

Recommended Reading List Based on Virtues for Grades K-8

Introduction

The following list was created to help parents and teachers quickly find books, based on virtues and values, to read and enjoy with their children. The reading levels are listed as well as the virtues covered in each book. Please feel free to send titles of other books to me if you think the books would be good additions to the list. My hope is the list will continue to grow.

Please send additional book titles to beth.groene@icdschool.org.

Grades K-2

Different Just Like Me -- Lori Mitchell

While preparing for a visit to her grandmother, a young girl notices that, like the flowers in Grammie's garden, people who are different from one another also share similarities, and it's okay to like them all the same.

Level: 3.5

Virtue: Acceptance

Horton Hears A Who -- Dr. Seuess

A city of Whos on a speck of dust are threatened with destruction until the smallest Who of all helps convince Horton's friends that Whos really exist.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Loyalty, Friendship

A Sick Day For Amos McGee -- Philip C. Stead

Every day, Amos spends time with each of his friends at the zoo, running races with the tortoise, keeping the shy penguin company, and reading bedtime stories to the owl. But when Amos is too sick to make it to the zoo, his friends return the favor.

Level: 3.0

Virtue: Compassion, Friendship

Cookies: Bite Size Life Lessons -- Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Simple text and illustrations describe lessons in life as a young girl bakes cookies and learns cooperation, patience, pride, compassion, trust, and more.

Level: 3.1

Virtue: Many

Same, Same But Different -- Jenny Sue KostECKI-Shaw

Pen pals Elliott and Kailash discover that even though they live in different countries, they both love to climb trees, own pets, and ride school buses.

Level: 1.9

Virtue: Acceptance, Tolerance

The Invisible Boy -- Trudy Ludwig

Brian has always felt invisible at school, but when a new student, Justin, arrives, everything changes.

Level: 2.8

Virtue: Friendship, Kindness

The Teddy Bear -- David McPhail

A teddy bear, lost by the little boy who loves him, still feels loved after being rescued by a homeless man.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Kindness, Compassion

Doug-Dennis And The Flyaway Fib -- Darren Farrell

Having fibbed about stealing his best friend's popcorn at the circus, Doug-Dennis the sheep finds himself carried far away to a place filled with lies and liars of all sorts and must discover a way to return.

Level: 2.4

Virtue: Honesty

The Golden Rule -- Ilene Cooper

Grandpa explains that the Golden Rule is a simple statement about how to live that can be practiced by people of all ages and faiths and then helps his grandson figure out how to apply the rule to his own life.

Level: 2.7

Virtue: Kindness, Respect

Whoever You Are -- Mem Fox

Despite the differences between people around the world, there are similarities that join us together, such as pain, joy, and love.

Level: 3.2

Virtue: Tolerance, Community, Acceptance

Do Unto Otters -- Laurie Keller

Mr. Rabbit wonders if he will be able to get along with his new neighbors, who are otters, until he is reminded of the golden rule.

Level: 2.7

Virtue: Manners, Kindness

My Friend Fred -- Hiawyn Oram

Grace loves her best friend Fred, the family dog, but when she tries to keep Fred all to herself, she learns that the very best friends are the ones who share.

Level: 3.0

Virtue: Kindness, Friendship, Sharing

Kindness Is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler -- Margery Cuyler

Mrs. Ruler guides her students in discovering ways of being kind to their family members, community, and each other.

Level: 2.9

Virtue: Kindness, Community

Bear Feels Sick -- Karma Wilson

When Bear is too sick to play, his animal friends go to his cave to make him soup and tea and keep him company.

Level: 1.8

Virtue: Compassion, Friendship

Hey Little Ant -- Phillip M. Hoose & Hannah Hoose

This is a song in which an ant pleads with the kid who is tempted to squish it. The coauthor is Hannah Hoose.

Level: 2.5

Virtue: Value Life, Respect

The Kindness Quilt -- Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Minna does a lot of thinking about her kindness project, but she finally comes up with an idea that spreads to the whole school.

Level: 3.1

Virtue: Kindness, Community

Ava, The One And Only -- Karen Hill

Ava's classmate makes fun of her freckles, but her parents urge her to be kind and remember that she is just the way God wants her to be.

Level: 2.5

Virtue: Faith, Courage, Kindness

Ruthie And The (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie -- Laura Rankin

Ruthie loves tiny things, and when she finds a tiny camera on the playground, she is very happy, but after she lies and says the camera belongs to her, nothing seems to go right.

Level: 2.5

Virtue: Honesty

What If Everybody Did That? -- Ellen Javernick

A child learns that there are consequences for thoughtless behavior, from feeding popcorn to a bear at the zoo to dropping an empty can out of a car window.

Level: 2.5

Virtue: Responsibility

Peace Week In Miss Fox's Class -- Eileen Spinelli

For Peace Week, the animals in Miss Fox's class find ways to be peaceful instead of squabbling with each other.

Level: 2.4

Virtue: Peace

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns We Can All Get Along -- Howard Binkow

Howard B. Wigglebottom learns how to live in harmony with neighbors, friends, and family. The coauthor is Reverend Ana.

Level: 2.8

Virtue: Kindness, Community

The Rainbow Fish -- Marcus Pfister

The most beautiful fish in the entire ocean discovers the real value of personal beauty and friendship.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Generosity

Llama, Llama Time To Share -- Anna Dewdney

Llama Llama does not want to share his toys with his new neighbors, but when fighting leads to broken toys and tears, Llama learns that it is better to share.

Level: 1.5

Virtue: Kindness, Friendship

The Berenstain Bears Show Some Respect -- Jan Berenstain

Brother and Sister Bear are reminded of the importance of respecting their elders when they set out for a picnic with Mama, Papa, Gran, and Gramps.

Level: 2.9

Virtue: Respect

Ruth Tells The Truth -- Mark Heaton

Ruth breaks her brother's favorite cup but just can't bring herself to tell him the truth.

Level: 1.4

Virtue: Honesty

Finding The Golden Ruler -- Karen Hill

When John searches his house for the "golden ruler" that he had heard about in school, his mother explains what is meant by the Golden Rule.

Level: 2.6

Virtue: Kindness

Nugget & Fang -- Tammi Sauer

Everyone knows that minnows and sharks can't be friends. Can Nugget and Fang be different?

Level: 2.3

Virtue: Friendship

I Am Extremely Absolutely Boiling -- Lauren Child

Charlie and Lola's summer fun takes a nosedive when Lola refuses to talk to their neighbor, Arnold Wolf, after he dumps her ice-cream cone on the ground.

Level: 2.1

Virtue: Forgiveness

Arthur And The True Francine -- Marc Brown

Francine and Muffy are good friends until Muffy lets Francine take the blame for cheating on a test.

Level: 2.3

Virtue: Honesty

The Berenstain Bears And The Truth -- Stan Berenstain

Brother and Sister Bear learn how important it is to tell the truth after they accidentally break Mama's favorite lamp. The coauthor is Jan Berenstain.

Level: 3.6

Virtue: Honesty

The Giving Tree -- Shel Silverstein

An apple tree shares all it has with a boy from the time he is very young until he is very old.

Level: 2.6

Virtue: Generosity

A Big Fat Enormous Lie -- Marjorie Weinman Sharmot

A child's simple lie about not eating all the cookies in the jar grows to enormous proportions.

Level: 1.7

Virtue: Honesty

Grades 3-4

The Empty Pot -- Demi

When Ping admits that he is the only child in China unable to grow a flower from the seeds distributed by the Emperor, he is rewarded for his honesty.

Level: 3.8

Virtue: Honesty

Mr. Peabody's Apples -- Madonna

A boy learns a lesson about the destructive power of gossip.

Level: 3.8

Virtue: Honesty

Each Kindness -- Jacqueline Woodson

When Ms. Albert teaches a lesson on kindness, Chloe realizes she and her friends have been wrong by making fun of new student Maya and refusing to play with her.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Kindness

Melissa Parkington's Beautiful, Beautiful Hair -- Pat Brisson

Known for her lovely hair, Melissa wants to be seen as beautiful for something other than her appearance.

Level: 3.7

Virtue: Compassion, Kindness, Generosity

The Can Man -- Laura Willems

After watching a homeless man collect empty soft drink cans for the redemption money, a young boy decides to collect cans to earn money for a skateboard, until he has a change of heart.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Compassion

Sylvester And The Magic Pebble -- William Steig

In a moment of fright, Sylvester the donkey asks his magic pebble to turn him into a rock but then cannot hold the pebble to wish himself back to normal again.

Level: 4.0

Virtue: Gratitude

The Three Questions -- Jon Muth

Nikolai asks his animal friends to help him answer three important questions.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Kindness

Rules -- Cynthia Lord

Frustrated at life with an autistic brother, twelve-year-old Catherine longs for a normal existence, but her world is further complicated by a friendship with a teenage boy in a wheelchair.

Level: 3.9

Virtue: Perseverance, Compassion

Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch -- Eileen Spinelli

A secret admirer sends the unsmiling Mr. Hatch a valentine.

Level: 3.9

Virtue: Kindness

The Popcorn Dragon -- Jane Thayer

Though his hot breath is the envy of all the other animals, a young dragon learns that showing off does not make friends.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Humility

Uncle Willie And The Soup Kitchen -- DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

A boy spends the day with Uncle Willie in the soup kitchen where he works preparing and serving food for the hungry.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Compassion, Generosity

One Smile -- Cindy McKinley

When a child smiles at a stranger, she sets off a chain of kindness that eventually comes full circle.

Level: 3.7

Virtue: Kindness

Howard B. Wigglebottom And The Monkey On His Back -- Howard Binkow

Even though Howard's conscience told him lying was wrong, he chose to lie anyway. It was easy, and he got away with it most of the time, but he soon realizes that he feels sad and uncomfortable with himself.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Honesty

The Last Straw (A Christmas Story) -- Fredrick H. Thury

A prideful camel named Hoshmakaka learns the value of humility as he bears more and more gifts to the baby Jesus at Bethlehem.

Level: 3.2

Virtue: Humility

The House On Dirty-Third Street -- Jo S. Kittinger

A mother and daughter work to turn a hopeless, rundown, dirty old house into a loving family home with hard work, faith, and the support of their new friends and neighbors.

Level: 3.2

Virtue: Perseverance, Compassion

Spaghetti In A Hot Dog Bun: Having The Courage To Be Who You Are -- Maria Dismundy

Lucy decides to help Ralph when he is in trouble, despite the fact that he teases her for being different.

Level: 3.3

Virtue: Courage, Kindness

A Day's Work -- Eve Bunting

When Francisco, a young Mexican American boy, tries to help his grandfather find work, he discovers that even though the old man cannot speak English, he has something even more valuable to teach Francisco.

Level: 2.7

Virtue: Honesty

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Courage -- Howard Binkow

Howard B. Wigglebottom learns to overcome his fears with the help of family and friends.

Level: 3.7

Virtue: Courage

Sorry! -- Trudy Ludwig

When Jack makes friends with Charlie, a troublemaker, he learns the difference between an insincere apology and showing that you are truly sorry.

Level: 3.2

Virtue: Sincerity, Forgiveness

The Quiltmakers Gift -- Jeff Brumbeau & Gail de Marcken

When a generous quiltmaker finally agrees to make a quilt for a greedy king but only under certain conditions, she causes him to undergo a change of heart.

Level: 4.6

Virtue: Kindness, Generosity

Victory Vault -- Emma Carlson Berne

When Kayla messes up her vault at an important gymnastics meet, the judges don't see it, but her best friend Chandra does. When Chandra pressures her to tell the truth, Kayla has a decision to make.

Level: 3.9

Virtue: Honesty

The Story of Ruby Bridges -- Robert Coles

For months, six-year-old Ruby Bridges must confront the hostility of segregationists when she becomes the first African-American girl to integrate Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in 1960.

Level: 4.4

Virtue: Courage

Sarah, Plain And Tall -- Patricia MacLachlan

In this loving story of a motherless family, a tall, plain woman comes to stay with them.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Humility

The Little Engine That Could -- Watty Piper

The story of the little blue engine that thought she could pull the heavy train and did.

Level: 3.5

Virtue: Perseverance

Little Croc's Big Purse -- Lizzie Finlay

When Little Croc finds a purse filled with money, he returns it to its owner and is rewarded for his honesty.

Level: 3.4

Virtue: Honesty

Tattletale Tilly -- Joanna Weaver

A young girl learns that it is wrong to always focus on what others do wrong and with Jesus' help, she learns to see the good in family and friends.

Level: 3.2

Virtue: Forgiveness

Grades 5-6

Out Of My Mind -- Sharon Draper

Considered by many to be mentally retarded, a brilliant, impatient fifth-grader with cerebral palsy discovers a technological device that will allow her to speak for the first time.

Level: 4.3

Virtue: Compassion, Courage

Wonder -- R. J. Palacio

Ten-year-old Auggie, born with extreme facial abnormalities, goes from being homeschooled to entering fifth grade at a private middle school, where he endures taunts and bullying and struggles to be seen as just another student.

Level: 4.8

Virtue: Compassion, Endurance

The Hundred Dresses -- Eleanor Estes

In winning a medal she is no longer there to receive, a little Polish girl teaches her classmates a lesson.

Level: 5.4

Virtue: Compassion

Fish In A Tree -- Lynda Hunt

Ally's greatest fear is that everyone will find out she is dyslexic and doesn't know how to read.

Mr. Daniels sees the bright, creative kid underneath the troublemaker, and with his help, Ally learns she has nothing to be ashamed of.

Level: 3.7

Virtue: Perseverance

Half A Chance -- Cynthia Lord

Lucy, with her mother and her photographer father, has just moved to a small rural community in New Hampshire. With her friend Nate, she plans to spend the summer taking photos for a contest.

Level: 4.5

Virtue: Friendship, Family

A Handful Of Stars -- Cynthia Lord

Twelve-year-old Lily befriends Salma, a Hispanic girl whose family is in Maine for blueberry picking season, but as a local pageant approaches, the girls are confronted with the hard truths of prejudice and migrant life.

Level: 4.4

Virtue: Acceptance, Friendship

The Year The Swallows Came Early -- Kathryn Fitzmaurice

After her father is sent to jail, eleven-year-old Groovy Robinson must decide if she can forgive the failings of someone she loves.

Level: 4.8

Virtue: Forgiveness

Auggie & Me Three Wonder Stories -- R. J. Palacio

This short story, based on the novel WONDER, tells the story of Julian, showing why he treated Auggie the way he did and offering him a chance for redemption. First short story in the book AUGGIE & ME: THREE WONDER STORIES. Readers will get a peek at Auggie's life before Beecher Prep, with a new short story told entirely from the point of view of Christopher, Auggie's

oldest friend. Second short story in the book AUGGIE & ME: THREE WONDER STORIES.

Readers will learn about life as a fifth grader at Beecher Prep through the eyes of Charlotte, the girl who had been chosen to be Auggie's "welcome buddy." Third short story in the book AUGGIE & ME: THREE WONDER STORIES.

Level: 4.3, 4.2, 4.7

Virtue: Compassion, Understanding

Charlotte's Web -- E. B. White

In this endearing story, a little girl and Charlotte, a beautiful grey spider, struggle to save Wilbur the pig from being butchered.

Level: 4.4

Virtue: Friendship, Compassion

Faith, Hope, And Ivy June -- Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

During a student exchange program, seventh-graders Ivy June and Catherine share their lives, homes, and communities and find that although their lifestyles are total opposites, they have a lot in common.

Level: 5.8

Virtue: Friendship

Hatchet -- Gary Paulsen

After a plane crash, thirteen-year-old Brian spends 54 days in the wilderness, learning to survive initially with only the aid of a hatchet given to him by his mother, and learning also to survive his parents' divorce.

Level: 5.7

Virtue: Courage

The Angel Tree -- Daphne Benedis-Grab

Every Christmas in the small town of Pine River, a tree appears in the town square and people tie wishes to it, but nobody knows where the tree comes from. This year, four children are determined to solve the mystery of the Angel Tree.

Level: 5.7

Virtue: Compassion

My Secret Guide To Paris -- Lisa Schroeder

Feeling she has lost everything when her beloved grandmother passes away, twelve-year-old Nora embarks on a mysterious Parisian scavenger hunt organized by her late grandmother that helps her find healing and forgiveness.

Level: 4.3

Virtue: Kindness, Community, Forgiveness

The Junction of Sunshine And Lucky -- Holly Schindler

Auggie and her grandfather use found objects to transform the appearance of their home and, in the process, change a whole town's perceptions of beauty and art.

Level: 5.6

Virtue: Courage, Perseverance

Red Berries, White Clouds, Blue Sky -- Sandra Dallas

After Pearl Harbor is bombed by the Japanese, twelve-year-old Tomi and her Japanese American family are split up and forced to leave their California home to live in internment camps in New Mexico and Colorado.

Level: 4.3

Virtue: Tolerance

Grades 7-8

The Running Dream -- Wendelin Van Draanen

When a school bus accident leaves sixteen-year-old Jessica an amputee, she returns to school with a prosthetic limb and her track team finds a wonderful way to help rekindle her dream of running again.

Level: 4.1

Virtue: Perseverance, Compassion, Courage

A Single Shard -- Linda Sue Park

Tree-ear, an orphan in Korea, lives under a bridge in a potters' village and longs to learn how to throw the celadon pottery himself.

Level: 6.6

Virtue: Perseverance, Responsibility

The Summer I Saved The World In 65 Days -- Michele Weber Hurwitz

Inspired by her late grandmother, thirteen-year-old Nina spends a summer secretly doing good deeds for her neighbors and enjoying the changes she brings about, even as she is dealing with changing friendships and family issues.

Level: 3.5

Virtue: Kindness, Community

I Am Malala: Young Readers Edition -- Malala Yousafzai

This edition of Malala's story includes exclusive photos and material with firsthand accounts of the story of a girl who always knew she wanted to change the world. The text contains descriptions of violence. The coauthor is Patricia McCormick.

Level: 5.9

Virtue: Courage

Wonder -- R. J. Palacio

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Level: 4.8

Virtue: Compassion

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After her father is sent to jail, eleven-year-old Groovy Robinson must decide if she can forgive the failings of someone she loves.

Level: 4.8

Virtue: Forgiveness

The Five People You Meet In Heaven -- Mitch Albom

A bitter 83-year-old war veteran who believes his life is meaningless dies while trying to save a little girl's life and finds himself in heaven, where five people from his past explain what his years on Earth really meant. The plot contains profanity.

Level: 4.7

Virtue: Worth

North To Freedom (I Am David) -- Anne Holm

After escaping from an Eastern European concentration camp where he has spent most of his life, a twelve-year-old boy struggles to cope in a strange world as he flees to freedom in Denmark.

Level: 5.6

Virtue: Courage

The Book Thief -- Markus Zusak

Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel, a young German girl whose book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her family and the Jewish man they are hiding.

Level: 5.1

Virtue: Courage

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Level: 4.3, 4.2, 4.7

Virtue: Compassion, Understanding

A Long Walk To Water -- Linda Sue Park

Eleven-year-old Salva becomes separated from his family when the Sudanese civil war reaches his village in 1985, and he must walk with other Dinka tribe members in search of a safe haven. The plot contains violence.

Level: 5.0

Virtue: Courage, Perseverance

The Finest Hours: The True Story of a Heroic Sea Rescue -- Michael J. Tougias and Casey Sherman

This young readers' adaptation of THE FINEST HOURS: THE TRUE STORY OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD'S MOST DARING SEA RESCUE chronicles the rescue of two oil tankers on February 18, 1952. The coauthor is Casey Sherman.

Level: 7.5

Virtue: Courage

The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind -- William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer

When William, a Malawian teen, began building a windmill from scraps and claimed the machine would generate electricity, everyone in his village thought he was crazy. The coauthor is Bryan Mealer.

Level: 5.8

Virtue: Courage, Perseverance

The Boys In The Boat: The True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey To Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics -- Daniel James Brown

Complemented by photographs, this middle-grade adaptation of THE BOYS IN THE BOAT describes the American rowing team's triumphant and unlikely win during the 1936 Olympics.

Level: 6.9

Virtue: Courage, Perseverance

Leap of Faith -- Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Forced to attend a Catholic middle school because of her conduct, Abigail discovers a talent for theater and develops a true religious faith.

Level: 4.2

Virtue: Faith

One For The Murphys -- Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Carley struggles with being open to love after she suffers a heartbreaking betrayal that forces her to move in with a foster family.

Level: 5.1

Virtue: Courage

Reign, Rain -- Ann M. Martin

Struggling with OCD and Asperger's syndrome, Rose shares an inseparable bond with her beloved dog, but when the dog goes missing during a storm, she is forced to confront the limits of her comfort levels. The plot contains threats of violence.

Level: 4.3

Virtue: Courage

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