

On the power of words

Words and language are critical shapers of a child's future. Dana Suskind, a surgeon who does cochlear implants, has found that, among her patients, "The kids who . . . struggled to develop language often did so because their parents didn't talk to them as much as their growing brains required." She references a study by Betty Hart and Todd Risley "of children between 0 and 3 years old from all socioeconomic backgrounds. . . . [T]hey found, [that] by the end of age 3, children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds will have heard 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers. . . . The most stark findings of Hart and Risley were really the differences in affirmations versus prohibitions. . . . Not only does that impact children's language development, but it can often be related to toxic stress, which impacts children's ability to learn, as well as their own view of themselves. . . ."²

Empowering God's children

Your church or PWP can help children develop healthy minds and spirits (and equal footing) through words, books and reading. Plan one activity or a week of activities! Focusing on children's literacy is one way we can fulfill our call to serve "the least of these" and witness to God's love. Here are a few ideas.

- Start an after-school program that helps children with homework or improves their reading skills.
- Partner with another church to make a community impact for kids.
- Hold a book drive and set up a "lending" library.
- Donate books to children who don't have books at home.
- Talk to children and listen, *really* listen, to them.
- Share your stories of successful outreach in the area of children's literacy/education. Email PW staff at yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org.

Resources

- Visit www.presbyterianwomen.org for additional suggestions, a reading list and a copy of this bulletin insert. Email yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org with questions/suggestions.
- Download the free Educate a Child toolkit from www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/child/toolkit. Email ginna.bairby@pcusa.org with questions/suggestions.
- See the July/August 2015 (page 47) issue of *Horizons* magazine and visit www.pcusa.org/globalpoverty for more information on the Educate a Child initiative.
- Learn about Children's Book Week at www.bookweekonline.com.
- See Teaching for Change (www.teachingforchange.org) and We Need Diverse Books (<http://weneeddiversebooks.org>).

Notes

1. Also see "Working to Alleviate Poverty Through Education in Democratic Republic of Congo" at www.pcusa.org/blogs/global-poverty/2015/10/30/democratic-republic-of-congo/
2. Cory Turner, National Public Radio report, September 14, 2015.

*Gracious and loving God, may our words
to your children further your kingdom on earth.*



Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA)

Together in Action for children's literacy



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The development of adequate language is critical in allowing every child to reach his or her potential.

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.'"

—Matthew 19:4

Literacy as a justice issue

Last fall, Presbyterian Women's Churchwide Coordinating Team pledged to make children's education a focus of PW's work during the 2015–2018 triennium. Children's nurture and well-being have always been concerns of Presbyterian Women, but they are more so now, since the PC(USA) launched its global campaign in 2015 to strengthen quality education for a million children by 2020. (Learn more about the Educate a Child initiative in the July/August 2015 issue of *Horizons* magazine or at www.pcusa.org/globalpoverty.)¹

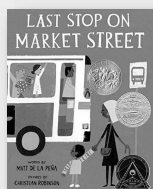
What began as a PC(USA) program aimed at eliminating poverty through educating children is, for PW, becoming even more. PW is taking the challenge of children's education a step further by addressing children's literacy as a justice issue. Because many peace and justice issues—poverty, discrimination, abuse, violence, exploitation, marginalization, imprisonment, unequal access to opportunity—are related to lack of education, PW urges each congregation to seek to empower children through literacy.

Presbyterian Women Children's Reading List

This reading list is meant to serve as a resource for groups taking action to enhance children's literacy. It is a compilation of recommendations by Churchwide Coordinating Team members and PW staff. It is by no means comprehensive, but is meant as a starting point. Age ranges are shown in parentheses.

Caldecott Award winners (a sampling)

- *The Biggest Bear* by Lynd Ward (4-7)
- *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (9-12)
- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams (4-8)
- *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin (4-8)
- *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (4-7)
- *John Henry* by Julius Lester, ill. by Jerry Pinkney (4-8)
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, ill. by Christian Robinson (3-5)
- *Olivia* by Ian Falconer (3-7)
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (2+)
- *Strega Nona* by Tomie dePaola (3-8)



Building character

- *A Is for Activist* by Innosanto Nagara (3-7)
- *The Berenstain Bears Show Some Respect* by Jan and Stan Berenstain (4-8)
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (1-8)
- *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, ill. by LeUyen Pham (4+)
- *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss (5-9)
- *Howard B. Wigglesbottom Learns to Listen* by Howard Binkow and Susan Cornelison (2-5)
- *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper, ill. by George Hauman (3-7)
- *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt, ill. by Vin Vogel (4-8)
- *My Mouth Is a Volcano* by Julia Cook, ill. by Carrie Hartman (5-8)
- *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister, ill. by J. Allison James (3-10)
- *¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can!* by Diana Cohn, ill. by Francisco Delgado (5-7)
- *Teamwork* by Ann Morris (5+)
- *Under the Lemon Moon* by Edith Hope Fine, ill. by René King Moreno (6-8)
- *The Velveteen Rabbit* by M. Williams (3-7)
- *Voices Are Not for Yelling* and others by Martine Agassi and Marieka Heinlen (1-4)
- *We Are All Born Free* by Amnesty International (6+)
- *Why War Is Never a Good Idea* by Alice Walker, ill. by Stefano Vitale (4-8)



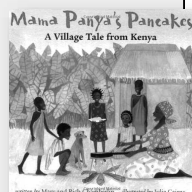
Classics of children's literature (a few)

- *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, ill. by Garth Williams (8-12)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis (8+)
- *Henry Huggins* by Beverly Cleary (8-10)
- *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell (10-14)
- *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (10-13)
- *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf, ill. by Robert Lawson (3-5)
- *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and others by Beatrix Potter (3-7)
- *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams, ill. by William Nicholson (3-7)
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1-3)
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein (6-8)
- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (4-8)



Families

- *The Berenstain Bears and the Trouble with Chores* by Jan and Stan Berenstain (4-8)
- *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (9-12)
- *Families, Families, Families!* by Suzanne Lang (3-7)
- *Feast for 10* by Cathryn Falwell (4-7)
- *Full, Full, Full of Love* by Trish Cooke, ill. by Paul Howard (2-5)
- *Gaston* by Kelly DiPucchio, ill. by Christian Robinson (4-8)
- *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Ros Asquith (5-8)
- *Heart Picked: Elizabeth's Adoption Tale* by Sara Crutcher (4-8)
- *Let's Go See Papá!* by Lawrence Schimel, ill. by Alba Marina Rivera (9-12)
- *Lola Loves Stories* by Anna McQuinn, ill. by Rosalind Beardshaw (2-5)
- *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, ill. by Sheila McGraw (4+)
- *Mama Panya's Pancakes* by Mary Chamberlin (4+)
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia (8-12)



Presbyterian Women Children's Reading List

Folk tales

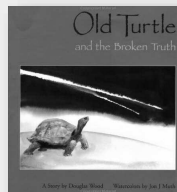
- *Beaver Steals Fire: A Salish Coyote Story* by Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, ill. by Sam Sandoval (4-7)
- *The Empty Pot; The Foolish, Timid Rabbit* and others in the Fairy Tales from Around the World series by Charlotte Guillain and Steve Dorado (4-8)
- *John Henry* by Julius Lester, ill. by Jerry Pinkney (4-8)
- *Mama Panya's Pancakes* by Mary Chamberlin (4+)
- *María Had a Little Llama/María Tenía Una Llamita* by Angela Dominguez (4-7)

For younger children

- *The Bear Ate Your Sandwich* by Julia Sarcone Roach (3-7)
- *Bob Books* (beginning readers) by Bobby Lynn Maslen (4-6)
- *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina (2-3)
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*—Bill Martin, Jr. John Archambault and Lois Ehler (1-4)
- *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Loeb (4-8)
- *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae, ill. by Guy Parker-Rees (4+)
- *Girl of Mine* by Jabari Asim, ill. by LeUyen Pham (1-3)
- *Global Babies* by The Global Fund for Children (baby-3)
- *Good Dog Carl* by Alexandra Day (1-4)
- *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann (1-3)
- *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney, ill. by Anita Jeram (2-3)
- *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff, ill. by Felicia Bond (4-8)
- *The King, the Mice and the Cheese* by Nancy and Eric Gurney (3-7)
- *Lola at the Library* by Anna McQuinn, ill. by Rosalind Beardshaw (2-5)
- *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt, ill. by Vin Vogel (4-8)
- *Olivia* by Ian Falconer (3-7)
- *Peekaboo Morning* by Rachel Isadora (3+)
- *Peek-a Who?* by Nina Laden (1-3)
- *Please, Baby, Please!* by Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee, ill. by Kadir Nelson (2-8)



- *Rain Feet* by Angela Johnson (3-5)
- *Say Hello!* by Rachel Isadora (3-5)
- *The SheepOver* by Jennifer and John Churchman (3-6)
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (2+)
- *Thunder Rose* by Jerdine Nolan (4-7)
- *Whistle for Willie* by Ezra Jack Keats (2+)
- *Who Loves You, Baby?* by Nina Laden (2-4)
- *Whose Toes Are Those?* by Jabari Asim, ill. by LeUyen Pham (1-3)

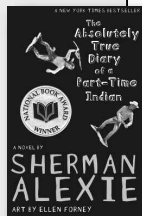


God's creation

- *Aani & the Tree Huggers* by Jeannine Atkins, ill. by Venantius J. Pinto (6+)
- *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema (5-8)
- *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* by Kadir Nelson Sam Snead (4-8)
- *In the Canyon* by Liz G. Scanlon (4-8)
- *Old Turtle* by Douglass Wood (6-9)
- *Old Turtle and the Broken Truth* by Douglass Wood (4-8)
- *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* by Miranda Paul, ill. by Elizabeth Zunon (6-9)

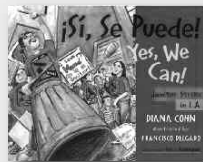
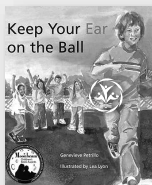
God's diverse people

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, ill. by Ellen Forney (12-17)
- *Abuela's Weave* by Omar S. Castaneda, ill. by Sanchez (6-9)
- *All the Colors of the Earth* by Sheila Hamanaka (4-8)
- *The Amazing Erik* by Mike Huber, ill. by Joseph Cowman (3-6)
- *Around Our Way on Neighbors' Day* by Tameka Fryer Brown (5-7)
- *Crane Boy* by Diana Cohn, ill. by Youme Landowne (8-10)
- *The Flag of Childhood: Poems from the Middle East* by Naomi Shihab Nye (8-12)
- *Global Babies* (and others) by The Global Fund for Children (baby-3)
- *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, ill. by LeUyen Pham (4+)
- *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (4-7)
- *Habibi* by Naomi Shihab Nye (12+)
- *Happy* by Pharrell Williams (3-7)



Presbyterian Women Children's Reading List

- *Home* by Carson Ellis (4–8)
- *I Am Jazz* by J. Herthel and J. Jennings (4–8)
- *Keep Your Ear on the Ball* by Genevieve Petrillo, ill. by Lea Lyon (8–12)
- *Malcolm Little* by Ilyasah Shabazz (6–10)
- *Maria Had a Little Llama/María Tenía Una Llamita* by Angela Dominguez (4–7)
- *Mixed Me!* by Taye Diggs, ill. by Shane W. Evans (4–8)
- *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* by C. Baldacchino, I. Malenfant (4–7)
- *My Name Is Not Isabella* by Jennifer Fosberry and M. Litwin (4–8)
- *One Million Men and Me* by Kelly Starling Lyons (3–5)
- *The Paper Bag Princess* by R. N. Munsch and M. Martchenko (4–7)
- *Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw (4–7)
- *Say Hello!* by Rachel Isadora (3–5)
- *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children* by Sandra L. Pinkney (2–3)
- *Shades of People* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly (3–6)
- *¡Sí, Se Puede! Yes, We Can!* by Diana Cohn, ill. by Francisco Delgado (5–7)
- *Sifti's Secrets* by Naomi Shihab Nye, ill. by Nancy Carpenter (5–8)
- *Sylvia & Aki* by Wini-fred Conkling (9–12)
- *Two Eyes, a Nose and a Mouth* by Roberta Grobel Intrater
- *Walking on Earth & Touching the Sky: Poetry and Prose by Lakota Youth . . .* edited by Timothy P. McLaughlin, ill. by S. D. Nelson (8–12)
- *We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers* by Julie Flett (3–6)

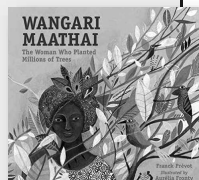


- *The Magician's Hat* by Malcolm Mitchell, ill. by Dennis Campay (4–8)
- *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires (3–7)
- *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster (8–12)
- *The Stinky Cheese Man* by Jon Scieszka, ill. by Lane Smith (3–7)
- *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein (6–8)
- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (4–8)
- *What Do You Do With an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada, ill. by Mae Besom (5–8)
- *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai (5–8)



Inspiring

- *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (12+)
- *Dreams of Freedom* by Amnesty International (4–8)
- *Every Little Thing* by Cedella Marley, ill. by Vanessa Newton (3–6)
- *I Am Amelia Earhart; I Am Abraham Lincoln; I Am Helen Keller; I Am Albert Einstein; I Am Martin Luther King, Jr.; I Am Jane Goodall and others* by Brad Meltzer and Christopher Eliopoulos (5–8)
- *Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* abridged by Chris Van Wyk, ill. by Paddy Bouma (7–11)
- *One Love* by Cedella Marley, ill. by Vanessa Newton (3–6)
- *Rad American Women A-Z: Rebels, Trailblazers, and Visionaries Who Shaped Our History . . . and Our Future!* by Kate Schatz, ill. by Miriam Klein Stahl (8–16)
- *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni, ill. by Bryan Collier
- *The Streets Are Free* by Kurusa, ill. by Monika Doppert (7–8)
- *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer* by Carole Boston Weatherford, ill. by Ekua Holmes (9–12)
- *Wangari Maathai* by Franck Prevot, ill. by Aurélie Fronty (6–9)
- *What Color Is My World?* by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (8–12)
- *Wind Flyers* by Angela Johnson, illustrated by Loren Long (5–9)



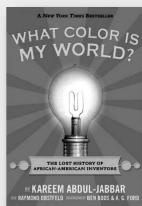
Good for the imagination

- *Christina Katerina and the Box* by Patricia Lee Gauch (4–8)
- *Dare to Care: Pet Dragon* by M. P. Robertson and Sallie Symes (6–9)
- Dr. Seuss books
- *From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E. L. Konigsburg (8–12)

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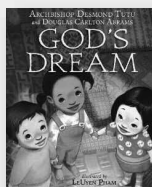
Newberry Award winners (a sampling)

- *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, ill. by Garth Williams (8–12)
- *The Dark Frigate* by Charles Boardman Hawes (11–15)
- *The Family Under the Bridge* by Natalie Savage Carlson, ill. by Garth Williams (8–12)
- *Moon Over Manifest* by Clare Vanderpool (8–12)
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (10–12)
- *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia (8–12)
- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (10–14)



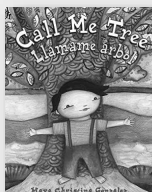
Nurturing faith

- *The Blessing Seed* by Caitlin Matthews, ill. by Alison Dexter (4+)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis (8+)
- *God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, ill. by LeUyen Pham (4+)
- *A Little Jar of Oil* and others in the *God Loves Me Storybooks* series by Patricia Nederveld, ill. by Lisa Workman (8+)
- *Only a Star* by Margery Facklam, ill. by Nancy Carpenter (3+)
- *The Rhyme Bible Storybook* by L. J. Sattgast, ill. by Laurence Cleyet-Merle (4–8)
- *Shanti Means Peace* by Anna Bedford (5–8)

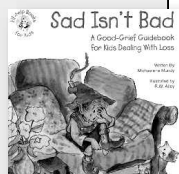


Nurturing self-image

- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Caroline Binch (4–8)
- *Bright Eyes, Brown Skin* by Cheryl Willis Hudson, ill. by George Ford (6–9)
- *Call Me Tree* by Maya C. Gonzalez (4–7)
- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney (8–12)
- *Do Princesses Wear Hiking Boots?* by Carmela L. Coyle, ill. by Mike Gordon (3–7)
- *Firebird* by Misty Copeland (5–8)
- *First Day in Grapes* by L. King Perez, ill. by Robert Casilla (6–11)



- *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud, ill. by David Messing (4–7)
- *I Love My Hair* by Natasha A. Tarpley, ill. by E. B. Lewis
- *Jacky Ha Ha* by James Patterson, ill. by Chris Grabenstein (9–12)
- *My Mouth Is a Volcano* by Julia Cook, ill. by Carrie Hartman (5–8)
- *Rosie Revere, Engineer*; *Iggy Pect, Architect*; *Ada Twist Scientist*—all by Andrew Beatty and David Roberts
- *Sad Isn't Bad* by Michaelene Mundy, ill. by R. W. Alley (4–8)
- *Shades of People* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila Kelly (3–6)
- *Something More Special* by Judith Gupton Wiley
- *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli (12+)
- *The Things You Will Be* by Dr. Seuss
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, ill. by Christian Robinson (3–5)
- *Who Says Women Can't Be Doctors? The Story of Elizabeth Blackwell* by T. L. Stone and M. Priceman (5–8)
- *The Wonderful Things You Will Be!* by Emily Winfield Martin (3–7)



Sources/Resources

- "100 Children's Books To Read in a Lifetime"—www.amazon.com
- *Babies Need Words Every Day*—www.ala.org/alsc/babiesneedwords
- *Children's Book Week*—www.bookweekonline.com
- *Children's Books that Nurture the Spirit: Choosing and Using the Best* by Louise Margaret Granahan
- *Every Child Ready To Read*—www.everychildreadytoread.org
- *On bias*—www.tfcbooks.org/guide-anti-bias-childrens-books
- *The Read-Aloud Handbook: Seventh Edition* by Jim Trelease
- Scholastic—www.scholastic.com/worldofpossible
- *Teaching for Change*—www.teachingforchange.org
- *We Need Diverse Books*—<http://weneeddiversebooks.org>

