A Wilderness Voice Publication

# Recommended …

# Children's Books

*for*

# Christadelphian Families

## Part 1:

## Picture Books for 3–8 year olds

Mishael Widemann

wilderness voice publications

www.wilderness-voice.org

A Wilderness Voice Publication

# *Recommended . . .*

# Children's Books

*for*

# Christadelphian Families

---

Part 1:

## Picture Books

*for*

## 3–8 year olds

**Mishael Widemann**

**For information on Wilderness Voice Publications, visit:**

www. wilderness-voice.org
Email: publications@wilderness-voice.org

**Copyright:**

By law, copyright is automatically applied to original written material. Permission to use material from this book may be obtained from Wilderness Voice Publications:
publications@wilderness-voice.org

**Scripture versions:**

Scripture quotations in this publication are from the King James Authorised Version, or the author's own translation, unless specifically stated.

**Acknowledgements:**

Photos: Chris Yearsley
Paddington Bear image: Public Domain

wilderness voice
publications

# Picture books for children 3–8 years

## A few words of introduction

It's Wednesday afternoon and there I am in the library, keeping track of my children out of the corner of my eye while flicking through the picture books in order to re-stack our library box at home. I only have another few minutes, so my decisions have to be instant.

I pass over dozens of books — the titles are uninviting, and the illustrations are simple and two-dimensional. Inevitably I find myself drawn to the same old books — stories that I know, with pictures that are interesting to look at. An *Alfie* book by Shirley Hughes goes in the bag. *Babar* makes his way in too, as does any Bill Peet book that I come across.

If you are a parent looking for good picture books to read your children, you've probably had a very similar experience to me. In our humanistic world, the books that are on offer at libraries and even bookshops are pretty mediocre fare. It's disappointing when you take the time to sit down to read a stack of books to your children, and find yourself muttering under your breath at the end of a story "That was a waste of time" (which I have to confess I have done … more than once). I have frequently wondered how some picture books ever came to be printed. The plot is weak and the illustrations poor. What did the publisher ever see in the work to get it printed?

Many picture books these days seem to be either mediocre in quality or, alternatively, they deliberately promote a worldview and behaviours that are ungodly. I've had a few library books make their way into our home that I have had to instantly confiscate once I realised what they were really about. One book I came across at the library the other day was entitled, *Jack not Jackie,* a picture book with a deliberate agenda to normalise gender-identity confusion in the minds of our very young children.

The language used can also be cheap and crude and, frequently, authors seem to want to sink to a child's level, using toilet humour and other unsavoury language to supposedly engage the child.

I've just spent the last few months reading dozens of outstanding picture books. What struck me is that many of these books I have *never* come across at a library or seen in a bookshop. Good picture

books have to be hunted down for your home library and captured! That is what the following booklist is for: for you to print out and use as a resource to stock your home with quality books. Or, you can give the titles to grandparents to buy as birthday presents. If you start collecting while your child is a baby, you'll have a good stack of books to read to your children while they grow.

So, what is it that we should look for in a quality picture book? What elements will nourish the hearts and minds of our children?

## Does the book uphold virtue?

It is never too early to introduce our children to virtue through powerful storytelling. If we want our children to embrace godly characteristics as they grow, it just makes sense to read them books that promote those characteristics. Our Lord and Master knew the value of story when he taught the people powerful lessons through the medium of parables. Children learn consciously and subconsciously through stories. They will learn the characteristic of courage and persistence when they listen to *Brave Irene* by William Steig, or the principle of being thankful for our blessings in Julia Donaldson's *A Squash and A Squeeze*. Without any extra commentary from us, we can teach them the evils of selfishness through reading *Babushka's Doll* by Patricia Polacco or the preciousness of books themselves through the reading of *The Bee Tree* by the same author. Not all enjoyable picture books will have a clear moral lesson — some will be amusing or entertaining — but having a collection that teach good lessons is invaluable.

## Does the book encourage scriptural male and female roles?

Many books these days seem to push a distinct agenda — the confusion of biblical roles. The purpose is to encourage girls to see themselves as leaders and breadwinners, capable and independent. One such book that springs to mind is *Jam* by Margaret Mahy, which portrays the male as the industrious stay-at-home dad while the mother is off at work every day. Another push in the picture-book industry is to portray fathers as stupid, irresponsible, and immature while the mother is presented as the intelligent and capable adult. If we want our children to grow up valuing and respecting God-given roles, let's be careful what role-models we introduce them to through the picture books we read them.

## Are the children in the book respectful to their parents?

Children are to obey and honour their parents (Eph. 6:1–3; Col. 3:20). And yet, picture books abound that tell the stories of rude, disobedient, disrespectful children … *who get away with it!* If we want our children to learn that such behaviour is unacceptable, then let's give them good examples through books. Children like those in *Sarah and Simon and No Red Paint* by Edward Ardizzone, who love their parents and do everything they can to help their poor father. Or the girl in *The Rag Coat* by Lauren Mills, who is deeply grateful to the adults in her life for making her a winter coat, even though it is out of rags. She subsequently goes on to teach her schoolmates a lesson in thankfulness and appreciation. Sometimes children will behave badly in a picture book story, but the important thing is that, in the course of the story, they learn a better way and are reconciled to their parents by the conclusion of the book.

## Is the language rich and sophisticated?

Picture books are a fantastic start along the road of building and increasing a child's vocabulary. I'm not talking about early readers that use simple words and sentence structures. Dr Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* is not that fun to read aloud to your child (I know because, somehow, I found myself reading it just the other night), but it's a great book for beginning readers to read on their own. Leave the readers to your child to read on their own, and, instead, delve into the rich array of language in a quality picture book. It's not necessary to 'dumb' down language for children. Consider the beginning of *When Jessie Came Across the Sea* by Amy Hest (illustrated by P.J. Lynch):

> "Once, in a poor village far from here, there was a very small house with a slanting roof. Inside were two chairs, two narrow beds, and a table with a fine lace cloth. A potbellied stove warmed the place in winter, and warmed thin soup.
>
> Jessie lived in that house with Grandmother. They had one skinny cow — Miss Minnie- and a patch of garden. Carrots came up here and there, and sometimes a potato".

The writing style is at once simple and yet rich. Children can understand it, and yet there will be some words ('slanting' and 'potbellied') that they won't fully comprehend. No matter. Their vocabulary is being built by listening to rich and sophisticated language that, one day, they will be able to use themselves. If we want them to appreciate quality literature in all its fullness and beauty, let's begin with well-written picture books.

## Is the artwork interesting, unique, beautiful … or flat, cartoon-like, and even distorted?

One of my favourite picture books is the one mentioned above — *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*, by Amy Hest and P.J. Lynch. I just love looking at the artwork. It draws your eye in; the coziness of a young girl sewing with her grandmother by firelight, the bleak stormy day as she leaves for America, the hope and resolve on the faces of those who sail past the Statue of Liberty bound for a better life. It's all there in the artwork (you *really* need to get this book!) It is simply breath-taking in beauty and detail. Place it alongside many modern picture books and there is just no comparison. The crude, cartoon-like drawings of many books are exposed for what they really are.

Children are never too young to start appreciating beauty. Sarah Clarkson in her book, *Read for the Heart,* writes:

> "In their early years, children are sensory sponges, soaking up every drop of sight and sound as they furnish the landscape of their minds. With every picture and illustration they encounter, they are building an internal expectation of beauty against which they will measure all future experiences with art. They are also outfitting the realm of their imagination, setting up that secret world of pictures to which they will turn later in life as they come across great literature that will demand them to furnish images out of the stock in their own minds." (page 65)

Let us provide a visual feast for our children so that they learn what is good and lovely and true (Philippians 4:8).

There are many unique artistic styles that we can expose our children to. The rich, homely style of Shirley Hughes is quite different to the distinctive artwork of Patricia Polacco, but each artist evokes an atmosphere in their works and provides detail for the eye to rest on. The world our Heavenly Father has created is dense and detailed, and artwork can be a fine reflection of that.

# Do *you* want to read this book to your child?

Although picture books are written for children, it's easy to forget that the ones reading the books are most often us, their parents. It really helps if you actually *enjoy* reading a particular book to your child, instead of inwardly groaning your way through it. I remember once being given a collection of painfully boring ballet stories that my youngest two just loved and wanted me to read to them. There really was nothing to commend the stories — the plots were trite and predictable, and the artwork was just awful. Night after night they chose this book to read, and I still remember the freedom I felt when I finally did what I should have done much earlier: quietly dispose of the book in a recycling bin. In my opinion, the best picture books are enjoyable for both parent and child. If we enjoy the stories ourselves, we will be far more motivated to make the time to read to our children.

So, those are a few benchmarks I consider when choosing picture books. And while we tend to think of picture books as suitable for very young children, a well-written, beautifully illustrated picture book will appeal to *all* ages.

After all, as my husband will testify, you're never too old to enjoy a Bill Peet.

*Mishael Widemann*

# Picture Book List

This is the first in a series of suggested lists of books for children and young people. This list incorporates picture books for three-to-eight-year-olds and is made up of mainly non-biblical stories. We are putting together another list for biblical stories as part of the series.

## Disclaimer:

Please accept my apologies if your favourite picture book isn't listed. I've only included books I, or a trusted source, have read and would recommend. Please also accept my apologies if any of these books do not meet your approval. Any list is going to be incomplete and somewhat subjective, so use this list as a resource to stock your own personal library with the books that appeal to you and your family.

## Michael Bond

**Paddington series.** Illustrated by **R. W. Alley**

The iconic British picture book series. These stories are beautifully illustrated and written with dry humour. Paddington is a bear from "Darkest Peru" who is found at a London Railway Station and subsequently adopted by the Brown Family. Each story deals with one of Paddington's quirky escapades. It is impossible not to be charmed by this marmalade-loving character.

***Paddington***
***Paddington in the Garden***
***Paddington Goes to Hospital***
***Paddington and the Grand Tour***
***Paddington at the Carnival***
***Paddington at St. Paul's***
***Paddington Aat the Palace***
***Paddington at the Tower***
***Paddington at the Zoo***
***Paddington at the Circus***

---

## Shirley Hughes

Shirley Hughes' illustrations are warm and rich, and beautifully capture normal family life. Each page is a visual feast for parent and child, and the stories are perfect for a cozy read-aloud session on the sofa.

***All About Alfie*** series

***Dogger***

***Olly & Me***

***Lucy & Tom***

***The Big Concrete Lorry***

---

## James Herriot

***James Herriot's Treasury for Children.*** Illustrated by **Ruth Brown** and **Peter Barrett.**

Some of James Herriot's beloved animal stories written for children to enjoy, and accompanied by beautiful illustrations that really capture the charm of Yorkshire in the 1940s.

---

## Jill Murphy

### The Large Family series

There is something about this series that is laugh-out-loud funny. If you are a parent, you will identify instantly with these books in their hilarious depiction of the chaos of family life.

***All in One Piece***

***Mr Large in Charge***

***A Piece of Cake***

***Five Minutes' Peace***

***A Quiet Night In***

---

## James Mayhew

### Katie Artist series

This series introduces children to great works of art through the charming adventures of a small girl named Katie, who visits the National Art Gallery in London with her Grandma. Invariably, her Grandmother falls asleep on a sofa somewhere and Katie is left free to wander through the Gallery, climbing into picture frames, and experiencing each painting through an unfolding story. A great introduction to famous works of art.

***Katie and the Impressionists***

***Katie and the British Artists***

***Katie's Picture Show***

***Katie and the Bathers***

***Katie and the Starry Night***

***Katie in London***

***Katie and the Dinosaurs***

***Katie and the Waterlily Pond***

***Katie and the Sunflowers***

***Katie in Scotland***

***Katie and the Mona Lisa***

***Katie and the Spanish Princess***

---

## Julia Donaldson

Julia Donaldson is a master of rhyme. Her stories are well-composed and well-written. Her books are not in series, so each needs to be assessed on its own merits. However, some titles that can be recommended, that uphold values such as kindness, courage, and thankfulness are:

***The Gruffalo***

***The Snail and the Whale***

***A Squash and a Squeeze***

***What the Ladybird Heard***

***Tabby McTat***

***The Smartest Giant in Town***

***Tiddler***

***The Magic Paintbrush***

***The Highway Rat***

---

## Lynley Dodd

These rhyming masterpieces are fun to read and, due to the rhyme, children will subconsciously start to memorise the lines. *Hairy Maclary* is probably her most famous book, but there are many others that will delight.

***Hairy Maclary***

***Hairy Maclary's Bone***

***Hairy Maclary and Zachary Quack***

***Hairy Maclary Scattercat***

***Hairy Maclary's Rumpus at the Vet***

***A Dragon in a Wagon***

***Slinki Malinki***

***Schnitzel von Krumm***

---

# Dr Seuss

Dr Seuss is the penname for author Theodor Seuss Geisel, who wrote a number of children's books that are quirky and zany. Some books are written for beginning readers and some contain very sophisticated language.

***Green Eggs and Ham***
***Horton Hears a Who***
***The Cat in the Hat***
***Oh, the Places You'll Go!***
***Fox in Socks***
***Hop on Pop***
***The Butter Battle Book***
***And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street***
***Horton Hatches the Egg***
***Wacky Wednesday***
***The Lorax***

---

# Bill Peet

Bill Peet is an example of an author who is as talented with the written word as he is with illustration. The language is sophisticated, and the drawings detailed and unique. His stories are quirky and all very different.

***Kermit the Hermit***
***The Wump World***
***The Caboose who got loose***
***The Ant and the Elephant***
***Encore for Eleanor***
***Ella***
***Buford the Little Bighorn***
***Chester the Worldly Pig***
***Smokey***
***Jennifer and Josephine***
***Eli***
***Huge Harold***
***The Pinkish, Purplish, Bluish Egg***
***Capyboppy***
***The Whingdingdilly***
***Farewell to Shady Glade***
***How Droofus the Dragon Lost His Head***

***The Gnats of Knotty Pine***

***The Spooky Tail of Prewitt Peacock***

***Big Bad Bruce***

***Hubert's Hair-Raising Adventure***

***Cowardly Clyde***

---

## Amy Hest

***When Jessie came across the sea.*** Illustrated by **P.J.Lynch**.

This book tells the moving story of a young girl who emigrates from Eastern Europe to America, and who has to face her new life with courage and resolve. The story is told simply and powerfully, and the artwork is simply breathtaking, transporting the reader to the scenes described with an emotive vividness that make this picture book very, very special.

---

## Robert McCloskey

***Make way for ducklings*** (Winner of the Caldecott Medal)

A delightful story about how a pair of Mallard ducks and their eight ducklings navigate urban dangers with the help of some policemen and eventually find their home in a park.

***Blueberries for Sal***

This Caldecott Honor book tells a perfectly crafted story of a little girl with her mother who are picking blueberries to can for the winter and a little bear cub with his mother who are consuming berries to grow fat for their winter. The mix-up that follows is delightful and charmingly resolved.

---

## Renee Graef

***My First Little House Books***

Perfect for reading to younger children, these books tell some of the stories from the "Little House" books by Laura Ingalls Wilder and are illustrated in the style of Garth Williams who illustrated the novels.

***County Fair***

***Dance at Grandpa's***

***The Deer in the Wood***

***A Farmer Boy Birthday***

***Going to Town***

***Going West***

***A Little House Birthday***

***A Little Prairie House***

***Prairie Day***

***Sugar Snow***

***Summertime in the Big Woods***

***Winter Days in the Big Woods***

***Winter on the Farm***

---

## Jill Barklem

***The Complete Brambly Hedge***

A cozy retreat into a community of field mice who live happily together in a collection of trees at the edge of a field. Full of seasonal delight and warm celebrations and festivities.

---

## Virginia Lee Burton

Burton's books were initially written to entertain her two sons, and her philosophy was that children's books ought to be first and foremost loved by children. She draws heavily on the theme of the passing of time and inevitable changes that occur, but always looking back to the lifestyle of yesteryear.

***Mike Mulligan and his steam shovel***

A heart-warming story about a steam shovel and her driver who find themselves out of work when newer electric and diesel shovels come on the scene, and the story of how they overcome that obstacle.

***The Little House***

There aren't too many books where the main character is a house! This book chronicles the life story of a house who lived in the country but dreamed of living in the city.

***Katy and the Big Snow***

The story of Katy, a red crawler tractor, who saves the town when a big snowfall comes.

***Maybelle the Cable Car***

Set in San Francisco and based on truth, this story tells of the fight to save the cable cars of San Francisco and is told through the eyes of a cable car called Maybelle.

---

## Marjorie Flack and Kurt Wiese

***The Story about Ping***

A charming tale of a duck who lives with his family on a boat on the Yangtze River and the adventure he has when he doesn't return to his boat one night.

---

## Barbara Cooney

***Miss Rumphius***

The beautifully told and illustrated story of a woman who used her energies to make the landscape around her more beautiful.

***Eleanor***

Based on the life of Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D Roosevelt and First Lady of the U.S.A. A beautiful book exploring the somewhat sad and lonely life this girl experienced and the events and people that were instrumental in shaping her into the compassionate woman she would become.

***Island Boy***

Set in New England, this is the fictional story of a family dedicated to their home and land and how it passes through the hands of several generations. A tribute to a quieter era and lifestyle.

***Emily.*** Illustrated by **Michael Bedard**

Based on the life of the reclusive American poet Emily Dickinson, who was born in 1830 and died in 1886, this story imagines the visit of a little girl to see her and an exchange of gifts that occurred. A lovely, contemplative book.

---

## Patricia Polacco

Patricia Polacco draws on real life events, family culture and values and sometimes more difficult themes for her books. Her books can be a powerful gateway to having meaningful discussions with your child about various issues, such as disease, slavery, and different cultures. Each book needs to be assessed on its own merits.

***The Junkyard Wonders***

Based on the author's own experience, this story of a group of children, all social 'misfits', can inspire compassion in a child to be kind to those who are different to themselves, and encourage someone who

feels like a 'misfit' that with endeavour and energy, they can achieve remarkable things.

***When Lightning Comes in a Jar***

A story about family, the traditions at a family reunion, and the way they are passed on with love and warmth through the generations.

***The Lemonade Club***

A very moving story about a special teacher and her class and the tragedy that strikes their classroom in the form of cancer. More appropriate for reading to older children. This book is based on a true story.

***Just Plain Fancy***

Set in an Amish community, this is an interesting peek into their life and culture. A young Amish girl who looks after chickens finds herself raising another special bird but is worried when she finds out her fancy chick may not be welcome in her plain, simple community.

***Mrs Katz and Tush***

A sweet friendship between a young black boy and his neighbour, an old Jewish lady, and the lady's cat, Tush. Larnel, the boy, learns about the connections between his neighbour's Jewish history and his own history as a black American.

***The Bee Tree***

A small girl, tired of reading, is taught a memorable lesson about learning by her grandfather when he takes her on a hunt to find some honeycomb in a bee tree.

***Thunder cake***

Perfect for children who are afraid of storms, this story is about the wisdom of a grandmother in helping her grandchild not only overcome her fear but realise she has acted courageously.

***Babushka's Doll***

A girl named Natasha learns a very important lesson when her grandmother's doll comes to life and makes the same demands on her as she has just made on her own grandmother.

***January's Sparrow***

This picture book is the intense and emotional true story of the Crosswhite family and their friend, January Drumm. The trauma and hardship this African-American family go through as they escape slavery in the South is indeed moving, and the courage their new community show to protect them as the story unfolds is inspiring. A very important glimpse into the history of slavery in America, but more appropriate for older children.

## Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson

***The Story of Ferdinand***

Set amidst the Spanish tradition of bullfighting comes this delightful tale of a little bull called Ferdinand who prefers sitting quietly and smelling flowers than anything else. Both the story and pictures are charming.

---

## Robyn Belton

***Herbert — the Brave Sea Dog***

The true story of a terrier who fell overboard from a fishing boat near Nelson, New Zealand, and amazingly survived thirty hours at sea before being found by his thankful owner, twelve-year old Tim.

---

## Tessa Duder

***Carpet of Dreams.*** Illustrated by **Mark Wilson**

A unique book about a little girl, Sara, who is staying with her Turkish grandmother and discovers an old Turkish rug in the attic. Through a series of dream-like adventures and conversations with her grandmother, Sara learns all about the animals depicted on the rug, and at the conclusion of the book, the maker of the rug is finally revealed.

---

## Lynne Cox

***Elizabeth, Queen of the Seas.*** Illustrated by **Brian Floca**

This is the charming true story of an elephant seal who preferred the Avon River in Christchurch, New Zealand, to anywhere else, and how she kept coming back, despite efforts to move her.

---

## Gloria Whelan

***Yatandou.*** Illustrated by **Peter Sylvada**

Set in Mali, the daily grind of an eight-year-old African girl, named Yatandou, who spends her day pounding millet for three hours, and helping to fetch water and sticks to make a fire, is transformed by the arrival of a machine that automatically grinds millet. The prospect of an education, and learning how to read and write is opened up for this young girl. Likewise the reality of how other people live will open up your child's eyes to their own ease of lifestyle in comparison. The way the story is written is poetic and the illustrations evoke the heat and haze of Africa.

**Note:** the story does mention evil spirits a couple of times, as per cultural and religious belief in that country, so this may need to be explained.

## Beatrix Potter

It all began with a picture letter that Beatrix Potter sent a small boy, which became the famous *'The Tale of Peter Rabbit'*. Every child should be familiar with these simple, beautifully illustrated stories. Inspired by her own pet rabbits and animals around the farms in England that she purchased, Beatrix Potter has written a beautiful collection of timeless tales.

***The Tale of Peter Rabbit***

***The Tale of Benjamin Bunny***

***The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies***

***The Tale of Mr Tod***

***The Tale of a Fierce Bad Rabbit***

***The Tale of Tom Kitten***

***The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck***

***The Tale of Samuel Whiskers***

***The Tale of the Pie and the Patty-Pan***

***The Tale of Ginger and Pickles***

**Related:** ***Beatrix Potter: A Journal***

Containing diary entries, photographs and original sketches, this book details the events of Beatrix Potter's life story and the successful career she created from writing and illustrating books.

## Arthur S Maxwell

***Uncle Arthur's Best Stories***

Each story in these books is centered around a lesson that children can glean, such as kindness to animals, thoroughness, persistence, and truthfulness. In addition, many stories are either based on real events or historical characters.

## Dianne Hofmeyr

***The Faraway Island.*** Illustrated by **Jude Daly**

Based on the story of Fernando Lopez and the island of St Helena, this is the tale of how one man cultivated a bare island into a lush garden and in the process thereof found happiness.

## Paul Geraghty

***The Hunter***

A richly-illustrated story of a young African girl who gets lost in the African bush and then finds a young elephant who has lost his mother to hunters and become separated from his herd. The story comes to a satisfying conclusion for both characters.

---

## Eileen Browne

***Handa's Surprise.*** Illustrated by **Michael Rosen**

This is a simple story, great for reading to younger children. It is a book where the illustrations humorously tell a different story to the text so that Handa (the main character) is more surprised at the end of the story that the reader!

---

## Sam McBratney

***Guess how much I love you.*** Illustrated by **Anita Jeram**

This book brought tears to my eyes the first time I read it, as it perfectly captures the deep and total love of a parent for their child. Children will enjoy this book, but only a parent can truly understand it.

***Just You and Me***

Another warm, cozy story of a Little Goose and Big Gander Goose who looks after her. Highlighting the specialness of the parent-child relationship

***You're all my favourites***

Another well-constructed tale affirming for children that parents love all of their children equally for who they are and do not have favourites.

---

## Joy Watson and Wendy Hodder

These books are fun to read and poke gentle fun at the quirks and traits of life when one is older. Entertaining and amusing for all generations.

***Grandpa's Cardigan***

***Grandpa's Shed***

***Grandpa's Shorts***

***Grandpa's Slippers***

***Grandpa's Cat***

---

## Edward Ardizzone

***Diana and her rhinoceros***

***Paul, the Hero of the Fire***

***Sarah and Simon and no red paint***

***Little Tim series***

The artwork in these books is unique and instantly recognizable. The *Little Tim* series in particular will appeal to boys, and values such as courage and persistence are upheld.

---

## John Patience

***My Fern Hollow Bedtime Book***

***Adventures in Fern Hollow***

These colourful books tell of the adventures and happenings in Fern Hollow, home to different neighbouring animals. There are sports days, parties, and all sorts of village happenings. Bound to charm and entertain.

---

## Eloise Wilkin

***Eloise Wilkin Stories***

***A Golden Book Collection***

Eloise Wilkin was one of the illustrators for the *Little Golden* Books. Her artwork with its chubby babies, cozy homely scenes, and idyllic depictions of nature is a real treat. These nine stories are warm and nostalgic and perfect for sharing with young children.

## Katherine Holabird and Helen Craig

***Angelina Ballerina***

***Angelina and Alice***

***Angelina Ice Skates***

***Angelina at the palace***

***Angelina and Henry***

***Angelina and the princess***

***Angelina at the Fair***

***Angelina's Birthday***

***Angelina's Baby Sister***

Girls love these books about a small mouse who adores ballet and who lives in Mousetown with her parents and sister. They are beautifully illustrated and uphold virtues of kindness, hard work and friendship.

---

## Don Freeman

***Corduroy***

A classic tale of how a bear in a department store finds an owner and a new home. A beautiful story of discovery and belonging, and the adventures the bear goes through on the way to the satisfying conclusion.

---

## Val Biro

***The Adventures of Gumdrop***

If you or your child is enthralled by the prospect of a story about the adventures of an Austin Clifton Heavy Twelve-Four, made in 1926, named 'Gumdrop', then this delightful story is for you. Charmingly illustrated, and set in a quaint English village, this is sure to be a favourite with boys.

---

## Benedict Blathwayt

***Adventures of the Little Red Train***

***Little Red Train to the Rescue***

***The Runaway Train***

***Faster, Faster Little Red Train***

***Green Light for the Little Red Train***

***The Great Big Little Red Train***

The Little Red Train and his driver Duffy experience many adventures bound to delight boys.

---

## Allen Say

***Grandfather's Journey*** (Winner of the Caldecott Medal)

Written by his grandson, this is the moving story of a man who emigrates from Japan to America and back again, and how history repeats itself in the actions and emotions of his grandson. The watercolour pictures are remarkable and the story is told with great simplicity and directness.

---

## Jean Craighead George

***The first Thanksgiving.*** Illustrated by **Thomas Locker**

This book gives in just a few short pages a very good overview of the coming of the Mayflower to America in 1620, the difficulties that followed, the advice and help they received from the Native American,

Squanto and the harvest feast of celebration and thanksgiving that followed. The book begins with some evolutionary assumptions, but the bulk of the story is based in history.

## Lauren Mills

***The Rag Coat***

Inspired by Appalachian culture, this story tells the tale of a young girl who is finally able to go to school due to the love of some mothers who make her a coat out of rags to keep her warm. The reaction of the other children and the lesson they learn is touching.

## Joy Cowley

***Tarore and Her Book.*** Illustrated by **Mary Glover Bibby**

This is an unusual book in that the story is written by a current author, but the paintings used to illustrate the story were done one hundred years ago by a woman who used them to tell her Sunday school scholars the true story of a twelve-year-old girl named Tarore! The true story of how the spread of Christianity amongst the Maori in New Zealand gradually brought about peace.

## Marjorie Priceman

***How to make an Apple Pie and see the World***

You will feel very grateful for the ease of locating cooking ingredients after reading this book to your child. A light-hearted and amusing journey around the world to source ingredients for an apple pie. And while your children are enjoying the story, they are learning geography without even realising it!

## Richard Scarry

Join Huckle and Lowly Worm in the crazy world of Richard Scarry. Full of quirky animals, vegetable vehicles and impossible scenarios, these books are a visual feast for the eyes. A great choice to keep your young child occupied during the meeting too!

***Please and thank you book***

***What Do People Do All Day?***

***Cars And Trucks And Things That Go***

## Alice and Martin Provensen

***The Glorious Flight Across the Channel with Louis Bleriot*** (Winner of the Caldecott Medal)

On July 25, 1909, Louis Bleriot was the first man to fly across the English Channel. See the bare facts of history come to life as Bleriot, known as 'Papa Bleriot' in the book experiences and overcomes multiple failures on his way to victory. The style of writing is quaint and witty and the story is accompanied by illustrations which conjure up the era of the early 1900s.

---

## William J Bennett

***The Children's Book of Virtues.*** Illustrated by **Michael Hague**

A companion to *The Book of Virtues*, this picture book contains many stories, fairy tales, poems and fables to teach children virtues such as perseverance, kindness, courage, honesty and responsibility. A lovely addition to a home library.

---

## Masako Matsuno

***A pair of red clogs.*** Illustrated by **Kazue Mizumura**

Enter the culture of Japan with this sweet story of a little Japanese girl, her red clogs and the lesson she learns from being a little deceitful. By the simple reading of a story such as this, we can teach our children the value of honesty.

---

## Jan Andrews

***Very Last First Time.*** Illustrated by **Ian Wallace**

Did you know that it was possible to walk along the sea bed without diving equipment? I certainly didn't. A fascinated glimpse into Inuit culture and how, during winter, they walk on the bottom of the frozen sea to collect mussels. A simple story, well-told and illustrated.

---

## William Steig

***Brave Irene***

The story of a courageous daughter who faces the elements to bring her mother's sewing to a rich client as her mother is ill. Although the journey does not go as planned, Irene shows bravery and persistence and is a credit to her mother.

---

# Picture books about nature

## Barbara Bash

***Tree of Life — the World of the African Baobab***

A beautiful pictorial depiction of the African Baobab tree and how many creatures depend upon it for survival.

---

## Cheryl Bardoe

***Gregor Mendel — the Friar who grew peas.*** Illustrated by **Jos.A. Smith**

The fascinating true story of the man who discovered via his own experiments with pea plants, how traits are passed from one generation to the next. Excellent for older children who are interested in science and nature.

---

## Lynne Cherry

***The Great Kapok Tree — A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest***

A man who enters the rainforest to chop down a Kapok Tree falls asleep in the forest and is visited by many different creatures who try to convince him not to destroy their habitat. Beautiful and educational.

---

## Gerda Muller

***A Year Around the Great Oak***

Two children, Benjamin and Anna, love visiting their cousin Robin who lives with his father and mother on the edge of a forest. They visit in autumn, winter, spring, and summer, where they spend time in the woods around a large oak tree observing the wildlife that visit and marvelling at the age and changes they see in the tree each season. This book has beautiful pictures and is a great introduction to the seasonal changes in trees and all the animals that depend on them.

***A New Year in Our New Garden***

Benjamin and Anna move into a new house in town and discover the pleasures that come with growing their own plants. Together with their neighbour, Louis, the seasonal changes in the garden are enjoyed. Let this book inspire your own children to get out and get planting.

---

## Signe Aspelin

***Tales of the Mushroom Folk***

A charming book, first published in Swedish in 1909. Through the book, we visit a number of different mushroom 'families', such as the proud Button Mushrooms, the Fly Agaric Toadstools who paint their houses red, and the big smelly Stinkhorn — avoided by all the other mushrooms! Quaint, highly original, and your children will be learning about mushrooms while thinking they are just enjoying a story!

---

## Laura Krebs

***The Beeman.*** Illustrated by **Valeria Cis**

A simple rhyming story about a boy whose grandfather is a Beeman. The world of the honeybee is opened up in this story, and the book also contains really interesting information about bees and beekeeping at the back.

---

# Poetry picture books

***A child's Book of Poems.*** Illustrated by **Gyo Fujikama**

A collection of favourite children's poetry, with the works of well-loved poets such as Robert Louis Stevenson, Christina Rossetti, and Emily Dickinson.

***A Child's Garden of Verses***

The classic treasury of poems by Scottish poet **Robert Louis Stevenson**. Stevenson leads children into the world of beautiful language, and the collection of poems is illustrated by notable illustrators of the late 19th and 20th centuries, giving the book a beautiful, old-fashioned appeal

---

# Picture books for a purpose

## Jennie Bishop

***The Prince and the Kiss***

Tastefully and beautifully done, this story is about the value of purity, and saving oneself for marriage. A powerful and important book, and a great springboard for further discussion with children and young adults on the matter of purity.

## Sandy Kleven

***The Right Touch.*** Illustrated by **Jody Bergsma**

Winner of the Benjamin Franklin award, this book carefully and appropriately addresses the issue of child sexual abuse. With quaint drawings and a gentle storyline, this book shows children the differences between positive touches and those that are not okay. It gives children guidelines on how to listen to their 'gut feelings', how to resist any inappropriate touching, and affirms that all such behaviour is not the child's fault. An important book to read and discussion to have.