



CREATIVE PARENTING

The Christian perspective for a happier, healthier home life

The World Is an Open Book

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My great grandmother's name was Rosamund, and she looked much like the picture of the lady at the See's Candy store. Inside the front cover of each book she ever gave me, she wrote my name, the date I received it, and signed her name. As a child I just knew that books came that way, and I liked it. As an adult, I realize that even more special than the books she gave me, it was the love of books she passed on to me. She subtly let me know the importance of books by writing in each of them for me, and she taught me to treasure and love my books through her own modeling!

Great grandma also read to me. She bought me books that had too many words for me to read, but I knew I would hear the stories from her. At the time, I had no idea how important her reading aloud was to me. Now I do! Not only did I learn important things, I learned the pleasure of reading!

Reading aloud to children can help them to gain information and skills they need to succeed in school and all aspects of life. It helps them understand the difference between written language and every-day communication, learning the meaning of words and the world in which they live.

Here are some ideas to consider about the importance of reading:

- ☛ Make reading books an enjoyable experience. Choose a comfortable place where children can sit close to you. Help them feel safe and secure. Be enthusiastic about your reading.
- ☛ Read to your children frequently. Having regular times for reading adds to children's sense of security. Start or end the day with a book. If you read after a busy time of day, it generally helps children settle down. Read during bath time, while waiting for an appointment, riding in the car (if you don't get car sick), or after a meal.
- ☛ Help your children learn as you read. Explain words they may not know. Point out how the pictures in a book relate to the story. Talk about the character's actions and feelings.

- ☛ Help your children appreciate the artist as well as the author. Reading the author's name and referring to the artist's drawings not only expands their knowledge, it models an appreciation for both the author and the illustrator.
- ☛ Ask your children questions as you read. Help them connect the story with their own lives, or help them to compare the book with other books they have read.
- ☛ Encourage your children to talk about the book. Ask them about their favorite parts, and encourage them to tell the story in their own words.
- ☛ Read many kinds of books. Read books that are both similar and dissimilar to your children's own lives so they can learn about the world.
- ☛ Choose books to help you teach. That includes alphabet books, poetry and rhyming books, nature books, and certainly the books with the moral and spiritual lessons you want your children to incorporate into their lives.
- ☛ Reread favorite books. Children love to hear their favorite books over and over again. Hearing books read several times helps your children understand and notice new things and also gives them a sense of accomplishment and security.
- ☛ If your child is in school, become aware of the reading program that is part of the school's curriculum. There are several effective ways reading is taught, and it is helpful when parents grasp the concepts teachers are trying to teach children. Research reveals that after age nine, children have an extremely difficult time improving their reading abilities—another reason to spend time yourself teaching some of the basic reading skills.
- ☛ While it is important to partner with your children's teachers at school to foster reading, it is also important to read for enjoyment at home. Besides specifically reading to them, think about the model you are presenting. When you read the newspaper, devotional books, magazines, or general reading, share with your children some of what you are learning.
- ☛ Encourage your children to read the newspaper, food containers, street signs, the mail, etc. This helps them know reading is valuable and empowers them to feel confident and capable.

Many times parents stop reading to their children when their children can read on their own. We now know that children of all ages benefit when their parents read to them

In short, the world is an open book! I invite you to share it with your children.

