Outstanding Books Reviewed in This Issue

Bunny’s first spring, by Sally Lloyd-Jones

Cartwheeling in thunderstorms, by Katherine Rundell.

The allure of gentleness: defending the faith in the manner of Jesus, by Dallas Willard.
A Letter from the Publisher

Dear CLJ Reader:

How time flies! My kids have less than two weeks of school left. I am sure that many of you have made or are making your summer plans. Wherever your summer leads you, don’t forget to bring along some good books! And be sure to recommend titles for your children and students; experts agree that it is critical to keep kids reading over the summer. Many excellent titles for all ages are reviewed in this issue of CLJ.

This month, we are also pleased to present a wonderful interview with Denalyn Lucado, Max Lucado’s wife and co-author of the Lucado Treasure of Bedtime Prayers: Prayers for Bedtime and Every Time of the Day! (reviewed in this issue). Mrs. Lucado has some truly inspiring words for parents and anyone entrusted with sharing the gift of prayer with little ones. Many thanks to our Special Features Writer, Valorie Cooper, for putting this together. We pray that you are blessed by Mrs. Lucado’s words of wisdom.

We thank you for your support of CLJ. If you haven’t already done so, please visit www.ChristianLibraryJ.org to subscribe to the CLJ blog and to receive this online journal in your inbox. And if you like to write reviews such as those found within these pages, then I invite you to consider applying to become a CLJ reviewer.

In Christ,
Angela Walsh
Publisher and Editor
dereditor@christianlibraryj.org.
The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide reviews from a Christian point of view, of both Christian and secular titles for the Christian reader. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of Christian Library Journal.

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**Author Interview:**

Denalyn Lucado

*CLJ* was thrilled recently to have an opportunity to speak with Denalyn Lucado, co-author, along with her husband, Max Lucado, of the lovely new children's book, Lucado Treasury of Bedtime Prayers: Prayers for Bedtime and Every Time of Day! Here’s a peek into our conversation:

**CLJ:** We’ve had a chance to look at your beautiful new book, and it’s just precious!

**DL:** Isn’t it? They did such a great job! I love the artwork! The title describes the book perfectly. It is like a treasure book intended for parents to share with their children, and children with their parents. Parents can hold the big book and kids can point out the fun pictures. By the pictures, they will recognize prayers that they like or that speak to them.

**CLJ:** The padded cover makes it something nice to cuddle up with in bed.

**DL:** Yes, it is. And it’s a beautiful book.

**CLJ:** We’ve had a chance to look at your beautiful new book, and it’s just precious!

**Q:** Can you tell us about how this book came to be.

**A:** Well, Max wrote a book called Before Amen, a book about prayer. Publishers are so great with ideas, and Tommy Nelson, the children’s division of Thomas Nelson (which is all Harper Collins now), wanted to do something for children. They came to Max and asked if he could write some prayers for children. He did not have the time, so the publisher asked if I could help. It piqued my interest because I really do believe in the power of prayer, and I’ve been part of a prayer ministry for a long time. I just see God doing wonderful things when people connect with Him. And it’s so often in prayer, really.

**Q:** Can you tell us about how this book came to be.

**A:** I’m so quick to say “no” to extra things, but this was a “yes” in my heart right away. I thought, “This is good! If children can learn to pray when they’re young—really pray and really connect with God and try to hear Him and be led by Him, that’s going to affect our world. It’s going to affect our churches, our cities.” That was the “yes” in my heart. So that’s how it came to be.

**Q:** Can you tell a bit about the process of writing the prayers?

**A:** In writing the prayers for the book, I drew on what I’ve been learning in my Inner Healing Prayer Ministry. I tried to use unique little simple prayers, just about God being near and close—God is great and strong and He’s our defender. He can heal us. Those things that I’ve been learning did influence the simple prayers that we wrote for children.

**Q:** Can you tell a bit about the process of writing the prayers?

**A:** The publisher gave us a list of themes that they wanted to be covered, so we tried to follow those themes. We would write separately. Sometimes in my quiet time I would think of something. I don’t consider myself a writer, but I was an elementary education major and my mom was always making up poems when I was growing up. And I can rhyme, so those things made me believe I could do this. I think this kind of came out of my own desire for children to learn [to pray] at a
younger age. I would just sit down and say I really want kids to know God can heal them and that He can go deep—to know that God, when I’m scared at night, can keep and protect me. And then I can have peace and I don’t have to be afraid. Going to Him will change the situation in my heart and even the atmosphere in my room.

This project was fun to do, and I appreciated the opportunity. It blessed me to get to do this.

Q: What was the experience like, to get to collaborate with your spouse?

A: It was fun! It was kind of funny to think, “Oh wow, I’m doing a project with Max!” Usually he has his projects and I work on other things. To hear him say “That’s good!” when he read my prayers was fun! We wrote separately and then read the prayers to each other. Then we might tweak or finish lines for each other.

Q: Do you have a favorite takeaway from the project?

A: Hearing my husband, the author, say “That was really good!”

Q: Did the experience of becoming grandparents have an impact on this creation?

A: Yes, the anticipation of reading these prayers with my grandchildren was a thrill to me. In my 50s, I just have a greater understanding of life, and my prayer life is different now than it was when I was raising my own children. So I’m excited to share these prayers at this age with my little one.

Prayer is so mysterious, and it can sometimes just feel weird, or sometimes feel like I’m just saying words and checking that off my list for the day. But, when my kids were small, I joined a Moms in Prayer group. It was one of the best things I did as a young mom because Moms in Prayer is so strong in teaching praying scripture for your children. And now I think that’s just the most powerful thing you can do for your kids—to pray God’s word into their lives and over their lives, because His word is alive and active. Moms in Prayer really influenced my prayer life. I appreciate that ministry and I bet there are a lot of women around the world who were influenced and trained to pray by Moms in Prayer.

Q: In Before Amen, Max says there’s no right way or wrong way to pray.

A: Yes. There are no magical words. It’s just me asking God for what I need and praising Him and thanking Him and confessing. God hears every word. Even if it’s just “help,” He hears it.
Q: Max has said it’s important to open the door to prayer while children are young and before it becomes intimidating. Why do you think it becomes intimidating and how can parents help address that with this book?

A: Children are so trusting. They are so willingly vulnerable. They are just so innocent, and faith comes so easily to little children. So if they can begin to really know God and understand that they can talk to Him any time they want, whether they’re happy or they’re sad, if they’re hurting or if they don’t understand—it’s such a good thing. I don’t think I understood that when I was growing up. It’s such an advantage for them, if while they’re little they can begin to develop a conversation with God Almighty and understand the way He is in them and is with them. That is true equipping of your children. We know we cannot prevent hard things in their lives. They’ll lose contests and they won’t be picked for the team sometimes. There’s cruelty even in children, and I think the best way we can equip our kids to deal with the hard things is to teach them about God and how they can have a relationship with Him and that they can call upon Him, and to teach them that they can forgive people and that God forgives them. It’s such a privilege and responsibility to teach our children about God.

Q: What is your greatest hope for how this treasure of a book could make an impact on parents?

A: We didn’t create everything about this book. There was an artist and there were many writers who wrote prayers, and God’s word is in this book as well. The gifts and talents of several people went into the creation of this book. I really think this book will be very helpful to parents as they teach their children to pray. It can be a fun experience. It can be a go-to if there’s a hard day. I think it’s a sweet book that could be a really great tool for parents, even for parents who feel awkward about prayer or who aren’t real sure about prayer. I believe this book could bring everyone in the family together to learn how to pray.

Max’s short but powerful introduction to the book does a great job of explaining how we would love for this book to affect families. We hope this book will help parents teach their children to pray, to give and receive forgiveness, to hope, and to understand that God cares about each of us.

Q: How did you help make faith and prayer priorities in your children’s lives when they were young?

A: Well, when they were really small, we would read fun Bible storybooks, using character voices. Then when they were a little bigger, we would have the girls act out Bible stories. The most fun one was when they acted out being the children of Israel wandering in the desert. We had manna—vanilla wafers—fall from heaven via the ceiling fan!

As they got older, we would try to have devotionals. Sometimes that would be hit and miss. But as parents, we just have to be strong and courageous. We can’t be intimidated by our children’s initial reactions to things we try to promote in their lives.
I would tape Scriptures to their mirrors at night so they would see it first thing in the morning. I would speak a Scripture over them before they walked out the door. Sometimes they rolled their eyes. But in more recent years, I’ve heard them tell people about that experience and what it meant to them. The richest thing we can do for our children is to put God’s word in their life and pray it into them and over them and around them and for them.

I remember our oldest had insomnia, and I started walking through our house and praying for God to come and protect. It’s a powerful thing we can do and you don’t have to be in a certain place to pray.

Another thing we did—each day of the week would represent a people group, like Monday = missionaries, Tuesday = teachers, Wednesday = family, etc., and that’s the group we would pray for that day. And we would always end the day with prayer with each child individually at their bedside.

Q: The book includes both classic prayers and new ones you wrote. Do you have any favorites?

A: Yes, “Shoo!” (p. 94) is a favorite. “Thunderstorms are big and loud, Especially in the night, When thunder makes a boom, And lightning makes the light. Sometimes I am afraid And I don’t know what to do. I pray to You, sweet Jesus, And you tell my fears to ‘Shoo!’” I love that one!

Another fun one I did is “From A-Z” (p. 70), which thanks God using all the letters in the alphabet. “Good Night, Jesus” (p. 148) is also a favorite. I would say this one while kids march around the bed.

Q: A couple of prayers really touched my heart, too. “Good Night, Jesus,” which you just mentioned, is one. It is so comforting! It has such sweet illustrations as well, with the soft bunnies, and colorful butterflies and flowers. “Keep me Close” (p.158) is another favorite.

A: “Keep me Close”—I think Max wrote that one. I love the artwork on that page! Lisa Alderson, the illustrator, did a beautiful job with this book. Kids need to know God will comfort them. And the illustrations in this book do a good job of communicating peace and comfort.

God says He is love. I believe that is His main characteristic. Our children need to learn how much God loves them. That will transform them. The more we understand His love for us, the more that love pushes out all the rest. If I receive the love, then that starts filling me up and I start leaving behind the things that don’t honor God.

Q: Do you have any last thoughts you want to share?

A: God bless you in your work!
**Review Rating System**

*5 Outstanding — a book which impacts someone’s life or thinking

5 Excellent — well written, among the best

4 Very good — definitely worth reading

3 Good — may be a good source for relaxation or to meet needs for information

2 Fair — poor writing or editing; read only if very interested

1 Poor — not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings) – Note reservations within the review.

Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings) – Note problems within the review.

**Value of the book:**

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood, and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

With nonfiction, the rating includes quality of the information, accuracy, up to date, stimulates further inquiry, adds to the understanding of the topic, illustrations which are informative and appropriate.

With picture books, first be aware that these are written today for various age groups, so don’t assume little children. The rating includes those above for fiction and nonfiction, and also emphasizes the illustrations.

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**Commonly used abbreviations in CLJ reviews**

- **LCCN** Library of Congress Cataloging Number
- **C** Canadian Library Cataloging Number
- **ISBN** International Standard Book Number
- **CDR** CD-ROM
- **DVD** Videodisc
- **VID** Videocassette
PRIMARY FICTION

It's only Stanley / written and illustrated by Jon Agee.
1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm. PS-Grade 1  
E Rating: 4
All sorts of noises keep waking the Wimbledon family during the night. First their dog is howling at the moon. Then he is helpfully, if a bit unusually, cooking and fixing things! It’s Only Stanley by Jon Agee is a rhyming tale that ultimately reveals just what the family dog is really up to.

The humor of this story begins with the matter-of-fact attitude of Mr. Wimbledon as his weary family members (including Max the cat) grow increasingly distressed. Stanley’s silly antics build to an unexpected climax, though the pictures do hold some imaginative clues. The rhyming verse and lively sound words (“blubb”, “sploosh”, “bonk!”) make It’s Only Stanley a fun and memorable read-aloud.

Author/illustrator Jon Agee pairs this madcap nighttime adventure with amusing illustrations. His soft dark hues evoke the lateness of the hour and add a bit of suspense as the plot grows more baffling by the page. Stanley displays some very human-like skills (climbing ladders, using tools) while wearing an endearing look of pure determination. The cat wanders in and out of each scene with a comic range of eye expressions from bewilderment to disgust, while the humans are, literally, just along for the ride!

It’s Only Stanley will undoubtedly find an audience of young listeners and young-at-heart parents who enjoy an offbeat fantastical (and actually somewhat poignant) tale and good giggle.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

Mighty dads / by Joan Holub ; pictures by James Dean.
1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm. PS-Grade K  
E Rating: 5
A construction site is alive with all kinds of trucks doing their jobs in Joan Holub’s Mighty Dads. Each “Daddy” truck in this preschool-level picture book sets an example, teaches, protects, and encourages his little truck as they go about their busy work together.

The adorable cover of Mighty Dads introduces a dump truck from Big Daddy and Son Trucking, the “son” being a mini-me named Dumpy who follows Dad to work. Other pairs include Backhoe Steady and Hoe-Hoe, Bulldozer Strong and Dozy, Steamroller Brave and Roller, and Grader and Grady.

In simple rhyming couplets, each Daddy truck shows his child what to do. The Dads share (“Excavator Big helps little Vator dig”), comfort (“Cement Mixer Busy gives a hug if Mixie’s dizzy”), and safeguard (“Crane Long Arm keeps junior Crane from harm”), just like human dads! At the end of the day, the Mighty Dads are proud of their children and eager to create a new tomorrow.

Illustrator James Dean (creator of Pete the Cat) manages to give each truck a personality with just the addition of an outlined eye (which cleverly becomes an eyelid at nightfall). The colorful pages filled with bold images of each truck doing what it does will surely enthrall young truck enthusiasts.
The text is lively, succinct, and rich with action and sound words that are fun for reading aloud: scoop, roar, crash, bang, boom!

Joan Holub uses trucks to describe the loving and positive traits of fathers, making *Mighty Dads* a winner for both boys and girls and a delightfully unique presentation.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ*

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**PRIMARY NONFICTION**

**The beautiful story of the Bible / Maïte Roche**; translated from the French edition by Pierpaolo Finaldi.


1 v. (unpaged) : ill. ; 22cm. PS-Grade 3

Rating: 5

In *The Beautiful Story of the Bible* are important stories of the Bible, Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament stories include Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, David & Goliath, and Moses. The New Testament narratives include the life and miracles of Jesus, the lives of the Apostles, and the early Church.

The full-color illustrations on each page make it easy to linger in the stories and make the hardcover book a simple but elegant resource for easy out-loud reading. While *The Beautiful Story of the Bible* is geared very well to readers in preschool to grade 3, many in grades 4 or 5 would also feel at home in spending time with these stories. What is particularly clever is that the dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, can be found on every two-page spread—some take a serious search but they are present.

Roche has also written *The Bible for Little Ones*, which follows a similar format but is more
appropriate for three- to five-year-olds. Its color illustrations on every page give a similar feel as The Beautiful Story of the Bible. Those seeking a related work for the little ones after the preschool phase might look at The Complete Illustrated Children's Bible by Harvest House Publishers, which includes referenced Bible verses and two-page illustrations.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

The First Easter Ever / illustrated by Dennis Jones.

32 p.: col. ill.; 16 x 19 cm. PS-Grade 2
232.9 Rating: 3

The First Easter Ever abridges the story of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection in this small illustrated paperback by Zonderkidz.

The story begins with the 30-year-old Jesus leaving home to share God's message of love. He enlists "12 good friends" to spread the good news for three years until He is betrayed by Judas and arrested. After being whipped and put to death on the cross, Jesus rises and spends 40 more days with His disciples before ascending to heaven. The final message from an angel promises His eventual return.

The First Easter Ever is a very simplified version of the Gospel story, using short sentences and dialogue that is age-appropriate for children. Dennis Jones's cartoon-style artwork will hold the attention of younger readers, with some particularly effective scenes such as a two-page trail showing the disciples at work. The drawings of Jesus being punished and crucified give enough detail without being too gory for preschoolers. A soldier is shown raising a barbed whip and a fist to Jesus, and there is only a partial profile of Jesus on the cross.

The easy format and size make The First Easter Ever a thoughtful addition to a child's Easter basket and a useful starting point for learning about Jesus's life and sacrifice.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ

Lucado treasury of bedtime prayers: prayers for bedtime and every time of the day! / by Max & Denalyn Lucado.

160 p.: ill.; 29 cm. PS-Grade 3
242 Rating: 5

The Lucado Treasury of Bedtime Prayers is a collaboration between popular author Max Lucado and his wife Denalyn Lucado. This large picture book, with its soft, padded front and back covers and ribbon bookmark, is designed to be treasured and embraced by little arms.

The book begins with a letter to parents about the importance of teaching children to pray. This short introduction succinctly addresses forgiveness, hope, God's care, and ways to teach and model prayer. The rest of the volume is filled with prayers and poems from various authors—from St. Francis of Assisi to the Lucados themselves—as well as prayers from Scripture (from the International Children's Bible). There are chapters covering a variety of times and situations: Good Morning, God; God, You Are Great!; My Family and Friends; In My Play and Through My Day; My Mealtime Prayers; God Takes Care of Me; Teach Me, God; Prayers for Special Days; Thank You, God!; and Good Night, God.

The prayers teach children to speak to God from
their hearts in simple, honest words. Most of the prayers are in rhyme, and all are in the form of short verse, rendering them appealing to and easier to memorize for younger readers. Lisa Alderson's warm, watercolor illustrations adorn each page with beautiful, soothing images of nature and animals. The overall layout is attractive and conducive to frequent browsing.

While the Lucado Treasury of Bedtime Prayers is a perfect introduction to prayer for toddlers and beginning readers, it is also a lovely keepsake that children of all ages will enjoy. The prayers could certainly be used at bedtime, but the book's message is that prayer is appropriate at all times and for all needs—or just to praise God for His wonderful provision.

Angela Walsh, CLJ

Creature features : 25 animals explain why they look the way they do / Steve Jenkins & Robin Page ; illustrated by Steve Jenkins.


1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill., col. maps ; 24 x 24 cm.
Grades K-3

571.3 Rating: 5

Creature Features is the fourteenth book Steve Jenkins and Robin Page have written together. Some of their books have won awards such as the Caldecott Medal or the Children's Book of the Year. They have received high reviews on several book lists for children's books. This particular one is a Junior Library Guild Library Selection.

Twenty-five animals are featured in this volume, some familiar and some very strange. The colorful illustrations, made with torn- and cut-paper collage, will pique a child's interest, since children would find most of them unusual and unfamiliar.

On each page, the reader finds a reproduction of the animal and a question about its looks or habits, along with the answer, supposedly by the animal itself. For example, on the page with the panda, the question is asked, "Dear giant panda: Who gave you those black eyes?" He answers, "No one. We pandas all have them. The dark fur around my eyes makes me look bigger and fiercer to a predator. I hope." The fuzzy black fur around the panda's eyes and ears looks so real that a child might want to touch the page.

While this animal is one children would be familiar with, many are not, such as the blobfish, the babirusa, the axolotl, or the dearleaf-nosed bat. The animals are shown against a background of black or bright colors, causing them to stand out. The hard-back cover is easy for little hands to hold as parents read it again and again.

In addition to animals that children would be familiar with, the presentation of animals that are strange and different will arouse curiosity in young children. On the back pages are shadow drawings of each animal with lines drawn to globes showing their habitat or food, an added feature that could facilitate a geography or science lesson. This is a very nice book which would make a good addition to any family's or teacher's library.

Juanita Nobles, CLJ

About mammals : a guide for children / Cathryn Sill ; illustrated by John Sill.

Atlanta, GA: Peachtree, 2014.
LCCN 96036402 ISBN 9781561457571, hardcover, $16.95.

1 v. (unpaged) : ill. (some col.) ; 22 x 26 cm. PS-Grade 2

599 Rating: 5

John Sill, as wildlife artist, offers full-page
watercolors that add an inviting view in the introduction to mammals found in *About Mammals: A Guide for Children*. The realistic paintings are presented in an Audubon format as individual plates with identification labels with each animal appearing in its habitat. Toddlers will likely be drawn in by the warmth and large view each plate contributes.

Cathryn Sill provides minimal text as the mammals are introduced. She tells the reader about mammalian hair (thick fur, quills, whiskers) and how the young are treated, along with a variety of behavioral and physical characteristics (what they eat, how they move). The text works effectively to give preschoolers an attractive, easy reader. An afterword includes more detailed information about each of the plates.

Similar titles include *Born in the Wild: Baby Mammals and Their Parents* by Lita Judge, which presents 20 baby animals and their parents in pictures as charming as those in *About Mammals*, but with narrative that is uneven in coverage from animal to animal. *Eye Wonder: Mammals* by DK Publishing covers mammals but is geared more to grade 3 and 4 with a greater focus on text.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

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**INTERMEDIATE FICTION**

*The Legend of St. Nicholas / written by Anselm Grün ; illustrated by Giuliano Ferri ; translated by Laura Watkinson.*


ISBN 9780802854346, hardcover, $16.00.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. Ill. ; 29 cm.  Grades 1-3

B  Rating: 4

*The Legend of Saint Nicholas* tells a few of the legends and miracles associated with Saint Nicholas of Myra. Even Nicholas’s birth is an answer to prayer, the first of many answered prayers associated with him. From girls needing dowries to sailors floundering in the midst of storms and little boys drowning at sea, the goodness and miracles attributed to Nicholas create tales that foster a love for him and his goodness. “Like Jesus, he wanted to help people and to tell them about God’s love.”

Anselm Grun’s writing style is simple and to the point as he unfolds the tales of Saint Nicholas. Though he presents several stories from Nicholas’s life, the story flows smoothly from event to event. Nicholas, as presented in this book, doesn’t seem to grow or change much throughout his life, since from his childhood he seeks to do good for others, a theme that continues throughout his life and beyond his death. Illustrator Giuliano Ferri brings the setting and characters to life through his artwork. Nicholas’s life seems to point to God’s goodness, and when people attribute miracles (at least one of which parallels Jesus’ miracles) to him, Nicholas is quick to reply, “You should not thank me, but God. It is he who saved you.”

*Kristina Wolcott, CLJ*

*The Year of the Book / by Andrea Cheng ; illustrated by Abigail Halpin (Anna Wang series; 1)*


146 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.  Grades 2-4

Fic  Rating: 5

*The Year of the Baby / by Andrea Cheng ;*
illustrated by Patrice Barton (Anna Wang series; 2)

162 p. : ill. ; 20 cm. Grades 2-4
Fic Rating: 5

The year of the fortune cookie : an Anna Wang novel / by Andrea Cheng ; illustrations by Patrice Barton. (Anna Wang series; 3)

155 p. : ill. ; 19 cm. Grades 2-4
Fic Rating: 5

The year of the three sisters / by Andrea Cheng ; illustrated by Patrice Barton. (Anna Wang series; 4)

147 pages : ill. ; 19 cm. Grades 2-4
Fic Rating: 5

Andrea Cheng kicks off a series for middle grade readers featuring Anna Wang and her friends.

In The Year of the Book, fourth grader Anna Wang—an American-born Chinese—attends Chinese School on Saturday, where she struggles to learn the language. She turns to books for companionship when her best friend starts hanging out with other girls. Anna discovers that friendship is complicated but rewarding if one takes the time to be a friend to others.

In The Year of the Baby, Anna’s family adopts a baby girl from China. After learning last year how to be a good friend, Anna wants to be a good sister to baby Kaylee, who doesn’t like to eat and is failing to thrive. Nothing seems to work until Anna and her friends create a science project that helps Anna’s baby sister.

In The Year of the Fortune Cookie, Anna travels to China with her teacher who is adopting a baby. She has always wondered whether she is more Chinese or more American. Her trip will give her a chance to find out.

In The Year of the Three Sisters, Anna’s pen pal from China—Fan—comes to America as an exchange student. Anna’s friend Andee hosts Fan and makes the arrangements for the exchange. The girls find out that although they are different from one another, they are also very similar, like sisters.

Cheng pens a character-driven school (and family) series that readers will enjoy. One sees Anna grow from a fourth grader to a middle-schooler. Cheng does an excellent job in presenting Chinese culture from the viewpoints of both American-born and Chinese-born characters. Cheng tastefully weaves issues of adoption, learning differences, first-generation immigrants, and cultural stereotypes within engaging storytelling.

A pronunciation guide for Chinese words (written in characters and letters), recipes for making fortune cookies and bao zi (a type of bun), and directions for making a drawstring bag are included. Titles of familiar books (A Wrinkle in Time, Charlotte’s Web, and so on) read by Anna are mentioned, and the pen-and-ink illustrations add greatly to the delight of reading these books.

Recommended for school libraries and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
Digging a hole to heaven: a story about the coal mine boys / by S.D. Nelson.

63 p. : ill. ; 26 x 27 cm. Grades 3-7
622 Rating: 4

“For the strong-hearted men, boys, and mules who toiled together in the perilous darkness” (verse), Nelson weaves a tale of dust, danger, and disaster 800 feet underground in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. Conall, a 12-year-old boy from a family of Irish immigrants, is depicted as one of thousands of people who lived and died in the coal mine in the 19th century, while the robber barons built the industrial structure of the United States on their laborers' backs. Conall is a mule driver who is pleased to be earning more money underground than he had as a breaker boy above ground. Conall's mule, Angel, is his companion through a day measured in cars of coal, not hours. The story moves slowly, like the mules and coal carts through the shafts, interrupted by informational text and archival photos inset on 15 of the 64 pages. For example, the description of Conall and Angel's struggle to reach miners trapped in a cave-in is juxtaposed with a photo of Andrew Carnegie's mansion in New York City. Through repetition in story, informational texts, extensive author's notes, and darkly beautiful acrylic paintings, the reader learns the story of the coal miner boys' lives.

Nelson begins the story “millions of years ago” during the Carboniferous Period as the lush forests gradually decayed and were compressed into coal. The author's notes include a time line of selected events that also begins 360 million years ago and ends with a recent mining disaster in 2010 that killed 29 miners in West Virginia. Information children may not know, but will find interesting, is repeated in story form and in the informational insets and author's notes. For example, 121,000 men and boys have lost their lives in the mines since 1867. The extraordinary paintings detail their underground existence—the boys and men luminous even in the overwhelming darkness of the mines. Photographs show faces of breaker boys, mule drivers, handlers, miners, and mules at work. As Nelson intended, the book is a tribute to the laborers who built the USA.

Diane Carver Sekeres, CLJ

Cartwheeling in thunderstorms / Katherine Rundell.

248 p.; 22 cm. Grades 4-6
Fic Rating: *5

Simon is a “stretched-catapult of a boy” (pg. 5) and has been Will's best friend for the last seven years, but in no time at all, she loses him, along with the rest of the horse boys, her bareback horse Shumba, Kezia (the monkey she rescued from the city boys), and her childhood in Zimbabwe. It isn't that she hasn't been obeying the rules—well, she does bite ticks in two to kill them, and she has dug in the compost heap and been bitten by snakes, and to be honest, she tried the red berries once. But she faithfully irons the clothes to kill the putsi flies. Still, the Captain's new wife sends her off to England when her glorious, larger-than-life father dies of the malaria. Who will call her Wildcat or Cartwheel now? How will she find her way home to Africa from the cold chill of an English boarding school where "savage" is the kindest name they call her? There is only one way, and it isn't running. Will has to learn to turn cartwheels even in
thunderstorms.

Will’s story is one to savor. Katherine Rundell describes her in hyperbole. She glows; she hoots; she caroms through the fields on horseback, disappearing for days. Dirt is to be relished, especially when wet, because mud has possibilities. There are so many smells and sounds and sights of Africa that she loves with abandon and fiercely protects. Her scowl intimidates even adults, and her drunken-love smile is reserved only for her father. Rundell’s feisty heroine is fiercely honest and loyal and completely unbridled in her love of life. She is brave, self-reliant, and determined in the face of her fear of the unknown. Her story boasts a selfish and greedy villain, a rule-bound headmistress, a full complement of snooty, boarding-school girls, a kindred soul, and a wise-woman who comes at just the right time. The kindness of strangers redeems Will’s life when, starving for food and for love, she realizes she cannot succeed on her own. Will’s story is saturated in the language of Africa and in the language of heartache and hope. *Cartwheeling in Thunderstorms* is an unforgettable tale.

*Diane Carver Sekeres, CLJ*

**INTERMEDIATE NONFICTION**

*Caves / Anna Claybourne (Explorer travel guides)*


LCCN 2012042340 ISBN 9781410954282, library binding, $29.00.

48 p. : col. ill., col. maps ; 28 cm. Grades 3-6

796.52 Rating: 5

The introduction found in *Caves* offers much to help elementary students in grades 3 to 6 to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of what caves are and on how to explore them. There is plentiful information provided covering cave formations, famous explorers, and conservation efforts. Anna Claybourne gives the adventure a practical bent as she includes what one would need to climb down into a cave, what one would pack and need to know, and whom would it be a plus to have along.

In addition to the carefully researched narrative that Claybourne provides, there are extra tools to make the photos and narrative interesting and apt to hold the attention of middle-schoolers. There are “Don’t forget” boxes throughout the text that give handy tips and what one should take along on caving adventures. There are “Amazing facts” boxes which add interesting details. “Who’s who” boxes focus on cave experts and explorers of the past. “Conservation” boxes highlight the care given to protecting these caves. Finally, four pages outline some of the most exciting caves to see around the world, and another two-page spread shows where these are on a map. A timeline, fact file, glossary (words appearing in bold text in the narrative receive an explanation), and index attest to how much is packed in *Caves*’ 48 pages.

*Caves: Wonders of Our World* by Neil Morris offers photographs comparable in quality to those offered in Claybourne’s guide but does not have the same wide expanse of coverage that *Caves* does. Those seeking a compatible work for toddlers and preschoolers might consider *Caves: Landforms* by Cassie Mayer.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*
MIDDLE SCHOOL FICTION

Elijah of Buxton / Christopher Paul Curtis.

341 p.; 20 cm. Grades 4-7
Fic Rating: 5

The madman of Piney Woods / Christopher Paul Curtis.

363 p.; map; 22 cm. Grades 4-7
Fic Rating: 5

Elijah of Buxton and The Madman of Piney Woods are companion titles, both principally set in Canada.

In Elijah of Buxton, eleven-year-old Elijah’s claim to fame is that he is the first free child to be born in the Buxton Settlement. But instead of this accomplishment, most townspeople look on him as a “fra-gile” child, afraid of snakes, one who talks too much! Elijah himself is the narrator so readers hear his story in his own inimitable style. He relates many tales about the residents of his town before the real action begins when Elijah tracks down a thief who has stolen from his friend. His dangerous journey there and back—and what he is able to bring home—make Elijah a hero. As always, in Curtis’s books, readers will find many laughable scenes but also suspense and serious moments. The author’s attempt to cover the topic of slavery in a book for children is a valiant one and well done.

The Madman of Piney Woods takes readers back to Buxton and is told alternately by two boys—Benji, a freedman, and Red, a boy of Irish descent. They’re not friends, they have never met, and they even have different names for this madman they believe inhabits Piney Woods. And it may be 1901, but the Civil War and the Potato Famine continue to haunt them and their communities half a century later. As readers are introduced to both characters and get to know them and their families, the stories gradually entwine until the boys are united in their attempt to rescue this denizen of the woods.

Christopher Paul Curtis rarely fails to entertain and teach in a memorable way that touches both children and adults who read his books. Elijah of Buxton and The Madman of Piney Woods do not fail to meet this standard.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Riley Mae and the rock shocker trek / Jill Osborne. (The good news shoes; 1)

238 p.; 22 cm. Grades 5-7
Fic Rating: 5

Riley Mae and the Ready Eddy rapids / Jill Osborne. (The good news shoes; 2)

252 p.; 22 cm. Grades 5-7
Fic Rating: 5

Riley Mae and the sole fire safari / Jill Osborne. (The good news shoes; 3)

LCCN 2014016531 ISBN 9780310742838,
Author Jill Osborne leaves no adventure (well, almost none) unlived in her three-book series The Good News Shoes.

In book one (*Riley Mae and the Rock Shocker Trek*), readers are introduced to Riley Mae, a bright 12-year-old softball star reminiscent of the character Nancy Drew. Riley is chosen for a lucrative two-year contract as an athletic shoe model and spokesperson. Unfortunately, Riley soon learns some important lessons—fame comes with a price tag, and all that glitters is not gold. To fulfill the contract, Riley must forego her softball season and—to a certain extent—her friends as she travels the country touting sports shoes.

In book two (*Riley Mae and the Ready Eddy Rapids*), the adventure heats up with photo shoots at exotic locations. Various dilemmas, as well as a couple of mysteries, present Riley with decisions through which she comes to know Jesus more for who He is and not just a church activity. It is amazing that Riley maintains a typical 12-year-old personality and doesn’t let the attention that goes with celebrity status turn her to entitlement and ingratitude; instead she matures and her faith grows.

The locale turns to Kenya, Africa in book three (*Riley Mae and the Sole Fire Safari*), as Riley visits the family of her friend Sunday whom she met in Montana in book two. Adventures and mysteries, along with a bit of culture shock, help grow and mature Riley even more. Readers will begin to see how God works everything together for His purposes.

Few 12-year-olds don’t like shoes or don’t show at least a small attraction to celebrity status. The author’s skill in using these two elements of worldly focus and their underbelly is brilliant. Readers see Riley grow from a spiritual child to a more mature Christian, not just dependent on God and praying when situations look bleak, but asking God what His wishes for her life. This series is a great choice for a summer read—especially for children who enjoy adventures or mysteries, or who need a little push to read throughout the summer. Continuous adventures will keep even reluctant readers turning the pages. Readers may also see the color orange in a whole new light!

There are some descriptions of injuries that may be unsettling, although not graphic. The storyline deals with some adult themes, such as alcoholism and abandonment, but not in an in-depth manner.

*Martha Jo Dendinger, CLJ*

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**Two renegade realms / Donita K. Paul. (Realms walkers; 2)**


416 p. : 14 cm. Grades 5-9

Fic Rating: 4

Donita K. Paul continues her fantasy series aimed at middle school readers where dragons and humans fight side by side in a battle against evil in their realms. (The first in the series, *One Realm Beyond*, was reviewed in the Christian Library Journal, January-February 2014.)

In *Two Renegade Realms*, several years have passed since the attack by the corrupt Realm Walker Guild. Cantor D’Ahma and Bixby D’Mazeline have gone their own ways. During that time, Cantor has grown 15 inches in height while searching for his long-lost mentors. Meanwhile Bixby and Dukmee have been hunting for the lost Library of Lymes. The king and queen ask Cantor to find the ancient information needed by the
realm. In doing so, he meets up with Bixby and Dukmee.

Together, Cantor, Bixby, and Dukmee try to find the ancient Library of Lymes. They are also asked to rescue Chomountain (the legendary realm walker) from his imprisonment. Faced with the impending invasion, they must find a way to find the answers they need, both to rescue Chomountain and to fight against the intruders on the renegade realms. Though they fight valiantly, the war is not over yet.

Middle school readers will enjoy this fantasy series with its excellent world-building, descriptive narrative, and endearing characters. The faith element is allegorical, and violence is appropriate where the battles take place. Readers will find themselves caught up in the antics of the dragon Bridger and his sister, as well as the idiosyncrasies of Chomountain.

Recommended for public libraries and school collections. Fans of Donita Paul’s earlier series and fantasy fans will not be disappointed!

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ


280 p.; 20 cm. Grades 6-8
Fic Rating:*5

Handsome and athletic Conrad Parker Smith is so popular he can wear pink t-shirts to school. Sixth-grade tomboy Jessie Lou Ferguson loves him from a distance, until one day Conrad is forced to wear a shiny metal leg brace and everything changes. Deep Down Popular is a coming-of-age story by Phoebe Stone, set in small town West Taluka Falls, Virginia.

When Jessie’s teacher assigns her the task of helping Conrad, she is both delighted and mortified at the prospect of spending time with him. Conrad’s leg brace immediately halts his popularity, and fourth grade “squirt” Quentin Duster seizes the opportunity to befriend the older boy. Gradually Jessie, Quentin, and Conrad form a companionable trio.

The storyline includes a number of classmates and extended family members that all have plots of their own which play out against the backdrop of Jessie’s pre-adolescent struggles and triumphs. Deep Down Popular has all the hallmarks of Phoebe Stone’s excellent writing: endearing young characters, a colorful setting, scenes that envelop the reader, a touching blend of humor and pathos, and outstanding descriptive narrative.

Told in the voice of Jessie Lou, Deep Down Popular easily engages the mind’s eye. Though references to the Iraq war set the story in the early part of the last decade, the classmates seem to have the easy freedoms (meandering through the woods after school, exploring an old vacant house) of an earlier generation. Thus, another kudo for this marvelous book is that Phoebe Stone’s young characters are quintessentially, refreshingly, children.

The book’s title and cover art suggest a novel for teens; however, Deep Down Popular is entirely appropriate for grade school readers, commendably offering a higher reading level without being too mature in content.

Nina Ditmar, CLJ
MIDDLE SCHOOL NONFICTION

The beauty of believing : 365 devotions that will change your life / Tasha Douglas, Mona Hodgson, Kristi Holl, Lois Walfrid Johnson, Allia Zobel Nolan, Nancy Rue. (Faithgirlz library)

321 p.; 22 cm. Grades 5-8.
242 Rating: 5

Each daily devotion in The Beauty of Believing begins with a Bible verse at the top of the page and then presents a story or narrative illustrating the topic. A highlighted box each day includes “More to Explore,” consisting of additional Bible verses relating to the daily topic. Then there’s “Girl Talk,” an application section with self-reflection. Finally the box closes with “God’s Talk,” offering a prayer idea incorporating the daily topic.

Geared to tween and teen girls, the topics include common pre-adolescent issues of social cliques, self-doubt, and competitive striving. Since the contributors are Faithgirlz! authors, they are very familiar with pre-teen dynamics—friends who drift apart, slower developing bodies, wanting to be a believer when friends seem to act inappropriately, etc.

Comparable devotional include 921 Devotions for Girls by B&H Kids Editorial Staff and More for Girls Only! Devotions by Carolyn Larsen. Those who desire some art illustrations along with the Bible and prayers can consult 9-Minute Devotions for Girls by Janice Thompson. One advantage for those who own the book of The Beauty of Believing is that the layout of the narrative provides enough space to highlight and make brief notes. Another advantage is that Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV), The Amplified Bible (AMP), New Living Translation (NLT), The Message (MSG), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), or New King James Version (NKJV), giving both a personal and varied approach.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

The next wave : the quest to harness the power of the oceans / by Elizabeth Rusch. (Scientists in the field)

72 p.: photos, diag.; 24 x 29 cm. Grades 4-8
621.31 Rating: 5

Elizabeth Rusch comes to the energy of the ocean having published more than 100 articles in numerous national magazines for children and adults. Her publishing credits include Muse, American Girl, Read, Harper’s, Smithsonian, Mother Jones, Parenting, and Backpacker.

The Next Wave follows visionary engineers in their quest to design and build experimental devices to harness the energy of the ocean. Students are introduced to Morrow and Mike Delos-Reyes, working on a device that enables people to sit on the ocean floor. They meet Annette von Jouanne and her team who are working on a floating buoy that generates electricity. The narrative gives a human face to this exploration and explains in a way that even students who do not readily grasp science or engineering will find understandable. There is a diagram, picture, or multiple pictures on nearly every page. Notes for each of the chapters add interesting data, and an index
enables further research.

Those seeking a title on this subject for toddlers can consult *Spot the Shark in the Ocean: Packed with Things to Spot and Facts to Discover*, by Stella Maidment and illustrated by Joelle Dreidemy, or *The Earth is Mostly Ocean* by Allan Fowler. Middle-schoolers who need a beginner’s guide to oceanography will be enriched by *Basher Science: Oceans: Making Waves* by Simon Basher.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

**Best party book ever : from invites to overnights and everything in between / from the Editors of Faithgirlz! and Girls’ Life magazine. (Faithgirlz!)*

159 p. : photo ; 23 cm. Grades 3-9
793.2 Rating: 4

*Best Party Book Ever!* by Faithgirlz! is a “How-to” guide and resource for tween and teen party-planners.

Filled with enticing photographs, *Best Party Book Ever!* is organized into six chapters: Hostess Hints, Anytime Parties, Birthday Parties, Holiday Parties, Soirée Secrets, and Recipes. The chapters offer a selection of party themes and offer tips on invitations, decorating, crafting, activities, and food.

The editors of Faithgirlz! and Girls’ Life magazine have compiled a myriad of ideas that include the familiar (movie night sleepover), whimsical (secret garden tea party), charitable (bake-off), and economical (clothing swap). There are even suggestions and recipes for pet parties.

*Best Party Book Ever!* emphasizes the positive aspects of having a party: being creative, making memories and traditions, having fun, and celebrating with friends. Young hostesses are reminded to involve (and thank!) parents for help with planning and supervision; there are also guidelines for being a good and responsible guest and for dealing with difficulties that may arise during a party.

Illustrated with fun photographs and graphics and packed with possibility, the book encourages girls to “do-it-yourself.” The broad range of imaginative ideas expands the reading audience to older teens, youth groups, and even adults planning parties for their children.

*Nina Ditmar, CLJ*

**HIGH SCHOOL FICTION**

**The watcher / Joan Hiatt Harlow.**
290 p. ; 22 cm. Grades 7-9
Fic Rating: 4

In *The Watcher*, fourteen-year-old Wendy Dekker is uprooted from her home in America and taken to Berlin, Germany by her mother, who insists Berlin is Wendy’s true home. Wendy cannot speak German and feels out of place in a country that is foreign to her. Her loneliness is eased by the help of a special dog and a secret friendship with Barret, a blind boy, and his dog. Wendy’s mother is a staunch supporter of Hitler and is pushing Wendy to embrace the Nazi regime. Will Wendy stay or try to escape from Germany with the help of Barret’s grandfather, a member of the Nazi resistance?

Joan Hiatt Harlow has written a sensitive and
thoughtful story about a teenage girl who is thrust into Nazi Germany in 1942. At first Wendy is oblivious to what is really happening in Berlin, which changes after she becomes a volunteer, albeit at her mother's insistence, for a secret Nazi project. She is then faced with making a decision about her own beliefs and values and whether or not she wants to embrace the policies of the Nazi party. Wendy is an excellent role model for young people who are put in a position of needing to choose a side when confronted with injustices in society.

The book is a useful resource for educators and parents who are interested in teaching middle school students about the Holocaust. It will also appeal to young readers who want to read a book about Nazi Germany from the viewpoint of someone their own age. The persecution by the Nazi government of both innocent Jewish people and dedicated Bible students who refuse to swear allegiance to Hitler is accurately and perceptively depicted in the book.

Dianne Woodman, CLJ

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**The revised life of Ellie Sweet. / Stephanie Morrill. (Playlist; 1)**

United States: Playlist Young Adult Fiction, 2013.
243 p.; 22 cm. Grades 8-12
Fic Rating: 4

**The unlikely debut of Ellie Sweet / Stephanie Morrill. (Playlist; 2)**

United States: Playlist Young Adult Fiction, 2013.
332 p.; 22 cm. Grades 8-12
Fic Rating: 4

YA author Stephanie Morrill pens a contemporary novel about a teen girl who turns her everyday life into her first book. Morrill uses the story within a story format, as Ellie rewrites her experiences in a medieval story starring herself as Lady Gabriella.

In *The Revised Life of Ellie Sweet*, Ellie deals with the ups and downs of high school life. She is a bookish teen on the fringes of the popular crowd, trying to avoid attention yet wanting more from life. As she interacts with her friends (some are mean), she rewrites her relationships in her own medieval story. Things go well in her novel but not so in real life. Two very different boys are attracted to her, but each are challenging to Ellie. When her friends realize her manuscript is about them, even though set in a different time period, Ellie pays the price.

In *The Unlikely Debut of Ellie Sweet*, Ellie's book has been accepted for publication. She is dating former bad-boy Chase, and life seems to be going better than last year. Her friend Palmer is working at her grandmother's nursing home, so she sees him a lot. However, she cannot escape into the pages of her novel any more. Dealing with the stress of her strained relationships and major rewrites of her book causes writer's block. Is her dream-come-true of publishing a book a nightmare in disguise?

Morrill's book is a sweet read, with endearing but flawed realistic characters. Ellie's crushed hopes and heartbreak resonate with the reader. Ellie grows in maturity as she realizes that lying to one's parents and keeping secrets has consequences. She skirts some possibly dangerous situations, but ends up staying true to her beliefs. Though Ellie is a Christian, the faith element is light in this book. She stands up for her moral principles and grows when she realizes that real life cannot be scripted.

Aspiring teen writers can also learn about the arduous journey of a writer. Morrill sprinkles bits
of Ellie’s writing and her writing journey throughout the novels. Winner of the 2013 Grace Award, *The Revised Life of Ellie Sweet* helps a teen girl feel empowered as she navigates the challenges of high school relationships. *The Unlikely Debut of Ellie Sweet* tells the consequence of using her pen as her sword—revenge isn’t as sweet as she pictured.

Recommended for teen collections in public libraries and school libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ*

**Dauntless / Dina Sleiman. (Valiant Hearts; 1)**


365 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
Fic Rating: 5

Dina Sleiman makes her debut with this young adult novel about a young woman in the Middle Ages who courageously steps out to do what must be done even if it is unconventional.

In *Dauntless*, Merry is an outlaw as a result of her father’s failed assassination attempt. She is willing to go to any length to provide for the orphaned children from her village.

Timothy Grey, Merry’s former fiancé, serves as an assistant to the earl. Timothy wants to make a name for himself by capturing the “Ghosts of Farthingale Forest,” unaware that the leader is his childhood friend, Merry.

Sleiman presents a 13th century young woman with the skills and courage to step outside the normal role to lead others and help them survive. She isn’t waiting for a handsome knight to save her. Merry hardens her heart to God and to others in order to protect herself. *Dauntless* is about using one’s skills to do what needs to be done, but not abandoning hope especially when “God opens a window.”

Both plot and character driven, *Dauntless* is a welcome addition to young adult literature. Merry is a strong young woman who isn’t afraid to do whatever she needs to do in order to provide for the children in her care. She is a valiant heart—one who is fearless, both feminine and strong, open to love but not defined by a man. She is a role model to other young women, both in her story and to her readers.

Recommended for public libraries and school libraries. Fans of medieval young adult books by Melanie Dickerson and Lisa Bergren will especially enjoy this new author.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

**HIGH SCHOOL NONFICTION**

**The handy mythology answer book / by David A. Leeming. (The handy answer series)**

Detroit, MI: Visible Ink, 2015.

xxiii, 402 p.: ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 9-12
201.3 Rating: 5

David Leeming presents a comprehensive picture of world mythology in *The Handy Mythology Answer Book*. After beginning with a chapter on general questions about myth and the origins of mythology in prehistoric times, he devotes chapters to mythologies from the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas, Australia, and Polynesian cultures, and looks in the final chapter
at modern mythology.

The glossary, index, and bibliography make *The Handy Mythology Answer Book* an excellent reference source. The appendix offers an extensive chart of universal mythological types and themes, with the second part offering selected mythological texts to give the reader at least a glimpse of the stories as they would originally have been told.

A strength in Lemming’s approach is that he seeks to help the reader see that the sacred stories of the world all point as metaphors to certain universal human concerns. The more conversational and breezy style, as opposed to a dry, pedantic one, enables the reader to find much to understand in Lemming’s discussion. In many ways his work has the inviting approach used in *Don’t Know Much About Mythology: Everything You Need to Know About the Greatest Stories in Human History but Never Learned* by Kenneth C. Davis, but Leeming, as a comparative mythologist, offers a wider view. Leeming’s work is as ambitious as E. J. Michael Witzel’s *The Origins of the World Mythologies* in exploring global myths, but offers conciseness and clarity that high school students and adults can appreciate.

*Leroy Hommerding, CLJ*

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The flood of Noah : legends & lore of survival / [edited by] Bodie Hodge, Laura Welch ; illustrations by Bill Looney.

24 p.; ill.; 28 x 32 cm. Grades 5 and up
222 Rating: 5

Many cultures around the world have their own stories about a chosen few escaping a catastrophic flood. *The Flood of Noah* presents some of these legends and compares key elements to the Genesis account of Noah.

Editors Bodie Hodge and Laura Welch explore the common details of numerous worldwide flood legends as evidence that the globally destructive biblical event actually occurred. The editors assert that the Bible is a true historical record of the great flood and challenge certain modern interpretations and the position of “secularists” who disagree. Flood legends from New Guinea, China, Fiji, North America, India, Lithuania, Africa, Mexico, Europe, Greece, and Australia are summarized, and many more are referenced. The editors include a salvation message, concluding thoughts, and an extensive list of resources.

With numerous foldout pages, pamphlets, flaps, and pull-tabs, *The Flood of Noah* is interactive and immersive. Illustrator Bill Looney skillfully represents many different cultures with colorful artwork that enhances this large-format book. A dramatic flood fills the cover and additional scenes on the inside covers add to the feel of a fully-packed reading experience. Middle graders will be enriched by reading the legends and exploring the extra features and scriptural references found in *The Flood of Noah*. Older readers will be able to appreciate the greater scope of the book in more depth.

*Nina Ditem, CLJ*
You have a brain: a teen’s guide to T.H.I.N.K. B.I.G. / Ben Carson, MD with Gregg Lewis & Deborah Shaw Lewis.

231 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12
248.808 Rating: 5

The title of You Have a Brain: A Teen’s Guide to T.H.I.N.K. B.I.G centers on the advice Ben Carson’s mother gave him and his brother: you have a brain—use it. The well-known neurosurgeon Dr. Benjamin Carson has overcome the obstacles of his father’s leaving the family, being considered stupid by his classmates in grade school, and having a violent temper. He articulates eight principles that helped shape his future and which make up thinking big: Talent, Honesty, Insight, being Nice, Knowledge, Books, In-Depth Learning, and God.

Writing for a teen audience, Carson amply demonstrates that the effective use of one’s brain does trump peer pressure. In his experience, “peers” were actually People Encouraging Errors, Rudeness and stupidity. Carson also makes clear that his own battle with an out-of-control temper required help from God, though using his brain to recognize the need was essential.

Gregg Lewis is the author or coauthor of more than 50 books, and Deborah Shaw Lewis has authored or coauthored more than a dozen books; the two are the parents of five children. As a team they have worked with Dr. Carson and are able to articulate insights in a fashion that encourages personal assessment.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

The handy nutrition answer book / by Patricia Barnes-Svarney and Thomas E. Svarney. (The handy answer series)

x, 374 p.: photos ; 24 cm. Grades 9-12
363.8 Rating: 3

The Handy Nutrition Answer Book is part of a series that provides answers to basic questions on various subjects. Like the other titles in the series, The Handy Nutrition Answer Book is geared toward the general audience. (The Christian Library Journal has reviewed other titles in this series. The Handy Mythology Answer Book is reviewed in this issue; The Handy Science Answer Book, The Handy Psychology Answer Book, and The Handy Physics Answer Book were reviewed in the Christian Library Journal, November 6455. See the CLJ Library Catalog for a full listing.)

Arranged by topic, The Handy Nutrition Answer Book covers the basics of food chemistry; nutrition; food preservation; allergies, illnesses and diseases affected by nutrition, eating and drinking choices; nutrition history (including famines, typical diets of our ancestors); modern nutrition (USDA, MyPlate, food safety); controversies (like GMO, irradiation); and nutrition through different stages of life. It also includes several appendices—food safety websites, nutrition websites, diet comparisons, a glossary, an index, as well as references for further reading.

Along with approximately 900 questions and the one or two paragraph answers, the text is interspersed with facts in sidebars, photos, tables, graphs, and illustrations.

The Handy Nutrition Answer Book is designed to allow the reader to flip to the section of interest, finding the answer they need. This allows the book to be both practical and informative,
answering such questions as “How are calories measured?”, “Why is high fructose syrup controversial?”, and “What is the difference between gluten sensitivity, celiac disease, and wheat intolerance?”

The authors note that there is “no one book that can tell you everything about what you personally should or should not eat in order to stay healthy” (pg. x), but they hope this is a book that will help the reader make healthy choices for their family’s health.

Recommended for high school and public libraries.

Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ
**ADULT FICTION**

**Moonlight masquerade : a Regency romance / Ruth Axtell. (London Encounters; 1)**

Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2013.
345 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

In *Moonlight Masquerade*, suspicion is lurking around every street corner and town house of London as the Napoleonic Wars rage on, stirring up distrust for those of French heritage living in Great Britain. The widowed English countess Lady Céline Wexham, a favorite of the London ton but French by birth, has come under the radar of the British Foreign Office, as speculation surrounds her true political loyalties. As a result, the agency places Rees Phillips in her home to pose as the countess’ butler, in hopes that he will be able to discover if she is truly loyal to the crown or a spy for Napoleon Bonaparte. From the moment Rees enters Lady Wexham’s home, a game of cat and mouse ensues, as both try to outsmart the other and discover the truth, while tangled emotions and deadly forces raise the stakes.

In *A Heart’s Rebellion*, Jessamine Barry, the girl who has loved Rees Phillips forever, struggles to mend her broken heart by transforming herself into a fashionable lady of society who will not go unnoticed or be easily passed over for another. Shedding her country ways and ignoring her vicar father’s teachings, Jessamine becomes a favorite among the ton’s young men. However, not all have honorable intentions—like Lancelot Marfleet, a redheaded young vicar and second son of a baronet who annoys Jessamine upon their first introduction. In her desperation to escape her past image, will Jessamine lose herself completely, as well as any chance of finding true love?

In her “London Encounters” series, Ruth Axtell brings to life the sights and sounds of Regency London with her vivid imagery of ton life and humorous depictions of drawing room conversations and flirtations. The author uses enough historical details to authenticate the setting and plot, without crossing over into a history lecture. Intertwined with lighthearted fun, each novel holds a well-thought-out storyline that develops naturally and contains all the essential elements of a well-written novel of substance, including themes of discovery, enduring love, forgiveness, and coming home. The first book is primarily plot-driven, with its games of intrigue and suspenseful situations in which the main characters find themselves. In contrast, the second book is focused on the main character’s discovery of self-worth and true love. The main characters each experience spiritual birth or growth, as they learn to see and trust in God’s perfect plan for their lives.

*Justina McBride, CLJ*

**Mist of midnight : a novel / Sandra Byrd. (Daughters of Hampshire; 1)**

374 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

Historical fiction author Sandra Byrd pens a new
series, this time set in Victorian England. The first book, *Mist of Midnight*, tells of a young Englishwoman who returns from India only to find that another woman has claimed her identity and inheritance.

In *Mist of Midnight*, Rebecca Ravenshaw returns to England after her missionary parents are violently killed in India. But another woman claiming to be Rebecca, who returned over a year earlier, spent some of her inheritance. A few months later, the imposter committed suicide and was buried at midnight (the normal procedure for a suicide).

Rebecca's inheritance went to a distant relative—Luke Whitfield, who is now living at Headbourne House, the family estate. As Luke and her father's attorney await verification of her identity from India, Rebecca finds herself falling in love with Luke despite her good intentions. But does he really love her or her inheritance? Who was the imposter and why was she able to pose as Rebecca for several months? What happened to the imposter's Indian maid who disappeared when her mistress died?

Byrd writes an engaging story, filled with the best elements of a Gothic romance, where the reader wants the hero to be the hero, even when the circumstances might not make him appear that way. This book has just enough chills to grab the reader's attention and keep it until the spine-tingling conclusion. Even in the midst of the building tension and plot twists, Rebecca's faith keeps her grounded and helps her overcome her fears. Byrd's second book in this series, *Bride of Poseidon*, is coming in 2015.

Recommended for public libraries and school libraries, and fans of Bronte and Victoria Holt will enjoy it.

*Carol R. Gehringer, worthy2read.wordpress.com*

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**Angel sister : a novel / Ann H. Gabhart**

*(Angel sister; 1)*

Grand Rapids, MI: Revel, 2011.


407 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

**Small town girl : a novel / Ann H. Gabhart.**

*(Angel sister; 2)*

Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2013.


395 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

**Love comes home : a novel / Ann H. Gabhart.**


377 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

This is a wonderful series that illustrates how God is willing to help people navigate through life's challenges. All it takes is having a conversation with Him.

In *Angel Sister*, fourteen-year-old Kate Merritt and her parents and sisters are living in Rosey Corner, a small town in Kentucky. Her father is using alcohol to fight his inner demons. Her mother is distraught over her husband's drinking and the family's dire financial straits. Kate takes on more family responsibilities to help ease the household tension. Lorena Birdsong, an abandoned little girl, touches the family in unexpected ways.

In *Small Town Girl*, nineteen-year-old Kate meets Jay Tanner at her older sister's wedding. Jay finds himself attracted to Kate, but she is leery of becoming involved with him because of his
reputation for being a womanizer and a drifter. However, Kate is undeniably drawn to Jay. When Pearl Harbor intervenes, will Jay enlist? Will Kate have a chance to follow her heart?

In *Love Comes Home*, the Merritt sisters are dealing with personal issues. Kate is ready to start a family, but her husband is resistant to the idea. Evangeline wants her husband to be the preacher of a large church, but he is questioning his faith after his experiences during the war. Victoria is struggling as a single mother. Lorena wants to find out why her birth parents abandoned her. Each sister must learn to trust God’s plans for her.

Ann H. Gabhart has written an inspirational series about people who are facing adversity in their lives because of personal conflicts, hardships brought on by the Great Depression, and the psychological effects of the first and second World Wars on soldiers and their families.

The stories are told from multiple points of view, which allow readers to get an intimate glimpse into how each character handles difficult situations. A part of everyday life in the Merritt family includes not only talking to God but also leaning on each other and close family friends for help in dealing with seemingly insurmountable obstacles in their lives. God’s unconditional love and the answering of prayers in His own way and time frame are key aspects of each story. Even though belief in God is an important component to each storyline, the stories do not come across as preachy. They convey the message of how God is ready to listen to anyone who wants to talk to Him, and the time and the place do not matter.

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

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**Hidden agenda : a novel / Lisa Harris. (Southern crimes series; 3)**


305 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 4

Police officer Michael Hunt’s cover has been blown, and he has nowhere to go. His family and friends think he’s dead, and the drug cartel he spent eight months infiltrating wants him dead. To further complicate matters, there is a leak in the Atlanta police department that no one has been able to plug.

Newspaper reporter Olivia Hamilton receives an anonymous email indicating that her father is not the successful business man she thinks he is, but rather head of the Cartel Del Rey. She decides to use her investigative skills to prove the allegation false. She arrives at her father’s estate to find Michael beaten and awaiting his execution, and her brother, Ivan, the only eye witness to a murder. Ivan and Olivia rescue Michael, and the three are soon running for their lives.

*Hidden Agenda* is the third book in Lisa Harris's Southern Crimes series. Fast-paced with non-stop action, the story effectively melds suspense and romance. Main and minor characters are well developed, and readers will relate to Michael and Olivia’s struggles with their belief that God is in control. The message of salvation is woven throughout, yet is not preachy. Because of the subject matter, there are regular episodes of violence.

*Linda Matchett, CLJ*
**Princess ever after / Rachel Hauck.**  *(Royal wedding; 2)*

358 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

**How to catch a prince / Rachel Hauck.**  *(Royal wedding; 3)*

360 p.; 22 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 5

Award winner Rachel Hauck continues her contemporary royal romance series with two stories: one about a reluctant princess, the other about a marriage with secrets. (The first in the series, *Once Upon a Prince*, was reviewed in the *Christian Library Journal*, August-September 2013.)

In *Princess Ever After*, Regina Beswick leaves a corporate job to restore classic cars. Reggie is content with her new life until the day she finds out her grandmother's fairy tale book holds a new destiny for her–she is the lost princess of a small European country. Tanner Burkhardt, Hessenberg’s Minister of Culture, is sent to Florida to bring her back. Without her, Hessenberg loses its status as a sovereign nation.

Reggie has no desire to wear a royal crown in Europe, so Tanner has his hands full trying to convince her to come. Once there, Regina must decide whether her visit is a temporary or permanent one. Is God calling her to be the Princess of Hessenberg? Was she chosen for a “time such as this”? Will she open her heart to a future not of her choosing, to a country not her own?

In *How to Catch a Prince*, sparks fly when American heiress Corina del Rey meets Stephen, Prince of Brighton. Then they part ways, and five years pass. When his brother King Nathaniel (from *Once Upon a Prince*) confronts him about a long-forgotten document, Stephen is forced to re-examine the love he left behind.

Corina is still grieving the death of her twin brother killed in Afghanistan. How can Stephen reopen old wounds for her by telling her about their unfinished business – and the truth about her brother’s death? Will they each face their fears and accept the healing God has? Will they rediscover a future together?

Hauck creates endearing characters and engaging stories with a twist on the “royalty marries a commoner” theme. The relationships are charming, but their “happily ever after” endings don't come easily. There are secrets to reveal and obstacles to overcome. Both books have discussion guides for reading groups.

The faith element is evident–divine inspiration (things no one else sees) adds to the stories. The characters discover or re-discover a new relationship with God. Hauck weaves unexpected truths throughout the stories–God equipping those called for a specific purpose, and the importance of loving well even when result isn't guaranteed.

Highly recommended for public libraries and church libraries.

*Carol R. Gehringer, CLJ*

314 p. : maps ; 22 cm. Adult Fic Rating: 5

Jane Kirkpatrick’s books are very well-researched, so much so that each book based on a true historical story reads like the best combination of fiction and non-fiction imaginable. *A Light in the Wilderness* is no different. It follows the intertwined lives of three women in the American West.

Letitia is a freed slave, and the papers she has to prove that are her most important possession. Many white people still treat her as less than human, but those papers prove to her, even if to no one else, that she is a free person. Davey Carson seems to care for her as she is, as a woman, but can she trust him?

Nancy Hawkins is mother to a large brood of children and, after many years, still madly in love with her husband Zach. She has no desire to make the dangerous journey on the Oregon Trail but finds herself following Zach despite the hazards involved.

The third woman of the trio is Betsy, a member of the Kalapuya tribe, a small but once influential group of Indians. Her main goal in life is to impart her knowledge and the ways of their people to her young grandson.

The West and the Oregon Trail offer no promises for the future as each of these women discover. Can they trust their “men,” and can they trust themselves and each other? Will they put their trust in their God? Kirkpatrick’s fine descriptive writing immerses the reader in the historical setting and the characters’ lives as each woman learns about true freedom in this engrossing story.

Ceil Carey, CLJ

Child of mine / David & Beverly Lewis.

406 p.; 22 cm. Adult Fic Rating: 4

*Child of Mine* follows the lives of adults who will do anything for their children. Jack Livingston left his irresponsible life behind when he suddenly found himself the guardian of his four-year-old niece, Natalie, after his brother and sister-in-law passed away. He moved to Wooster, Ohio to raise a little girl he barely knew. Knowing nothing about raising a daughter, Jack is relieved that he has the help of Natalie’s Amish nanny, Laura. Jack and Laura provide a life filled with love for Natalie. Jack feels he is doing a good job until Natalie begins expressing a desire for a mom. Jack is able to provide everything Natalie needs, but is this one thing she will just have to live without?

Kelly Maines has spent eight years looking for her daughter who was kidnapped as a baby. With the help of a private investigator, Kelly persistently pursues every lead, doing whatever it takes to obtain the information she needs. When Kelly finds out about a girl nearby who could be her daughter, she is unsure how to pursue the lead because she has promised to leave her deceitful tactics behind her. Can she honor her promise and still get the information she is seeking? Is it possible to do it without destroying her most important relationships in the process?

*Child of Mine* is full of characters who rely on God to help figure out what to do in their lives. Each character has faced many struggles, and God’s faithfulness is credited for getting them through.
Deceit is a major part of the story, but it is portrayed negatively and leads to many repercussions. Many of the main characters wrestle with forgiving someone who has wronged them, and the negative implications of not truly forgiving and forgetting are explored. Perhaps the most important theme throughout the story is love—that actions based on love for others will ultimately lead to good.

Overall, *Child of Mine* is a sweet story filled with many twists and turns. Readers will connect with the characters as they work through the issues surrounding love and forgiveness.

*Dani Seilhamer, CLJ*

**Fear has a name / Creston Mapes.** *(Crittendon files, 1)*

417 p. ; 21 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

**Poison town / Creston Mapes.** *(Crittendon files, 2)*

352 p. ; 21 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

**Sky zone / Creston Mapes.** *(Crittendon files, 3)*

443 p. ; 21 cm. Adult
Fic Rating: 4

In *Fear Has a Name*, Jack Crittendon is an investigative newspaper reporter in Trenton City, Ohio. He has been tasked with looking into the disappearance of a local pastor, who is allegedly suicidal. Then a stranger breaks into the Crittendon’s residence while Jack’s wife and two daughters are at home. They flee to safety, but it soon becomes apparent Jack’s wife is in danger from an unknown assailant. It is up to Jack to figure out what happened to the pastor and who is stalking his wife. The two storylines intertwine and come together in an unpredictable way.

In *Poison Town*, Jack finds out that Demler-Vargus Corporation could be responsible for local residents’ health woes. Jack’s interest is piqued, and he starts making inquiries about the company. Jack runs into roadblocks in trying to find out if the corporation is corrupt, and his investigation also puts the lives of those who mean the world to him in imminent danger. The tension in the story ratchets up until the exciting and heart-stopping climax is reached.

In *Sky Zone*, Jack no longer has a job as a reporter, since the newspaper office in Trenton City closed its doors. Jack now works for EventPros and is part of the security detail assigned to the Columbus Festival Arena where a presidential candidate and a well-known Christian musician are making an appearance. The event becomes a nightmare when terrorists take over the arena. Readers will have their eyes glued to the pages of the book until the very end.

The Crittendon Files will appeal to readers who enjoy fast-paced thrillers filled with riveting action, nail-biting suspense, conspiracy, corruption, murder, and Christian elements. The messages about the importance of forgiveness and relying on God in troubled times are adroitly woven into the stories and do not make readers feel like they are being hit over the head with Christian principles. The books keep you on the edge-of-your-seat from start to finish with surprising twists and turns as the stories unfold. Each book can be read as a standalone.
Discussion questions are included at the end of *Sky Zone*. This allows readers to delve deeper into how they might react to circumstances similar to those in which the characters find themselves, to gain a snippet of information about thrillers written by Creston Mapes that are not part of this series, and to find out how interested readers may interact with the author.

*Dianne Woodman, CLJ*

**Farewell Four Waters**: one aid worker's sudden escape from Afghanistan; a novel based on true events / Kate McCord, a protective pseudonym.


363 p.; 22 cm. Adult

Fic Rating: 5

In *Farewell, Four Waters*, Marie starts a new program designed to teach Afghan women and girls to read. Marie loves her work with an NGO (non-governmental organization) in Afghanistan. She loves her co-workers. She especially loves the Afghan people. Her roommate of two years and close friend, Carolyn, works with the same NGO. Following some violence in Kabul, Carolyn's boyfriend requests that she return to the States for her safety and to see if their relationship will progress toward marriage. The impending loss of her good friend rattles Marie, but not as much as the loss of Afghanistan and her friends and work there when she has to escape.

Kate McCord masterfully creates tension throughout the story that drives the plot quickly and develops an atmosphere of suspense. Since the characters are based on real people, it makes sense that they feel authentic and original. Over the two-week timeline of this story, Marie transforms from a woman who is busy serving God and others to a woman who sees how God has been the One helping her each step of the way. The well-written dialogue also gives insight into the characters and their dreams as well as their doubts. Of course, the setting—Afghanistan about seven years after 9/11—plays as much a role as the characters since it provides the dramatic backdrop, the pervasive violence, and the many Afghans who love and live and try their best to have a normal life in spite of the danger around them. The theme, that Christ is present in every trial and in every good time, rings out clearly throughout the book. “I passed through the raging flood waters, and you were with me...You’ve always been with me, even in the storm, even in the loss.” (p. 353)

*Kristina Wolcott, CLJ*

**Jesus, a visual history**: the dramatic story of the Messiah in the Holy Land / Donald L. Brake, with Todd Bolen.


283 p.; photos, maps; 24 cm. Adult

232 Rating: 5

“No other historical event has been more debated, divisive, or trusted in than the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (front jacket) Donald L. Brake Sr.’s *Jesus, A Visual History* tells the most beautiful story ever told—the story of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ life unfolds on these pages starting with his birth and ending with the resurrection. Each chapter is correlated with specific Bible passages. The maps show the routes of Jesus’ travels and illustrate the geographic history. The beautiful photographs
depict the modern sites of biblical events.

Everyone is familiar with the story of Jesus. However, this book offers a visual insight into the history and geography of Jesus’s life through the photographs, art, and illustrations present on nearly every page. Readers get a glimpse of where Jesus traveled and of where his crucifixion and resurrection took place. The “Historical and Geographical Life of Jesus” tables provide the approximate date, location, and biblical references for each of the events in Jesus’ life, and also serve as an index referring the reader to the location in the book where each event is discussed. An introduction about the Holy Land and its history, detailed footnotes, an extensive bibliography, and a Scripture Index offer more information for the curious and the serious student. Jesus, A Visual History is a great tool for Bible studies, reading groups, and those interested in the life of Jesus Christ.

Recommended for public and school libraries.

Trina Chase, CLJ

The allure of gentleness: defending the faith in the manner of Jesus / Dallas Willard.


191 p.; 22 cm. Adult

239 Rating: 5

Professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California until his retirement in 2012, the late Dallas Willard sought to provide a model for how we can present the Christian life to others. It is not logic or reason or even the truth of doctrine that spreads Christ’s word as much as the example of our own lives. Demonstrations of Jesus’ message come from people living out a life as Jesus did: with love, humility, and gentleness.

Willard comes back again and again to this one large truth—the whole purpose of discipleship is for us to become more and more like Jesus.

Those who have enjoyed Willard’s earlier Divine Conspiracy, wherein he talked about “apprenticing” ourselves to Jesus and exploring life-changing ways to be guided God on a daily basis for God’s conspiracy is to undermine evil with good, will find this a natural follow-up to continue that journey. Also, Willard’s The Spirit of Disciplines noted that much emphasis in Christianity is on a quick conversion and the love and mercy of God when we ought best to note the strain and challenge of the daily walk with Christ. This work, edited by his daughter Rebecca Willard Heatley, helps people wrestle with common doubts and answer some of the hard questions like communication between God and humanity and the problem of pain and evil.

A Scripture Index and a Subject Index make it easy to continue the reflection.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

Your divine fingerprint: the force that makes you unstoppable / Keith Craft.


258 p.; 21 cm. Adult

248.4 Rating: 5

Pastor Keith Craft, the founder of the 7,000-member Elevate Life Church in Frisco, Texas, has participated in many business/success seminars and regularly appears at men’s conferences, marriage weekends and women’s conferences. In Your Divine Fingerprint, he proposes that each of us has a divine fingerprint already set by God the
Creator. Discovering and developing that fingerprint is what sets us apart from others and enables us to become the person God intends for us to be.

He imparts many insights along the way and for many readers these will open doors—e.g., on page 88 he advises each person to pay attention to the tension between where one is and where one needs to be, and on pages 107-108 he encourages people to lead from the middle of an organization. In addition to these commonsense and spiritual insights, he has the ability to let words carry the day. In chapter 8, “Your Life Sentences,” he suggests that the sum of what each of us says in our life “sentences our life.”

Craft is a leadership strategist as evident in his earlier Leadershipology 767: Leadership Proverbs for the 21st Century. In Your Divine Fingerprint, Craft gives the subject further depth and applicability. Made for More: An Invitation to Live in God’s Image by Hannah Anderson offers an authoritative nudge to live each day in God’s image. Made for More is devoted to women, whereas Your Divine Fingerprint takes in a wider audience. When one consults Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God by John F. Kilner, a similar scope is discussed but is geared to students and theologians, whereas Your Divine Fingerprint speaks to the everyday person.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ

Ordinary : how to turn the world upside down / Tony Merida.
xvi, 137 p.; 19 cm. Adult
248.4 Rating: 5

Tony Merida, author of Ordinary: How to Turn the World Upside Down, pastors Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. He seeks to put the emphasis on practicing ordinary Christianity, without focus on sensationalism or fame. In Ordinary, the central focus is on God’s grace and how, when we accept God’s love and His dying for us, we can be brave enough to identify more with the vulnerable. For example, Merida asks, “Will you meditate on God’s Word?” (pg. 112), and then offers a perspective on Psalm 146 that encourages further praying, prompting one to live sensitively to the needs around our world. The commentary there alone makes the book worth reading.

“Ordinary,” as used in this resource, means serving God quietly and serving to be please Him instead of serving to please people. Merida challenges each reader to show hospitality to others, especially in caring for orphans, widows/widowers, and the elderly. He has a gift for putting the hard concepts into obvious and applicable lessons.

An Appendix offers recommended websites of groups and organizations working to reach the vulnerable. A Notes section, with 261 entries, helps readers go further in their reflection and reading on this subject.

Those familiar with Yes, There’s More: A Return to Childlike Faith and a Deeper Experience of God by R. Loren Sandford will find in Ordinary a prayerful way and challenge to walk and think with the mind and heart of Jesus.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ
Becoming a spiritually healthy family: avoiding the 6 dysfunctional parenting styles / Michelle Anthony.

197 p.; 21 cm. Adult
248.845 Rating: 5

As the title suggests, Anthony’s book begins by describing six dysfunctional parenting styles. These include having divided devotion, being permissive, pressuring to succeed, overbearing, criticizing, and being unavailable. She is adamant that when one seeks to choose anything less than God, one is choosing dysfunction by default. The six dysfunctional parenting styles distract from the heart of what parenting is all about.

Chapter seven reinforces the legacy Anthony is building—to openly recognize a child’s value as a person. Chapter nine shows how families can practically respond by focusing on heart transformation, not behavioral modification. Each chapter closes with a “Reflect and Respond” section that invites the reader and parent to pursue Jesus instead of the “more and better” that the world offers.

Those familiar with Anthony’s earlier work, Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today’s Families, will find her usual conversational style and strong conviction that God does work in and with us. Building on the discussion in this work, one recognizes that it is breaking the patterns of control (or lack of such), fear, anger, shame, or manipulation that enables God’s desires to direct oneself.

Parents and readers having used Anthony’s earlier The Big God Story, wherein one can read this story like a normal bedtime story in three minutes, will find that she enhances the same approach in this latest work that adults can readily relate to—she’s direct and gives one the opportunity to truly be the Lord’s in a blend of Christian education and spiritual formation.

Leroy Hommerding, CLJ
CORE COLLECTION
FOR CHRISTIAN READERS

Being developed by librarians:
Donna W. Bowling: Fiction
Nancy L. Hesch: Nonfiction

The Core Collection, under construction, is a help for parents, teachers, librarians, and others in choosing the best books for the children and teens in their care. And when finished, the Core Collection will be a major reference source for schools and churches interested in building a new library.

Goal: to develop a list of highly recommended books for Christian readers, Christian school libraries, and church libraries, as well as for families.
Primary Fiction

Ieronimo, Christine

A thirst for home : a story of water across the world / Christine Ieronimo ; illustrations by Eric Velasquez.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm. Grades 2-5.
Rating: 5
Adoption--Fiction.
Water supply--Fiction.

Murguia, Bethanie Deeney

Zoe's jungle / by Bethanie Deeney Murguia.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm. Grade PS-2.
Rating: 5
Sistern--Fiction.
Imagination--Fiction.

Ruzzier, Sergio

A letter for Leo / Sergio Ruzzier.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm. Grades PS-3.
Rating: 4
Friendship -- Fiction.
Letters -- Fiction.

Simon, Francesca

Hello, Moon! / Francesca Simon and Ben Cort.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm. Grades PS-1.
Rating: 4
Bedtime -- Fiction.
Moon -- Fiction

Primary Nonfiction

Wigger, J. Bradley

Thank you, God / by J. Bradley Wigger ; illustrated by Jago.

LCCN 2013044346. ISBN 9780802854247, hardcover, $16.00.

1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 31 cm. Grades PS-3.
Rating: 5

Prayers.
Gratitude -- Prayers and devotions -- Juvenile literature.

551

It's raining / by Gail Gibbons.


LCCN 2013002898 ISBN 9780823429240, hardcover, $17.95.

Rating: 4

Rain and rainfall -- Juvenile literature.
Meteorology -- Juvenile literature.

636.7

Bozzo, Linda

My first dog / Linda Bozzo. (My first pet library from the American Humane Association)


LCCN 2006008404. ISBN 9780766027541, library binding, $22.60.

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 1-3.
Rating: 5

Dogs.

808.8


ISBN 9780688481350, hardcover, $24.00.

Rating: 5

Conduct of life--Literary collections.

636.6

Bozzo, Linda

My first bird / Linda Bozzo. (My first pet library from the American Humane Association)


LCCN 2006008405. ISBN 9780766027497, library binding, $22.60.

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 1-3.
Rating: 5

Cage birds.

975.6

Bauer, Marion Dane

Celebrating North Carolina / by Marion Dane Bauer; illustrated by C. B. Canga. (50 states to
celebrate)

Rating: 4
North Carolina

979.7

Bauer, Marion Dane

Celebrating Washington State / written by Marion Dane Bauer ; illustrated by C.B. Canga. (50 states to celebrate)

Rating: 4
Washington State

Fic

Larson, Kirby

Dash / Kirby Larson.

243 p. ; 22 cm. Grades 3-7.
Rating: 5

Intermediate Fiction

Fic

Fitzgerald, Laura Marx

Under the egg / Laura Marx Fitzgerald.

247 p. ; 22 cm. Grades 4-6.
Rating: 5
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Fiction.
Recluses--Fiction.

Intermediate Nonfiction

292

d'Aulaire, Ingri and EdgarD'Aulaires


xiii, 154 p. : ill. (some col.) ; 31 cm. Grades 3-6.
Rating: 4

Mythology, Norse.

363.34

Tarshis, Lauren

I survived true stories : five epic disasters / by Lauren Tarshis. (I survived)


Rating: 5

Survival.

Disasters.

636.7

Barnes, Julia

Pet dogs / Julia Barnes. (Pet pals)


LCCN 2006042378. ISBN 9780836867770, library binding, $26.00.

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6.

Rating: 4

Dogs.

636.7

George, Jean Craighead,

How to talk to your dog / Jean Craighead George ; illustrated by Sue Truesdell.


26 p. : col. ill. ; 23 cm. Grades 4-6.

Rating: 5

Dogs.

Human-animal communication.

636.8

Barnes, Julia

Pet cats / Julia Barnes. (Pet pals)


Rating: 5

Dogs.

Human anatomy--Juvenile literature.

Human body--Juvenile literature.
barnes, julia

**pet rabbits / julia barnes. (pet pals)**

ISBN 9780836868717, library binding, $26.00.
32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6.
Rating: 4
Rabbits.

636.935

Barnes, Juli

**pet guinea pigs / julia barnes. (pet pals)**

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 3-6.
Rating: 4
Guinea pigs as pets.

639.3

Gaines, Ann

**10 reptiles and amphibians for kids / Ann Graham Gaines. (Top pets for kids with American Humane)**

LCCN 2007047884. ISBN 9780766030749, library binding, $25.27.
Rating: *5
Amphibians as pets--Juvenile literature
Reptiles as pets.
Middle School Fiction

FIC

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

Tanglewood tales for boys and girls: being a second wonder / Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Whitefish, MT : Kessinger, 2008, 1881.

LCCN 4030406. ISBN 9781436937481, hardcover, OP: buy used.

243 p. : ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 4-9.

Rating: 4
Mythology, Classical--Juvenile literature.

FIC

Hawthorne, Nathaniel

A wonder book for girls and boys / Nathaniel Hawthorne ; with illustrations by Arthur Rackham.


LCCN 94007352. ISBN 9780679436430, hardcover, $17.00.


Rating: 4
Mythology, Classical--Juvenile literature.

Fic

Meigs, Cornelia


New York : Little, Brown & Co., 0.

ISBN 9780316565943, paperback, $9.00.

210 p. ; 19 cm. Grades 5-8.

Rating: *5
Alcott, Louisa May--1832-1888.

Middle School Nonfiction

292

Colum, Padraic

The children's Homer / by Padraic Colum.


ISBN 9781613820049, paperback, $7.95.

142 p. ; 23 cm. Grades 6-10.

Rating: 4
Odysseus (Greek mythology)--Juvenile literature.
Achilles (Greek mythology)--Juvenile literature.

292

d'Aulaire, Ingri and Edgar

Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire's Book of Greek myths / by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'aulaire.


ISBN 9780385157872, hardcover, OP: buy used.
192 p. : ill. (some col.) ; 31 cm. Grades 4-8.
Rating: 5
Mythology, Greek.

323
Freedman, Russell
Because they marched : the people's campaign for voting rights that changed America / Russell Freedman.
LCCN 2013038991. ISBN 9780823429219, hardcover, $20.00.
83 p. : ill. ; 23 x 29 cm. Grades 7-10.
Rating: 5
Selma to Montgomery Rights March--(1965-Selma, Ala.)--Juvenile literature.
Civil rights movements--Alabama--Selma--History--20th century--Juvenile literature.

639.9
George, Jean Craighead,
The tarantula in my purse : and 172 other wild pets / written and illustrated by Jean Craighead George.
134 p. : ill. ; 20 cm. Grades 5-8.
Rating: 5
George, Jean Craighead--1919-2012--Juvenile literature.
Pets--Fiction.

808.8
The book of virtues for young people / edited, with commentary, by William J. Bennett.
LCCN 96053584. ISBN 9780689816130, hardcover, $21.99
ix, 374 p. : ill. ; 25 cm. Grades 5-10.
Rating: 5
Conduct of life--Literary collections
Literature--Collections.
Audubon, John James
Capturing nature : the writings and art of John James Audubon / John James Audubon ; edited by Peter and Connie Roop ; with illustrations by Rick Farley.


LCCN 92015662. ISBN 9780802782052, library binding, OP; buy used.
Rating: 5
Birds.
Artists.

Benge, Janet
Louis Zamperini : redemption / Janet and Geoff Benge. (Heroes of history)


218 pages : map ; 21 cm. Grades 7-10.
Rating: 5
Bomber pilots--United States--Biography--Juvenile works.
Survival--Juvenile works.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor
The brothers Karamazov / Fyodor Dostoevsky ; with an introduction and notes by Maire Jaanus ; translated by Constance Garnett. (Barnes and Noble classics)

xxx, 720 p. ; 21 cm. Grades 11-Adult.
Rating: 4
Fathers and sons--Fiction
Brothers--Fiction.

Hedlund, Jody
An uncertain choice / Jody Hedlund.

254 p. ; 21 cm. Grades 9-12.
Rating: 5

Klavan, Andrew
The long way home / by Andrew
Klavan. *The homelanders; 2*  
345 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-12.  
Rating: 5  
Terrorism--Fiction.  
Amnesia--Fiction.

Fic  
Klavan, Andrew  
*The truth of the matter / by Andrew Klavan. (The homelanders; 3)*  
LCCN 2010009349. ISBN 9781595547149, hardcover, OP; buy 4 books in one.  
346 p.; 23 cm. Grades 9-12.  
Rating: 5  
Terrorism--Fiction.  
Amnesia--Fiction.

823  
Swift, Jonathan  
Gulliver’s travels / Jonathan Swift; with an introduction by Pat Rogers. *Everyman's library; 26*  
LCCN 91053011. ISBN 9780679405450, hardcover, $22.00.  
xlv, 318 p.; maps ; 21 cm. Grades 8-Adult.  
Rating: 4  
Travelers--Fiction.  
Adventures stories.
Wharton, Ethan Frome

Ethan Frome / Edith Wharton. (Vintage classics)


LCCN 2011277835. ISBN 9780307949530, paperback, $8.95.

103 p. ; 21 cm. Grades 11-Adult.

Rating: 4

Farm life--Fiction.

Rural poor--Fiction.

High School Nonfiction

Miller, Ron

Curiosity's mission on Mars : exploring the red planet / by Ron Miller.


64 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 6-12.

Rating: 5

Mars (Planet)--Juvenile literature.

Mars (Planet)--Exploration--Juvenile literature.

The book of virtues : a treasury of great moral stories / edited, with commentary by William J. Bennett.


ISBN 9780671683061, hardcover, $36.00.

831 p. : ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 11-Adult.

Rating: 4

Literature--Collections.

Conduct of life--Literary collections.

The moral compass : stories for a life's journey / edited, with commentary, by William J. Bennett.


824 p. : ill. ; 24 cm. Grades 11-Adult.

Rating: 4

Conduct of life--Literary collections

Literature--Collections.

Sophocles

Oedipus the King / Sophocles ; translated and with an introduction by David Grene.

LCCN 2009038278. ISBN 9780226768687, paperback, $8.00.
76 p.; 21 cm. Grades 11-Adult.
Rating: 4
Oedipus (Greek mythological figure)—Drama.

B

Aylward, Gladys

Gladys Aylward: the little woman / Gladys Aylward as told to Christine Hunter.
159 p.; 22 cm. Grades 9-Adult.
Rating: *5
Aylward, Gladys.
Missionaries—China—Biography.
Adult Fiction

Fic

Austin, Lynn

Keepers of the covenant / Lynn Austin. (The restoration chronicles; 2)  
477 p.; 23 cm. Adult.  
Rating: 5  
Ezra (Biblical figure)--Fiction.  
Bible--Old Testament--Fiction.

Fic

Camden, Elizabeth

Beyond all dreams / Elizabeth Camden.  
362 p.; 22 cm. Adult.  
Rating: 5  
Women librarians--Fiction.  
Legislators--United States--Fiction.

Fic

Dotta, Jessica

Born of persuasion / Jessica Dotta. (Price of privilege; 1)  
Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2013.  
435 p.; 21 cm. Adult.  
Rating: 5  
Guardian and ward--Fiction.  
Orphans--Fiction.

Fic

Dotta, Jessica

Mark of distinction / Jessica Dotta. (Price of privilege; 2)  
Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2014.  
437 p.; 21 cm. Adult.  
Rating: 5  
Heiresses--Fiction.  

Fic

Dotta, Jessica

Price of privilege / Jessica Dotta. (Price of privilege; 3)  
Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2014.  
451 p.; 21 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Heiresses--Fiction.

Fic
Karon, Jan
Somewhere safe with somebody good / Karon, Jan. (Mitford; 10)
LCCN 2014012105. ISBN 9780399167447, hardcover, $27.95.
511 p. : col. maps; 24 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Clergy--Fiction.
Mitford (N.C. : Imaginary place)--Fiction

Fic
Klassen, Julie
Secret of Pembrooke Park / Julie Klassen.
460 p. ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Single women--England--Fiction.
Mystery fiction.

Fic
Snelling, Lauraine
To everything a season / Lauraine Snelling. (Song of blessing; 1)
342 p. ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Nurses--Fiction.
North Dakota--Fiction.

Fic
Snelling, Lauraine
A harvest of hope / Lauraine Snelling. (Song of blessing; 2)
348 p. ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Nurses--Fiction.
North Dakota--Fiction.

Fic
Warren, Susan May
Evergreen : a Christiansen winter novella / Susan May Warren. (A
Christiansen Family novel; 3.5)
Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2014.
xiv, 192 p. ; 19 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Older couples--Fiction.
Empty nesters--Fiction.

Fic
Woodsmall, Cindy
A season for tending / Cindy Woodsmall. (Amish vines and orchards; 1)
x, 339 p. ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Amish--Fiction.

Fic
Woodsmall, Cindy
The winnowing season / Cindy Woodsmall. (Amish vines and orchards; 2)
x, 322 p. ; 21 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Amish--Fiction.

Fic
Woodsmall, Cindy
For every season / Cindy Woodsmall. (Amish vines and orchards; 3)
317 p. ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Amish--Fiction.

Adult Nonfiction:
230
Wright, N.T.
Simply good news / N.T. Wright.
189 pages ; 24 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Apologetics.

248.32
Lucado, Max
Before amen : the power of a simple prayer / Max Lucado.
174 p.; 15 X 23 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Prayer--Christianity.

261.58
Piper, John
Seeing beauty and saying beautifully : the power of poetic effort in the work of George Herbert, George Whitefield, and C. S. Lewis / John Piper. (The swans are not silent; 6)
158 p.; 24 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
Christianity and the arts.

277.3
LaGrow, Cathy
The waiting: the true story of a lost child, a lifetime of longing, and a miracle for a mother who never gave up / Cathy LaGrow, with Cindy Coloma.
Carol Stream, IL : Tyndale House, 2014.
viii, 323 p.: photographs ; 22 cm. Adult.
Rating: 5
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