

Information & Resources for Using Children's Literature in Ministry

Quote about using secular children's books from p194 Offering the Gospel to Children by Gretchen Wolff Pritchard "When a book that makes no claim to be "churchy" or "religious" reveals a world of faith, hope, and love; of humility and courage; of sacrifice, grace, and resurrection; or when it exposes sham and injustice – then we challenge our children to discern in the daily realities of their lives and the private workings of their dreams some of the patterns that are at the heart of the gospel. In so doing, we are helping to give them a found of faith and trust, an openness to the hidden working of God in creation, a reserve of moral strength, that is likely to outlast adolescent questioning far better than a mere collection of inspirational stories, doctrinal formulations, and flat-out moral imperatives."

Children's Books Used/Mentioned in the Session:

- Browne, Eileen. *Handa's Surprise*, London: Walker Books, 1994.
- McDonough, Andrew. *Tina the Tree*, Unley, SA: Lost Sheep, 2012. lostsheep.com.au
- Munsch, Robert & McGraw, Sheila. *Love You Forever*. CA: Firefly Books, 2010.
- Nellist, Glenys & Selivanova, Elena. *Twas the Evening of Christmas*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderkidz, 2017.
- Portis, Antoinette. *Not-A-Box*, London: Harper Collins, 2006.
- Rylant, Cynthia & Wenzel, Brendan. *Life*, New York: Beach Lane Books, 2017.
- Schaefer, Carole Lexa & Fellows, Stanley. *The Copper Tin Cup*, Candlewick Press, 2000.
- Silverstein, Shel. *The Giving Tree*, New York: Harper Collins, 1964.
- Vivias, Julie. *The Nativity*, Norwood, SA: Omnibus Books, 1986.
- Ytreeide, Aarnold. *Amon's Adventure: A Family Story for Easter*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2011.
- Ytreeide, Aarnold. *Bartholomew's Passage: A Family Story for Advent*, Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 2002.
- Ytreeide, Aarnold. *Ishtar's Odyssey: A Family Story for Advent*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2015.
- Ytreeide, Aarnold. *Jotham's Journey: A Storybook for Advent*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008.
- Ytreeide, Aarnold. *Tabitha's Travels: A Family Story for Advent*, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2010.
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Other Books Mentions in the Session:

- Aroney-Sine, Christine. *The Gift of Wonder: Creative Practices for Delighting in God*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019, pp77-78 *Practice: Read a Children's book*.

- Pinazza, Julie. *Worship is for Everyone: Ideas for worship including 'story books' as a way of exploring faith at all ages*, Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 2000.

Finding Books:

- If searching in the public library on a particular topic type in the subject eg. kindness but then add “juvenile fiction” to get children’s books. Can also search “kindness juvenile literature”
- Picture Book Theology – picturebooktheology.com
- Story Path: Lectionary Links – storypath.upsem.edu/lectionary-link
- [15 Picture Books that Nurture Your Child’s Spirituality](#)
- [Picture Books, The Way of Love, & Becoming Beloved Community](#)

Other Webinars with Ideas for using Children’s Literature in Ministry:

- PRC - [Using Children’s Literature in Children’s Ministry](#)
- PRC – [Celebrating a Holy Lent and Easter Through Children’s Literature](#)
- Lifelong Learning, Virginia Theology Seminary – [Children’s Literature for Ministry](#)

Questions to ask for faith Conversations after reading a book:

- What can we learn from this book?
- What can learn about faith or God from this book?
- I wonder who is like God or Jesus in this book?
- How do you think this book relates to our theme/reading?

Ministry Ideas:

General:

- Have children’s books in the church library, including secular books that reveal a world of faith, hope, and love, or can lead to wondering & discussion about God and theological matters.

Worship:

- Use books for the Children’s Message
- At the beginning or during worship to build on the theme
- As part of the sermon
- To lead into discussion
- Instead of or to complement a Bible Reading

- As part of a prayer – one person reading the story and one person praying or read the book and then pray based on the story.

Events/Programs

- Bag it up outreach – Child, family or all age session based on a Biblical theme and then children go home with a book to match the theme. Choice of 3 books - 1 for young children, 1 for primary age, 1 for high school.
- Bed Time Stories & Prayer – Modelling the practice. Stand-alone session or part of another social event/program. In person or online (be aware of copyright & not sharing recordings publicly)
- Read aloud time before or after Sunday School or worship or other church event. For those who want to participate and probably not every week.
- Reading group for primary schoolers – Reading a book and lining it up with scripture or what the current theme is.
- Parenting sessions, mothers groups or workshops.

Seasons of the Church Year:

Lent/Easter:

- Use a children's book as a way to explore the symbols or spiritual disciplines of Lent & Easter. (See *Celebrate a Holy Lent & Easter through Children's Literature* PRC Webinar.
- Amon's Adventure – a family story to read during Lent. Particularly good if you've used the Advent stories as it is the same characters but grown up.
- The Giving Tree has great themes to explore about God giving for us.

Advent/Christmas:

- Read a book a day for Advent.
- Aarnold Ytreeide family stories for Advent. Read a chapter a night during advent. Leading up to and at the birth of Jesus. Enjoyed by families with children of all ages.
- *Twas the Evening of Christmas*. The Biblical story of Christmas written in rhyme similar to "Twas the Night Before Christmas". It was tradition in our house to read *Twas the Night Before Christmas* & *An Aussie Night Before Christmas*, then we added *Twas the Evening of Christmas*.

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