened to is a good thing—they will get more out of it the second time round.
10. Use the read-aloud as a springboard for natural discussion with your children on values such as courage, honesty, purity, kindness, compassion.

## Books cited/Further reading:

*The Holy Bible, KJV*

Jim Trelease, *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2013)

Sarah Mackenzie, *The Read-Aloud Family*, (Oregon: Zondervan, 2018)

Gladys Hunt, *Honey for a Child's Heart*, (Michigan: Zondervan, 2002)

Sarah Clarkson, *Read for the Heart*, (USA: Apologia Press, 2015)



# BOOKLIST

**DISCLAIMER:** Many quality books for children are written by authors with a Christian worldview who do not share our doctrine and practice. Therefore, many books will have references to doctrines such as heaven-going or the immortal soul, or they refer to customs such as Christmas or Easter. The simple truth is that we do not have many children's chapter books available written by Christadelphians. Such topics need to be talked about with our children to create understanding of why we believe and act as we do. In fact, reading these things opens up an opportunity for discussion and can be welcomed as a learning opportunity.

## Wayne Grover

(illustrated by Jim Fowler)

### *Dolphin Adventure*

### *Dolphin Treasure*

Based on real life experiences, these charming stories tell of the special relationship between a diver and a dolphin in the seas off Florida. 'Baby', the dolphin that the man helps to save later comes to his own aid when he is in desperate need. Charming, adventurous and moving all rolled into one.

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## E.B.White

### *Charlotte's Web*

Possibly one of the most well-loved books ever written for children and a constant favourite, this special story, which won a Newbery honour award, is touching, witty, wise and clever. I don't know how many authors can succeed in making their readers feel emotionally attached to a spider, but E.B White certainly manages it. The special relationship between a runt pig and Charlotte, a spider who lives in his stall and saves his life through her cleverness is brilliantly told. This book is an absolute must-read and your children are sure to love it.

### *The Trumpet of the Swan*

Another special book from E.B White, this is the story of Louis, a trumpeter swan who has the problem of being mute but is helped by a boy named Sam Beaver to learn how to read and write. Louis obtains a trumpet which leads him into various adventures and all with the goal of winning the love of his heart's desire: a swan named Serena.

### ***Stuart Little***

The Little family in New York are shocked to discover that their second son, Stuart has the size and appearance of a mouse! Everyone learns to adjust to the shock, but when Margalo, a bird who lives near his house disappears, Stuart sets off on an adventure to find her.

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## Arleta Richardson

### ***In Grandma's Attic***

#### ***More Stories from Grandma's Attic***

#### ***Still More Stories from Grandma's Attic***

#### ***Treasures from Grandma's Attic***

Arleta Richardson, who grew up on the shores of Lake Michigan recounts stories that her grandmother, Mabel told her of her life on a nineteenth century farm, with her big brothers Reuben and Roy and her best friend, Sarah Jane. My children love listening to these tales, and always beg for another chapter. Each chapter is a stand-alone story and is either funny, ridiculous, or adventurous and always brings with it a powerful life lesson. These books are written with a Christian worldview and bring out general biblical principles regarding character and conduct.

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## Robert McCloskey

### ***Homer Price***

Well-known for his award-winning picture books, McCloskey brings us a story of a boy who lives in mid-western America in a tourist camp that his parents run. The stories are quaint and comical and border on the ridiculous. Involving jewellery that gets lost in doughnuts, robbers who steal hair lotion, and contests over the length of a piece of string, Homer, with his inventiveness and quick thinking is the star of every situation.

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## Rosemary Wells

### ***Mary on Horseback, Three Mountain Stories***

Winner of several awards, this book contains three true stories from the life of Mary Breckinridge, a girl from a wealthy family who trained as a nurse during World War 1 and who went into the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky, USA to care for the poor people who lived there. While most of America in the 1920s had cars, radios and telephones, the people in this book lived in difficult terrain, had no running water,

and suffered the tragedies of no effective nursing or hospital facilities in their area. This book will touch your heart as a parent and hopefully help your child to appreciate their blessings and comforts.

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## A.A. Milne

(Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard)

*Winnie-the-Pooh*

*The House at Pooh Corner*

*When We Were Very Young*

*Now We Are Six*

These books are almost 100 years old and are as quaint, silly and humorous as ever. The characters of Christopher Robin, Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore, Tigger and the others are unforgettable, once met. They are perfect for reading aloud, as the books become funnier once you're older. Hundred Acre Wood is the realm of imagination and set in nature. In this technology-obsessed age, our children can certainly do with a larger dose of that.

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## Claire Huchet Bishop

(Illustrated by William Pene du Bois)

*Twenty and Ten*

This book is based on a true story and an excellent age-appropriate book to introduce children to the events of World War 2. During the German occupation of France, twenty French children are taken to a refuge in the mountains. Then they learn that they are going to hide ten extra children in their house - Jewish refugees. The story of how they hide them from the Nazis and the dramatic events that unfold is a truly exciting story and one that can open our children's eyes to the relatively easy times they live in.

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## Laura Ingalls Wilder

(Illustrated by Garth Williams)

*Little House in the Big Woods*

*Little House on the Prairie*

*On the Banks of Plum Creek*

*By the Shores of Silver Lake*

*The Long Winter*

*Little Town on the Prairie*  
*These Happy Golden Years*  
*The First Four Years*  
*Farmer Boy (about the childhood of Almanzo Wilder)*



This series is an absolute classic and although it is about a pioneering family of all girls, the adventures the family has made it exciting for boys and girls alike. The series is based on the true story of Laura Ingalls and her family who were American settlers living in the late 1800s. From adventures with wolves, bears and Indians to the coziness of Pa's fiddle to the difficulties of crop failures and harsh winters, these books portray the full range of joy and suffering that those settlers faced. An unforgettable series of stories that will stay in the hearts of your children for ever.

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## Ruth Stiles Gannett

(Illustrated by Ruth Chrisman Gannett)

*My Father's Dragon*

*Elmer and the Dragon*

*The Dragons of Blueland*

The first book in this series, (a Newbery Honor Book) is the wild and nonsensical tale where the hero of the tale travels through a jungle to rescue a young dragon who is being mistreated and overworked on 'Wild Island'. The hero uses his well-stocked knapsack to appease all of the animals he meets along the way to his goal. A silly and adventurous book.

# Carolyn Haywood

## *Here's a Penny*

The actual name of the little boy in this book is William, but his adoptive parents name him Penny because of his bright copper curls. The story is about the adventures of this little six-year old boy, the friends he makes and the sticky situations he gets into.

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## Beverly Cleary

### *Beezus and Ramona*

### *Ramona the Pest*

### *Ramona the Brave*

### *Ramona and Her Father*

### *Ramona and Her Mother*

### *Ramona Quimby, age 8*

### *Ramona Forever*

### *Ramona's World*

Track the life of Ramona Quimby, age 4-10 in this series of books. Ramona is naughty, impulsive, imaginative and quaint and the series tell the story of a thoroughly normal American suburban family. As a child reading these books I found the adventures of Ramona fascinating. As an adult reading the first book to my children ... I found myself sympathising with her poor mother.



### *Henry Huggins*

### *Henry and Beezus*

### *Henry and Ribsy*

### *Henry and the Paper Route*

### *Henry and the Clubhouse*

### *Ribsy*

An equivalent series to Ramona, these are the stories about Beezus Quimby's friend, Henry Huggins. Another series for your children to enjoy.

### *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*

### *Runaway Ralph*

### *Ralph S. Mouse*

The adventures of a young mouse called Ralph, who can talk and is pretty competent on a motorcycle.

## Gertrude Chandler Warner

### *The Boxcar Children*

This is the first chapter book I remember reading aloud to my children, and it was a hit. The author wrote this book when as a teacher she noticed that there were not many exciting stories for children to begin their reading journey on. She later followed this original book with eighteen more stories about the 'Boxcar Children'. This simple book has mystery, adventure and a satisfying conclusion that your children will love.

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## Eleanor Estes

(Illustrated by Louis Slobodkin)

### *The Hundred Dresses*

Based on the author's real life experience when she was a little girl at school during World War 1, this Newbery Honor book tells the story of Wanda, a poor and motherless Polish girl who is teased by the other girls in the school. Particularly relevant to girls and the cruelty and bullying that girls can either be part of or party to, this book is important to open up the discussion on bullying with our own daughters. A powerful book and eloquently told.

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## Richard and Florence Atwater

### *Mr Popper's Penguins*

This quirky book, begun by Richard Atwater and finished by his wife when he became seriously ill, tells the story of Mr Popper, a painter who loves everything about the Poles and who is gifted a penguin by Admiral Drake from the South Pole. 'Captain Cook' is soon joined by a lady penguin and soon the family have twelve penguins to feed and look after. The ensuing chaos is not hard to imagine.

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## Clyde Robert Bulla

### *Viking Adventure*

### *Pocahontas and the strangers*

### *Squanto, friend of the Pilgrims*

### *The Secret Valley*

### *A Lion to Guard Us*

These are sensitively told stories about historical figures and time

periods. These books transport the young reader or listener into a different era of time to appreciate the hardships and struggles of those time periods.

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## Alice Dalgliesh

*The Bears on Hemlock Mountain*

*The Courage of Sarah Noble*

Both of these Newbery Honor books celebrate courage and bravery. The first is a tale of a young boy who faces his fear of bears and the second is based on the true story of a little girl who accompanies her father into the wilderness to cook for him while he is building their family home. Beautiful, simple stories that could be read aloud or read alone by your budding reader.

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## Will Moses

*Johnny Appleseed, the story of a legend*

In 1774, a boy named John Chapman was born. He would later become known as Johnny Appleseed, an eccentric and generous woodsman who planted tens of thousands of apple trees all over America. Wherever he went he sold apple tree seedlings to people with the promise that apples were what they needed — apple sauce, apple pie, dried apples. And lo and behold, apple pie is still a famous American dish today!

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## Susan E. Goodman

*Brave Kids: True Stories from America's Past - Cora Frear*

This is the true story of a little girl who helped her father, a prairie doctor, on his rounds. One day Cora and her father find themselves in the frightening situation of being in the direct line of a prairie fire. The true story of how they survive is inspirational.

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## Marguerite de Angeli

*Henner's Lydia*

This book, written and beautifully illustrated by Marguerite de Angeli gives an interesting insight into the life of a young girl, Lydia, growing up in an Amish community in Pennsylvania.

*The Skippack School*

About a hundred years after the founding of Plymouth Colony in the



New World comes a simple story about a German family who emigrate to Pennsylvania and join the 'plain' people, the Mennonites. This book is written from the perspective of their son, Eli Schrawder, a young boy who learns some valuable life lessons with 'Master Christopher' at the Skippack School.

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## Carol Ryrie Brink

### *Caddie Woodlawn, 1935*

Winner of the Newbery Medal and set in pioneering American days, this book is in a similar style to the Little House on the Prairie series. Written by her grand-daughter, this is the true story of an eleven-year old red-headed girl called Caddie Woodlawn (real surname of Woodhouse), who, with her tomboy ways gets into many scrapes and adventures throughout this book. Full of fun and excitement.

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## Eleanor Frances Lattimore

### *Little Pear*

The adventures of a five-year old Chinese boy, living with his mother, father and two sisters in a Chinese village. 'Little Pear' gets into all sorts of scrapes, but always manages to come off okay. The story is accompanied with charming illustrations by the author.

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## Judith Berry Griffin

### *Phoebe the Spy*

The true story of a young girl who becomes a spy in George Washington's household to keep an eye out for a possible threat on the General's life. The story of how she uncovers the plot and saves Washington's life makes a simple and exciting story for young children.

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## Elizabeth Yates

### *Sarah Witcher's Story*

The retelling of a folk-tale from New Hampshire, this is the remarkable story of a little girl that is lost for days in the wild, and looked after by a bear! The way in which she survives and the search that eventually succeeds in finding her is remarkable. How much is what actually happened and how much is legend is unclear, but it makes for an exciting story.

# Dick King-Smith

*The Sheep-Pig*

*Harry's Mad*

*Harriet's Hare*

*George Speaks*

*The hodgeheg*

*The Adventurous Snail*

*Pretty Polly*

Dick King-Smith has written many books for younger readers. He particularly enjoys writing stories about animals, drawing on his farm experiences. He writes with a dry sense of humour and a sense of the ridiculous that make his books great fun to read.

*Sophie's Snail*

*Sophie's Tom*

*Sophie Hits Six*

*Sophie in the Saddle*

*Sophie is Seven*

*Sophie's Lucky*

There are perhaps not many children, who at four years of age have their hearts set on becoming a 'lady farmer'. But such is the dream of the main character of these funny books. Small, but very determined, Sophie's adventures are hilarious and the stories are written with Dick King Smith's characteristic humour and wit.



# Astrid Lindgren

## *Pippi Longstocking*

### *Pippi Goes on Board*

### *Pippi in the South Seas*

Pippi Longstocking, with her red pigtails is the unforgettable heroine of this series. Pippi, motherless and with a father away at sea, moves into a house known as Villa Villekulla in a Swedish village. With her superhuman strength, her eccentric habits, and her funny sayings, she captivates the interest of Tommy and Anika, two Swedish children, with whom she has many adventures.

### *The Children of Noisy Village*

Another tale set in Sweden, 'Noisy Village' consists of the families living in three adjoining farms: Middle Farm, North Farm and South Farm. The story is written from the perspective of a nine-year old girl, Lisa and tells of the adventures and happenings of the children of 'Noisy Village'.

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# Marion Holland

## *No Children, No Pets*

This book has been a real hit in our family. The Sanders Family, consisting of Mother (a widow), Don, Jane, Betsy and their cat inherit an apartment house in Palm Glade, Florida. When they arrive at their new home, they are met by a sign reading "No Children, No Pets". They settle in, however, pet, children and all. With the eccentric residents, the power of a hurricane that hits Florida and a mystery that needs solving, this makes a great read aloud that your children will want to read again on their own.

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# Johanna Spyri

## *Heidi*

This is the classic story about a little girl who lives with her grandfather in the Swiss Alps, with Peter and his goats for friends. You can almost taste the fresh milk and hearty Swiss bread and cheese when you read this classic. Not to be missed. You can read more about Heidi in two books that Spyri's translator, Charles Tritten, wrote:

### *Heidi Grows Up*

### *Heidi's Children*

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## Joyce Lankaster Brisley

*Milly Molly Mandy*

*More of Milly Molly Mandy*

*Milly-Molly-Mandy again*

*Further Doings of Milly-Molly-Mandy*

Millicent Margaret Amanda, or 'Milly Molly Mandy' for short, lives with her Father, Mother, Grandparents, Uncle and Aunty in a 'nice white cottage with a thatched roof'. Her adventures with 'Little friend Susan' and Billy Blunt in an English country village make for a charming read. The stories are accompanied by the author's own illustrations.

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## Jean Fritz

*The Cabin Faced West*

Based on a real pioneering family and a note in the diary of General George Washington, this story is told from the perspective of a young girl who slowly learns to love the Western frontier of Pennsylvania.

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## Rebecca Caudhill

*The Fairchild Family series:*

*Happy Little Family*

*Schoolhouse in the Woods*

*Up and Down the River*

*Schoolroom in the Parlour*

The adventures of the Fairchild family who live in the hills of Kentucky. The series is set in the early 1900s and with five children in this lively family there is always something afoot.

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## Hugh Lofting

*The Story of Dr Doolittle*

Dr John Dolittle is a doctor who lives in a village charmingly named Puddleby-on-the-Marsh. The doctor is more fond of animals than he is of his human patients, and one day when he discovers how to communicate with animals, becomes an animal doctor instead. One day, the call comes for him to rush to the aid of the monkeys in Africa who are all dying of a disease. The adventures that follow make for an amusing tale.

## Patricia C. McKissack

### *Tippy Lemmey*

Leandra and her friends Paul and Jeannie have a problem with a neighbour's dog, known as 'Tippy Lemmy'. It chases them whenever they pass by and the three children are terrified. But when events turn and they find they are needed urgently to save the dog, the three children learn to overcome their fear. This book would make a good read-aloud if you have children who are scared of dogs.

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## Maud Hart Lovelace

(Illustrated by Lois Lenski)

### *Betsy-Tacy*

Based on the author's own childhood comes this lovely story of a friendship between two five year old girls, Betsy and Tacy. This book has the nostalgic charm of an era past, where little girls could roam free to have picnics and playdates. Lovelace went on to write more Betsy-Tacy books which continue right through to Betsy's wedding.

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## Russell Freedman

(Illustrated by Kate Kiesler)

### *Out of Darkness, The Story of Louis Braille*

Winner of several awards, this beautifully illustrated book tells the true story of how a fifteen-year old French boy (Louis Braille) invented the Braille alphabet system for blind people. The story is simply told, and won't take long to read, yet it really brings to life the struggles Braille went through personally, and the amazing way he worked on perfecting his system. A remarkable story of perseverance and dedication to the goal of making blind people's lives more worthwhile. It is also a great conversation starter to discuss gratitude for being able to see, as well as building compassion and greater understanding for those with any kind of disability.

# SERIES BOOKS FOR YOUNGER READERS

Donald J. Sobol

## Encyclopedia Brown Series:

*Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective*

*Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Secret Police*

*Encyclopedia Brown Finds the Clues*

*Encyclopedia Brown Gets His Man*

*Encyclopedia Brown Solves Them All*

*Encyclopedia Brown Keeps the Peace*

*Encyclopedia Brown Tracks Them Down*

*Encyclopedia Brown Takes the Case*

Leroy (Encyclopedia) Brown is the son of Chief Brown of the Idaville police force. Encyclopedia is a well-read young boy and adept at solving the mysteries that occur around the town of Idaville. It's fun to read the case and try and work out the answer yourself before turning to read the solution to the mystery.

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Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

## Nate the Great series:

*Nate the Great*

*Nate the Great Goes Undercover*

*Nate the Great and the Lost List*

*Nate the Great and the Phony Clue*

*Nate the Great and the Sticky Case*

*Nate the Great and the Missing Key*

*Nate the Great and the Snowy Trail*

*Nate the Great and the Fishy Prize*

*Another detective series, suitable for beginning readers.*

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George E. Stanley

## Third Grade Detectives Series:

*The Clue of the Left-Handed Envelope*

*The Puzzle of the Pretty Pink Handkerchief*



*The Mystery of the Hairy Tomatoes*

*The Secret of the Green Skin*

*The Riddle of the Stolen Sand*

*The Case of the Dirty Clue*

*The Secret of the Wooden Witness*

*Cobweb Confession*

Mr Merlins' third grade class can't wait to get to school each week, because their teacher, an ex-spy always has a mystery for them to solve, complete with secret codes. These books are great easy chapter books for young readers.

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## Enid Blyton

Perhaps one of the most well-known and prolific authors for children the world has yet seen.

### **The Secret Seven Series (15 books)**

A group of seven friends, who solve mysteries together. Pitched at slightly younger readers than the Famous Five.

### **The Famous Five Series (21 books)**

Four cousins and Timmy the dog make up the 'Famous Five', and like the 'Secret Seven', each book involves a mystery and the story of how they solve it.

### **Malory Towers**

#### **Naughtiest Girl in the School**

#### **Twins at St Clare's**

These are English boarding school series which make boarding school look like an amazing place of endless adventure, midnight feasts and pranks. These were some of my favourite reads as a young girl.

### **Noddy**

The adventures of naughty Noddy, his pet 'Bumpy-Dog', Big Ears and his other friends who live in Toyland.

### **Brer Rabbit**

Brer Rabbit is the trickiest trickster of all the animals and these stories of how he outwits all the other animals and is sometimes outwitted himself are a classic.

### **The Enchanted Wood**

#### **The Magic Faraway Tree**

#### **The Folk of the Faraway Tree**

#### **Up the Faraway Tree**

What child's imagination wouldn't be captured with the idea of a magic tree in the middle of an enchanted wood, complete with its own slippery-slide to slide down and a different magical land at the top of the

tree every time the characters in the book visit.

### **The Children of Cherry Tree Farm**

### **The Children of Willow Farm**

### **More Adventures on Willow Farm**

Rory, Sheila, Benjy and Penny and their parents leave London to live on a farm. They become friends with Tammylan, the 'wild man' and learn about the hard work and fun experiences that farm life entails.

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## Laura Lee Hope

### **The Bobbsey Twins series**

Penned under a pseudonym, this series totals 72 books, the first being written in 1904 and the last in 1979. Many authors penned the entire series, and there have been some rewrites of original books, so each one may need to be vetted for content. Two sets of fraternal twins, Nan and Bert who are twelve and Freddie and Flossie who are six, have adventures and are involved in solving mysteries.

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## Andrew Svenson

(pseudonym, Jerry West)

### **The Happy Hollisters:**

*The Happy Hollisters and the scarecrow mystery*

*The Happy Hollisters and the Mystery in Skyscraper City*

*The Happy Hollisters at Sea Gull Beach*

*The Happy Hollisters on a River Trip*

*The Happy Hollisters at Snowflake Camp*

*The Happy Hollisters and the Merry-Go-Round Mystery*

*The Happy Hollisters and the Old Clipper Ship*

*The Happy Hollisters at Pony Hill Farm*

*The Happy Hollisters at Lizard Cove*

*The Happy Hollisters and the Secret Fort*

Another family-friendly series, the Happy Hollisters are a family of five children who are always stumbling across some mystery that needs solving.



# John Peterson

## The Littles:

*The Littles to the Rescue*

*The Littles Take a Trip*

*The Littles Have a Wedding*

*The Littles and the Terrible Tiny Kid*

Follow the adventures of the 'Littles', a family of tiny people with tails who live in the house of the 'Biggs'.

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