Your 50+ favorite books for Catholic kids

[Children's Picture Books](#) • [Books about Saints and Mary](#) • [Kids' Chapter Books](#)
[For Teens](#) • [Bible Stories](#) • [Nonfiction Books](#)

Children's Picture Books

"The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith" by Josephine Nobisso illustrated by Katalin Szegedi

Summary

"When a poor devout widow begs for a scrap of bread from a rich faithless baker, she promises to participate in the king's wedding mass as payment for the baker's generosity. The baker writes "One Mass" on a scrap of paper and places it on his scale to determine how much bread it is worth. To his and the entire town's surprise, nothing in the shop, not even the gigantic wedding cakes made for the king, outweighs the simple piece of paper representing the true worth of a Mass. Luminous old-world watercolor paintings grace the interior of the book and gold foil artwork lends an air of solemnity and sacred beauty to the story."

Community Reviews

Melinda Lindgren: "Just ordered it to supplement our religious ed. curriculum (homeschool) for our upcoming first grader. Excited to sit down and read it."

Minette Paltz: "Beautiful illustrations and lovely story about how important the Mass and the Holy Eucharist are!"

“The King of Shattered Glass” by Susan J Bellavance

Summary

“Beautifully illustrated in color for young elementary school readers, ‘King of the Shattered Glass’ is a gentle parable about asking for forgiveness and receiving God’s mercy!”

Community Reviews

David J. Nicastro: “It’s a beautiful children’s book about confession and how Christ takes the broken parts of us to make us into the beautiful person he knows we can be.”

“Monk’s Daily Bread” by Sylvia Dorham, illustrated by Christopher Tupa

Summary

“The monks of Archangel Monastery have a dilemma: their cupboards are bare! But their wise Father Abbot reminds them to trust that Christ will provide their daily bread. So the monks go about their work, study and prayer, while offering up their belly grumble for the love of God. This beautifully-illustrated book will be enjoyed by children and their caregivers for its humorous pictures, for fun rhymes reminiscent of Dr. Seuss, and for the heartfelt message of sincere trust in the Lord’s providence.”

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “For young children, we love ‘Monk’s Daily Bread.’ It’s a short picture book with cute illustrations and rhyming text that teaches the importance of trusting in God.”

“The Adventures of Loupio, Volume 1: The Encounter and other” by Jean-Francois Kieffer

Summary

“In the days of knights and castles lived an adventurous young troubadour named Loupio. Orphaned and on his own in 13th century Italy, plucky Loupio meets Brother Francis of Assisi and his friend Brother Wolf, and so begins a new life of joyfully trying to do good, while still getting by in a dangerous world. The youthful and colorful comic- book style presents to young readers the exciting challenges of growing up in the Middle Ages, which often look very like the challenges of growing up in any age. Like the Tin Tin and Asterix comics, this series, never before available in English, is sure to entertain young readers. But more than that, the seeds of faith, hope and charity taking root in Loupio, might grow in their hearts too.”

Community Reviews

Recommended by Natalie Elskamp: “‘Adventures of Loupio’ books about the life of St Francis.”

“The Princess and the Three Knights” by Karen Kingsbury, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard

Summary

“There was once a princess … the most beautiful in all the land.” The search is on! The king determines to find a young man worthy of the hand of the princess. The knights of the kingdom endure tests and challenges to show their courage and strength. But those qualities alone will not win the king’s approval or the princess’s heart. The right knight must prove his kindness and character. … And the real meaning of true

love.”

Community Reviews

Sara Estabrooks: “‘The Princess and the Three Knights.’ I think there’s a parallel book that ‘appeals more to boys,’ but this is a favorite for all my kids. It teaches about true love, and an age appropriate chastity message. The knights go through a series of competitions to be the one to marry the princess. The final competition is who can ride a horse with the princess on the back, closest to the edge of a cliff. *Spoiler alert* the winning prince says he loves the princess so much he wouldn’t even think of bringing her anywhere near the edge of the cliff. Cue sobbing from mom.”

“Clown of God” by Tomie dePaola

Summary

“Little Giovanni is poor and homeless, but he can do something wonderful: he can juggle. The people of Sorrento marvel at his talents, and before long, he becomes famous throughout Italy for his rainbow of colored balls that delight the nobility and townspeople alike. But as the years pass, Giovanni grows old, and his talents begin to fail him. No longer a celebrated performer, he is once again poor and homeless, begging for his food. Until one Christmas Eve, when Giovanni picks up his rainbow of colored balls once more. And what happens next just might be a miracle…”

Community Reviews

Kendra Youren: “The saint who juggles in front of the statue of the Blessed Mother.”

Sara Estabrooks: “This, if you don’t mind sobbing while you read a book to your kids.”

“Take it to the Queen” by Josephine Nobisso, illustrated by Katalin Szegedi

Summary

“With exquisite artwork and evocative text, this original fable explores the events of Jesus’ life, and demonstrates the role of the Virgin Mary as the benevolent agent of God’s people. Reduced to desolation by a king and prince who feel they have been wronged, the residents of a once-favored village must seek help from the queen, a native of their devastated town. Religious subjects are presented clearly in an allegorical style that proves entertaining, and also serves to provide children with examples of virtue and good behavior.”

Community reviews

Barbara Abbate: “’Take it to the Queen’ is wonderful!”

“Before I Was Me” by Frank Fraser

Summary

“Before I was me, just before I was born, I asked God, ‘Who will I become?’ ‘Oh, my little one,’ he replied, ‘I have great plans for you! I have chosen you to be a very important person whom I will always love.’ Thus begins a charming odyssey of self-discovery, as, in conversation with God, the child imagines himself as” an astronaut, baker, and other jobs.

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “’Before I Was Me’ is my new go to book for a new baby or baptism gift. It tells the story of a conversation between a baby and God just before the baby is born, about

God’s great love and plans for the baby.”

“The Tale of Three Trees” by Angela Elwell Hunt

Summary

“Once upon a mountaintop, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up… This much loved folktale about three trees whose wishes unexpectedly come true will enchant a new generation of young readers.”

Community Reviews

Recommended by Chiara Pierpaolo Finaldi

“You are Special” by Max Lucado

Summary

“In this children’s tale, Eli the woodcarver helps Punchinello understand how special he is – no matter what other Wemmicks may think. It’s a vital message for children everywhere: that they are all special in God’s eyes.”

Community Reviews

Chiara Pierpaolo Finaldi: “This is also so good!”

“Angel in the Waters” by Regina Doman and Ben Hatke

Summary

“In its mother’s womb, a baby grows, explores the waters, and talks with the angel who is there. The gentle illustrations tell the story of that baby and angel, delighting young

children because the journey from conception to birth is their story, too."

Community Reviews

Recommended by Therese Maederer

Clarissa Carruthers-Dodsworth: "This is a good one also that we have."

Books about the Saints and Mary

"Saintly Rhymes for Modern Times" by Meghan Bausch

Summary

"Heaven's saints are holy, Each in their own way. Here you'll find their stories to inspire you every day. Remembering these rhymes is simple as can be. They show how we can all be saints. Even you and me! Filled with colorful illustrations and catchy rhymes, 'Saintly Rhymes for Modern Times' teaches your child that everyone is called to be a saint. These kid-friendly rhymes allow children to see the beauty of Christian holiness through the lives of our more recent saints. With these 16 poems, nineteen holy men, women, and children will become your child's friends in heaven!"

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: "Saintly Rhymes for Modern Times' is a great introduction to saints for young children. It's full of short poems that do a great job of sharing an important fact or two about a well-known saint in an easy to remember fashion.

Maria Jansen: My kids of all ages love this and it has an amazing collection of saints that I've never seen thrown together in the same book before – Bl. Chiara, Bl. Miguel Pro,

Sts. Louis & Zelie, Padre Pio, Bl. Pier Giorgio, JPII, Ven. Fulton Sheen, and more of our family's personal all-stars!

"My Golden Book of Saints" by Father Thomas Donaghy

Summary

"This is a lovely introduction for little ones to some of the most popular and well-loved Saints. The colorful illustrations throughout will capture their attention as simple language tells the stories of these special friends of God. With golden padded cover and gilded edges."

Community Reviews

Therese Maederer: "I like the 'Golden book of Saints' because it is a board book and hold up well!"

"Praying the Rosary with Mary" by Angela Burrin, illustrated by Maria Cristina Lo Cascio

Summary

"I am Mary, the mother of Jesus, and I love hearing children pray the rosary!" "Mary 'speaks' to children in this book about the mysteries of the rosary, explaining what happened in each mystery and asking children to pray with her and for her intercession. All 20 mysteries are included here, illustrated realistically and colorfully by Italian artist Maria Cristina Lo Cascio. This book is a great introduction to the rosary and will engage young children by helping them visualize the mysteries they are praying. The first-person narration brings each mystery to life and helps children to know that they can always turn to their loving mother, Mary, and her son Jesus.

Community Reviews

Rita Niemerg Feldhake: “Our whole family enjoyed the Angela Burrin’s ‘Praying the Rosary with Mary.’ It’s a great way to introduce the rosary to your kids.”

“A Boy Who Became Pope” by Fabiola Garza

Summary

“This lavishly illustrated biography for children ages 6-9 tells the captivating story of Saint John Paul II, revealing how his answer to the question ‘Who do you love most?’ blossomed into heroic virtue, holiness, and service to the Church and the world.”

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “Without a doubt, my favorite children’s book about a saint is ‘A Boy Who Became Pope,’ written and illustrated by Fabiola Garza. Absolutely beautiful illustrations and the story itself is even more beautiful. She does a great job of telling the life story of JPII from boyhood to the time he was elected pope.”

Lauren Stein: “We LOVE this one!”

Clarissa Carruthers-Dodsworth: “This book is so special to my heart because I take my only son out of five kids out for one on one time often as we read this book together on picnics or cuddle time. He is 8 and loves the vivid illustrations depicted in this heartfelt story of John Paul’s life as a child. It helps to normalize other young boys that they too can be holy and God can do extraordinary things with the most ordinary person. By far my fav. Catholic book!

Elaine Badamy O’Connell: “Loved ‘A Boy Who Became Pope.’”

“Mary and the Little Shepherds of Fatima” by Maryln Monge

Summary

“Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima, Portugal, with this charmingly illustrated true story designed to delight and educate children ages 5 to 8. Answering the Blessed Mother’s call to pray the rosary and make small sacrifices to help bring an end to WWI, Francisco, Jacinta, and Lucia faced persecution and doubt with unwavering faith and confidence. Read how their courage and desire to spread the rosary helped thousands witness Our Lady’s Miracle of the Sun!”

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “’Mary and the Little Shepherds of Fatima” is a great introduction to the story of Fatima for young children. The back of the book includes information about praying the rosary and a page “for the grownups” that provides a little more detail about the apparitions for parents.”

“Patrick and the Fire” by Cornelia Mary Bilinsky, illustrated by Maggie Coburn

Summary

“Bevan the goatherd longs for the annual festival bonfire celebrating the god of light. When a stranger named Patrick appears, Bevan learns about one God in three persons. Patrick frightens Bevan when he boldly lights a fire rivaling the king’s. Soon the king realizes Patrick’s faith, like his fire, cannot be quenched, and Patrick preaches the Trinity to the people. Ages 4 to 7.”

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “Pauline Kids has several children’s books that we love (a couple I’ve already mentioned). Two that we love are ‘Patrick and the Fire’ and ‘Brigid and the Butter.’ Both tell the story of a legend about the saint & have wonderful illustrations. The end of the book provides a factual summary of the saint.”

“Brigid and the Butter” by Pamela Love, illustrated by Apryl Stott

Summary

“Brigid wants to feed the hungry, but she is often hungry herself. When a beggar woman asks for the only food Brigid has – a dish of butter – she learns how to open her heart in generosity and love. This story of the first miracle of St. Brigid of Ireland will encourage children ages 4 to 7 to learn about this generous saint!”

Community Reviews

Cheryl Goheen: “Pauline Kids has several children’s books that we love (a couple I’ve already mentioned). Two that we love are “Patrick and the Fire” and “Brigid and the Butter.” Both tell the story of a legend about the saint & have wonderful illustrations. The end of the book provides a factual summary of the saint.”

Elaine Badamy O’Connell: “Yep, ‘Brigid and the Butter’ was great!”

“The Virgin Mary Around the World” by Chantal

Baros

Summary

“Journey around the world with the Virgin Mary (and Holy Spirit, can you find him on each page?)! The best-selling children’s book from Shining Light Dolls, with thousands of copies sold, this perfect blend of faith and fun is sure to become everyone’s new favorite! With 13 full color spreads and 11 different apparitions of the Virgin Mary from around the world, this board book is sure to not only delight children but also help them learn about their beautiful Catholic faith.”

Community Reviews

Veronica Isabel Cherney: “’The Virgin Mary Around the World’ (it’s a Shining Light Dolls book with little rhymes about several different Marian titles around the world).

“Book of Saints” by Amy Welborn, illustrated by Ansgar Holmberg

Summary

“Who are the saints, why are the lives of saints important for children, and what can children learn from lives and actions? In Loyola Kids Book of Saints, the first in the Loyola Kids series, best-selling author Amy Welborn answers these questions with exciting and inspiring stories, real-life applications, and important information about these heroes of the church. This inspiring collection of saints’ stories explains how saints become saints, why we honor them, and how they help us even today. Featuring more than sixty saints from throughout history and from all over the world, Loyola Kids Book of Saints introduces children to these wonderful role models and heroes of the church. Ages 8-12.

Community Reviews:

Veronica Isabel Cherney: We also like the ‘Loyola kids Book of Heroes’ and ‘Book of Saints.’”

“Francis of Assisi: Keeper of Creation” by Barbara Yoffie, illustrated by Katherine Borgatti; one in the “Saints and Me” series from Liguori

Summary

“People liked to hear St. Francis preach. He was kind, cheerful and always smiled. He preached about peace and forgiveness. People liked his simple life. His little group of followers preached and helped sick and poor people. Do we respect the earth and all creation? How can we make our world a better place? In the new series of early reader books, Saints and Me!, the real stories of saints come to life and connect with a today s children, ages 4 to 9.”

Community Reviews

Theresa Conley: “I really like the ‘Saints and Me’ series. The books are very short – great for a read-aloud at bed time. Each book focuses on a different Saint. We always include one in each of our kids’ Easter baskets.”

“Can You Find Saints?” by Philip D. Gallery, illustrated by Janet L. Harlow

Summary

This book “is filled with inviting, kid-friendly illustrations. Building on the fun and adventure of the award-winning ‘Can You Find Jesus? Introducing Your Child to the Gospel,’ ‘Can You Find Saints?’ will provide hours of learning

and delight for children. The stories of the heroes of the faith spring to life in dazzling pictures that sprinkle a little learning in with the fun. Includes a Parent's Guide."

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: "'Can You find Jesus/The Saints?' are Catholic I-spy and so fun for kids and adults alike."

"Mother Teresa: The Smile of Calcutta" by Charlotte Grossetete, illustrated by Catherine Chion

Summary

"The great saints devoted their lives to the love of God and of others. Their fascinating life stories will help children discover the great adventure of holiness. This beautifully illustrated book tells the story of such a great saint who lived in our times."

Community Reviews

Abigail Flavin: "Our sons are 5 and almost 8, and they adore this book."

"God's Doorkeepers: Padre Pio, Solanus Casey and André Bessette" by Joel Schorn

Summary

"Padre Pio and Andre Bessette would have readily agreed with Solanus Casey even though, on the surface, none of the three had much to give. All grew up in humble circumstances, each suffered poor health, and none achieved academic distinction or prominent positions in their religious orders. They were, to all appearances, the sort of people others overlook. Yet in

their lifetimes, untold numbers found physical and interior healing through their ministries, and since their deaths their fame has grown enormously. Their secret was the secret of every successful Christian life: In complete humility, they abandoned themselves to the will of God. Bessette and Casey literally answered the door at their monasteries, and Pio was something of a spiritual doorkeeper in the confessional. God's Doorkeepers reveals how these miracle-workers, in spite of their lowly circumstances, inspired and continue to inspire those who seek a healing encounter with God."

Community Reviews

Recommended by Barbara Abbate

Kids' Chapter Books

"Begin" by Philip and Erin Urlich Growly. First in The Growly Trilogy

Summary

"For centuries the bears of Haven have lived quiet lives, high in the mountains at the edge of the great precipice. That all changes for a young cub named Growly when he receives a mysterious message. With just his backpack and glider, Growly sets out on a desperate journey to find his grandfather's long lost friend … and to find a way back home. Begin is the first book in The Growly Trilogy."

Community Reviews

Heidi Indhal: "We are reading aloud the Growly series right now and my kids from 2-14 all enjoy listening. The adventures keep coming to life in our backyard! (Not Catholic but lots of good character building!) Elementary interest level primarily.

We are reading aloud with a big gap but my third grader and up are all capable of reading on their own. It's about a bear cub that goes on an adventure, like all bear cubs his age do, but finds himself in a totally new place with no idea how to get home. It's lovely with not a single bad guy, lots of humor, and tons and tons of personal struggle and adventure."

"Catholic Tales for Boys and Girls" by Leslie Silk Eslinger and Leslie Silk Eslinger

Summary

"Caryll Houselander is best known for the intensity of her vision of the suffering Christ and his immeasurable love for us, a theme that she frequently spoke of with breathtaking luminosity in her many books about him. Few know, however, of the many remarkable stories she wrote for Catholic children delightful tales that are simple but not shallow. Indeed, like her books for adults, they manifest a tender love of Christ and his little ones not commonly found among us these days. Here are 12 of Houselander's best tales, charmingly illustrated with Renée George s lively drawings of pirates and princesses, castles and kings. Through the tale of Jack and Jim, even young children will grasp the meaning of Christ's suffering; in Racla the Gypsy, they'll discover the charity which is at the heart of the Eucharist; in the The Cure's Guest, they'll see how Christ makes up for the sins of others. All the stories touch on Catholic themes, but these tales are not really catechetical."

Community Reviews

Veronica Isabel Cherney: "'Catholic Tales for Boys and Girls' – great little stories in which fictional characters highlight the virtues."

“American Cardinal Readers, Book One” by Edith M. McLaughlin and Adrian T. Curtis One in a series of six from Neumann Press.

Summary

“Long used by most Catholic schools and countless homeschooling families, the American Cardinal Readers are tried and true, well-loved companions for children developing their reading skills. The American Cardinal Readers begin following the family adventures of John, Jean and Baby, with simple sentences to ease your child into reading stories. As he or she progresses through the series, the books grow longer, the vocabulary expands, and the stories become more complex, guiding and challenging young readers to enhance their reading comprehension.”

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: “American Cardinal readers are great for new readers.”

“The Secret of the Shamrock” by by Lisa M. Hendey, illustrated by Jenn Bower. First in the Chime Travelers Series.

Summary

“When Patrick has to work on his church’s cleaning team on a Saturday, he thinks his weekend fun is ruined. But when the old church bells start chiming, Patrick and his pet frog, Francis, are suddenly taken back through time to ancient Ireland. Will the strange shepherd he meets be able to help him get home, or will Patrick be stuck taking care of sheep in the rain and mud forever? Find out in ‘The Secret of the Shamrock.’ Book 1 in the Chime Travelers series, exciting new chapter books ideal for children in grades 2-5.”

Community Reviews

Stefanie Ebelke: “I love the Chime Travelers series – it’s almost a little lectio divina.”

Lindsey Polly Koch: “My kids like the Chime Traveler books. Ages 2-6, so we use them as read aloud and they stay very interested in the stories and then it starts conversations about if this could have been how things really happened or not.”

Kathy Huegerich Rhodes: “Chime Travelers series. Like Magic Treehouse but about the lives of saints.”

“The King of the Golden City” by Lisa Bergman and Mother Mary Loyola

Summary

“‘The King of the Golden City’ is an allegorical tale which has stood the test of time because of the beauty of its symbolism and the richness of its spiritual advice. Written for children yet beloved by all, the only complaint lodged against it has been that its main character is female, leaving many boys to feel that this tale is better suited for girls. Encouraged by the original French translators of this book, who created parallel editions for boys and girls, we have now remedied this single fault! In this brand new edition adapted especially for boys, readers will find the tale of Dilectus and his friends every bit as charming and instructive as before – and now boys as well as girls will find it easy to become the hero of the story and make it their own!”

Community Reviews

Minette Paltz: “Great for all ages and to be read at various ages. Beautiful prep for first Holy Communion, read in junior high/middle school to get more out of the analogies, even as

an adult I find something cool every time I read it, and between my own kids and my class, I have probably read it five or six times at least."

"Will Wilder #1: The Relic of Perilous Falls" by Raymond Arroyo. The first in a series.

Summary

"Will Wilder didn't mean to unlock his otherworldly gift. But that is exactly what happens when Will 'borrows' a sacred relic believed to protect the town of Perilous Falls for nearly a century. Even though his intentions are good, the impulsive 12-year-old unwittingly awakens an ancient evil endangering all of Perilous Falls. As boats sink and hideous creatures crawl from the rising waters, it is up to Will to confront a nightmarish enemy and set things right before it is too late. Along with his sweet—if lethal—great-aunt Lucille, the curator of a museum of supernatural artifacts, Will proves that the actions of one twelve-year-old boy can change the world."

Community Reviews

Recommended by Elaine Badamy O'Connell

Wanda Casillas-Snively: "My 10-year-old daughter loves these!"

"Chronicles of Narnia" by C.S. Lewis

Summary

"Fantastic creatures, heroic deeds, epic battles in the war between good and evil, and unforgettable adventures come together in this world where magic meets reality, which has been enchanting readers of all ages for over 60 years."

Community Reviews

Elaine Badamy O'Connell: "'Chronicles of Narnia,' of course."

"Olivia and The Little Way" and "Olivia's Gift" by Nancy Carabio Belanger, illustrated by Sandra Casali LewAllen

Summary of "Olivia and The Little Way"

Fifth grader Olivia Thomas has moved to a new school in a new state, and is eager to make friends! Her best friend quickly becomes someone she has never seen: St. Therese of Lisieux. Follow Olivia's trials as she tries to fit in at St. Michael's School. With the help of her grandmother, she learns about the Little Way of serving God and how it can change everything! 2009 Catholic Press Association award winner, children's books.

Summary of **"Olivia's Gift"**

School is out for the year and it s time for a fun beach adventure! However, Olivia discovers that sometimes it can be difficult to be a good Catholic when you re in middle school and discovers that she needs God and St. Therese more than ever. In this novel that celebrates modesty and the precious gift of life, Olivia learns that it takes blind faith every day and that God is never far away—even on vacation. A Catholic Press Association award winner (2011).

Community Reviews

Recommended by Wanda Casillas-Snively

Jolene Sis: "My daughter enjoyed these two books as well. They have nothing to do with Olivia the pig."

“Kirsten, an American Girl” by Janet Beeler Shaw

Summary

“A six volume boxed set features stories about Kirsten, her family, and her friends in nineteenth-century Minnesota.”

Community Reviews

Kel Szydagis: “In non-religious: I’m reading the American Girl Kirsten books to my seven year old at the moment. They’re so wonderful, and the highlight of one book is discussion of how St. Lucia day is celebrated in Sweden. There’s also prayer woven in frequently, it’s very subtle since the books aren’t religious at all, but just matter of fact that we all pray.”

For Teens

“Golden Boy” by Tara Sullivan

Summary

“Thirteen-year-old Habo has always been different—light eyes, yellow hair and white skin. Not the good brown skin his family has and not the white skin of tourists. Habo is strange and alone. His father, unable to accept Habo, abandons the family; his mother can scarcely look at him. His brothers are cruel, and the other children never invite him to play. Only his sister Asu loves him well. But even Asu can’t take the sting away when the family is forced from their small Tanzanian village, and Habo knows he is to blame. Seeking refuge in Mwanza, Habo and his family journey across the Serengeti. His aunt is glad to open her home until she sees Habo for the first time, and then she is only afraid. Suddenly, Habo has a new word for himself: Albino. But they hunt Albinos in Mwanza because Albino body parts are thought to bring good luck. And soon Habo is being hunted by a fearsome man with a machete. To survive, Habo must not only

run, but find a way to love and accept himself.”

Community Reviews

Teresa Symalla Radcliffe: “For teens ready to delve into human rights issues. Tara Sullivan’s ‘Golden Boy’ (deals with the killing of albinos in Tanzania) and ‘The Bitter Side of Sweet’ (deals with child slave labor in the cocoa fields). Great opportunities to talk to teens about local and global issues and how we can help.”

“The Bitter Side of Sweet” by Tara Sullivan

Summary

“Fifteen-year-old Amadou counts the things that matter. For two years what has mattered are the number of cacao pods he and his younger brother, Seydou, can chop down in a day. The higher the number the safer they are. The higher the number the closer they are to paying off their debt and returning home. Maybe. The problem is Amadou doesn’t know how much he and Seydou owe, and the bosses won’t tell him. The boys only wanted to make money to help their impoverished family, instead they were tricked into forced labor on a plantation in the Ivory Coast. With no hope of escape, all they can do is try their best to stay alive—until Khadija comes into their lives. She’s the first girl who’s ever come to camp, and she’s a wild thing. She fights bravely every day, attempting escape again and again, reminding Amadou what it means to be free. But finally, the bosses break her, and what happens next to the brother he has always tried to protect almost breaks Amadou. The three band together as family and try just once more to escape. Inspired by true-to-life events happening right now, ‘The Bitter Side of Sweet’ is an exquisitely written tour de force not to be missed.

Community Reviews

Teresa Symalla Radcliffe: “For teens ready to delve into human rights issues. Tara Sullivan’s ‘Golden Boy’ (deals with the killing of albinos in Tanzania) and ‘The Bitter Side of Sweet’ (deals with child slave labor in the cocoa fields). Great opportunities to talk to teens about local and global issues and how we can help.”

“Crispin: Cross of Lead” by Avi

Summary

“Avi’s plot is engineered for maximum thrills, with twists, turns, and treachery aplenty. . . . A page-turner to delight Avi’s fans, it will leave readers hoping for a sequel – Publishers Weekly.”

Community Reviews

Shari Roberts Anderson: “I like this book for older kids because it is an action packed chapter book. It does not have a strong ‘lesson’ – instead, it’s set in medieval England and Crispin (the main character) has a strong Catholic background. So Catholicism is woven into the book. He has trials and makes different decisions but ultimately does the right thing. It won a Newberry Award Medal.”

“Saint Training” by Elizabeth Fixmer

Summary

“Mary Clare is on the lookout for a miracle. Mary Clare O’Brian is determined to be a saint when she grows up (the halo will help cover her frizzy hair). But lately none of her prayers seem to be working the way she wants them to: her mother is losing her faith, her parents can’t pay all the bills, and her brother receives a draft notice for the war in

Vietnam. Mary Clare has a plan to help, but it just doesn't seem to be working. How is she supposed to become a saint when her world is falling apart?"

Community Reviews

Clarissa Carruthers-Dodsworth: "'Saint Training' is another oldie but goodie!"

Bible Stories

"The Beatitudes for Children" by Rosemarie Gortler and Donna Piscitelli. One in a series.

Summary

"When it comes to growing closer to God, kids (and adults) have no better teacher than Jesus. His Eight Beatitudes are a positive, proactive guide for kids to love and serve the Lord as they mature in their understanding of their faith. In 'The Beatitudes for Children,' each beatitude is coupled with a kid-sized explanation that makes it easy for them to relate to these powerful statements. There are real-life applications that kids and their parents can participate in, which will inspire the whole family to apply the Lord's guidance to their lives. Enlightening, energizing, and creatively illustrated, 'The Beatitudes for Children' will help you encourage the kids in your life to stay close to Jesus as they grow.

Community Reviews

Kayla Curran: "So I have a pre-k daughter so we like reading the 'Catholic Treasure Box' books and the 'Little Acts of Grace' or any of the books by Rosemarie Gortler and Donna Piscitelli. These are kind of our spine for or pre-k faith formation at home."

“A Life of Our Lord for Children” by Marigold Hunt

Summary

“Describes the life of Jesus Christ and the establishment of his kingdom as the Catholic Church.”

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: “‘A Life of our Lord for Children’ by Marigold Hunt explains the Bible so well, it should be required reading for every parent! But it’s great for kids who are older on their own or as a read aloud too.”

“The Picture Bible” by Iva Hoth and “The Action Bible” by Doug Mauss, illustrated by Sergio Cariello

Summary

“For years, ‘The Picture Bible’ has delighted young and old. Now updated with interesting new features, including “Did you know?” fact pages, time line, story listing, maps, and more, kids will love the great stories and action pictures of the newly revised Picture Bible. God’s Word will come alive for hours of family reading enjoyment.”

‘The Action Bible’ presents 215 fast-paced narratives in chronological order, making it easier to follow the Bible’s historical flow—and reinforcing the build-up to its thrilling climax. The stories in ‘The Action Bible’ communicate clearly and forcefully to contemporary readers. This compelling blend of clear writing plus dramatic images offers an appeal that crosses all age boundaries.

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: “’The Picture Bible’ and ‘The Action Bible’

are Bibles in comic book or graphic novel form."

Rita Niemerg Feldhake: "My 8-year-old son devoured 'The Picture Bible' by Iva Hoth."

"Stories Jesus Told: Lift-the-Flap Board Book" by Mark Littleton, illustrated by Trace Moroney

Summary

"With more than 40 flaps to open (and surprises to find underneath), children can join in the thrill of discovery as they help uncover the lessons in Jesus' parables."

Community Reviews

Rita Niemerg Feldhake: "For pre-k I really like 'Stories Jesus Told: Lift the Flap Book.' They love to lift the flaps, and I love that they are learning different stories then the typical creation and Noah's Ark."

"Tomie DePaola's Book of Bible Stories" by Tomie DePaola

Summary

"Lovingly illustrated by award-winning artist Tomie dePaola, this stunning collection of stories brings some of the most memorable and significant figures in the Old and New Testaments to life. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Moses, Peter, John, and Jesus are all vividly portrayed in wonderful detail. The original Bible text captures all of the drama of the best-loved stories from the Bible, including Noah and the flood, Jonah's encounter with a great fish, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here is a beautiful collection of Bible stories, perfect for gift-giving."

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: “Tommie DePaola Bible stories too, for younger kids.”

“The Easter Story” by Brian Wildsmith

Summary

“The story of the last days of Jesus’ life, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, as seen through the eyes of a small donkey.”

Community Reviews

Kara Foster: “We love this one. It’s beautiful, too!”

“Catholic Baby’s First Bible”

Summary

“Includes the Our Father, Hail Mary, and ten stories: What God Made (Genesis 1) Noah’s Ark” ect., “20 pages, board book with handle.”

Community Reviews

Elizabeth Rogers: Also ‘Catholic Baby’s First Bible’ – we bring it to Mass a lot!”

The End of the Fiery Sword: Adam & Eve and Jesus & Mary

by Maura Roan McKeegan

Summary

What do Adam and Jesus have in common? What do Eve and Mary have in common? More than you think! With full color illustrations, Maura Roan McKeegan has brought to life biblical typology for children. Taking familiar biblical stories from the Old and New Testaments and placing them side by side, children can see biblical typology jump off the page.

Community Reviews

Maria Jansen: Great typography for kids. Short but solid.

Nonfiction

Heavenly Hosts: Eucharistic Miracles for Kids
by Kathryn Griffin Swegart OFS

SummaryYour children likely know all about the Eucharist, that central ritual beloved by Catholics worldwide. But do they know that God's presence in the Eucharist is miraculous?

Heavenly Hosts presents documented Eucharistic miracles in story form to bring middle-grade readers to a better understanding of the Real Presence.

Community Reviews
Maria Jansen: We just got this one, but it is a definite winner! So solid and well written.

"Catechism of the Seven Sacraments" by Mary O'Neill Kevin O'Neill

Summary

"Join your friendly guides Fulton and Cynthia on a biblical adventure as they journey from creation to salvation and

discover the importance of God's sanctifying grace. Set in a vivid comic-book format with stunning photographs, this book makes profound theological concepts accessible to both the Catholic and the curious, the child and the adult. Following Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's teachings on Covenant Theology, this book sheds light on the parallels between the Old Testament and the New Testament and the sacraments instituted by Christ that we experience today. Readers will develop a deeper understanding of salvation history, discover how to participate in God's covenant, and learn how to obtain grace through the sacraments, which are essential on our lifelong journey to the eternal promised land."

Reviews

Kel Szydagis: "We just got 'Catechism of the Seven Sacraments,' a LEGO illustrated Biblically based LONG book that goes into beautiful depth on the sacraments. It's incredible."

"Dear Pope Francis: The Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World" by Pope Francis

Summary

"If you could ask Pope Francis one question, what would it be? Children have questions and struggles just like adults, but rarely are they given the chance to voice their concerns and ask the big questions resting deep in their hearts. In Dear Pope Francis, Pope Francis gives them that chance and celebrates their spiritual depth by directly answering questions from children around the world. Some are fun. Some are serious. And some will quietly break your heart. But all of them are from children who deserve to know and feel God's unconditional love."

Community Reviews

Barbara Abbate: “My 6 year old really loved this book and there were some great questions and awesome answers. Each letter is written by the child, in their native language (with translation provided). Then it gives the child’s name and location and age. In addition to the learning from the letters and answers, it is great for showing the Church’s diversity and that Catholics are everywhere, truly Catholic.”

“How I Stayed Catholic at Harvard: Forty Tips for Faithful Catholic Students” by Aurora Griffin

Summary

“A Harvard graduate, Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, and devout Catholic tells you everything you need to know about keeping your faith at a modern university. Drawing on her recent experience, Aurora Griffin shares forty practical tips relating to academics, community, prayer, and service that helped her stay Catholic in college.”

Community Reviews

Recommend by Barbara Abbate

“Treasure Box Books” by Maryknoll Sisters

Summary

“’The Treasure Box’ books present a wonderful combination of fun, innocence and the Catholic faith. They teach the faith in a simple way, and they inspire children’s hearts to love God. The pictures are truly beautiful, unlike the cartoon illustrations found in many children’s books today. These books are full of Catholic doctrine, presented reverently and simply at a young child’s level, in a manner to capture the child\’s interest and raise the heart to God.”

Community Reviews

Kayla Curran: “So I have a pre-k daughter so we like reading the “Catholic Treasure Box” books and the Little Acts of Grace or any of the books by Rosemarie Gortler and Donna Piscitelli. These are kind of our spine for or pre-k faith formation at home.”

Cathy Gilmore: “Treasure Box Books created by Maryknoll sisters are a total hidden treasure for families with young children. Stories, faith, games. So good.”

“We Go to Mass” by Jude Winkler, Lawrence G. Lovasik and Thomas J. Donaghy

Summary

Interactive puzzle book.

Community Reviews

Angie Robertson: “My kids like these interactive puzzle books.”

“A Missal for Toddlers” illustrated by Elen Lescoat

Summary

“This simple, durable and lovely illustrated missal allows a young child to follow the prayers and actions of the Holy Mass step by step. The prayers and colorful pictures show a boy and a girl at Mass with their parents, what they say and what they do, as well as the words and actions of the priest. The mystery of Jesus, who died on the cross,

rose from the dead, and opened the way to heaven for us, is

the essence of the Holy Mass, which a child can enter into little by little with the help of this charming book. Color illustrations throughout."

Community Reviews

Veronica Isabel Cherney: "Magnificat-simple guide to the Mass with short prayers."

Tori King: "'We have A Missal for Toddlers.' I love that it is written from a young child's point of view. My daughter closes the book when she is ready to leave."

"Can You Find Jesus?" by Philip D. Gallery, illustrated by Janet L. Harlow

Summary

This book "offers hours of learning fun. A picture journey takes you and your child through the life of Jesus. As you search the charming illustrations for Jesus and other biblical figures together, your youngster will learn about Jesus and many of the things he did. In addition, ten symbols associated with the life of Jesus are hidden in each picture throughout the book."

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: "'Can You find Jesus/The Saints?' are Catholic I-spy and so fun for kids and adults alike."

"The Mass Book for Catholic Children" by Dr. Kelly Bowring, S.T.D., and Rev. Michael J. Sullivan, illustrated by Larry Ruppert

Summary

“This book … explains each part of the Mass from the Preparation before Mass through the Conclusion of the Mass and the time immediately following the Mass. It also explains briefly the lighting of votive candles and the sacrament of Penance. This is not a missal but an excellent source to help the child understand what is actually happening during Mass. Hardcover. 63 beautifully illustrated high-gloss pages. (Recommended for children age 6 and up.)

Community Reviews

Recommended by Natalie Elskamp

“A Little Book About Confession for Children” by Kendra Tierney

Summary

“The sacrament of confession is often misunderstood by children and adults alike. While your child is preparing for his first confession, it’s easy for you both to feel overwhelmed. And even if first confession was a while ago, perhaps you wish that you and your child had a better understanding of the sacrament. A Little Book about Confession for Children explains the hows and whys of going to confession. It includes step-by-step instructions for preparing and receiving this beautiful sacrament of healing, which draws us into the infinite mercy of God. The book even provides an examination of conscience just for kids.”

Community Reviews

Natalie Elskamp: “‘A Little Book About Confession for Children’ by Kendra Tierney is perfect for answering questions about confession.”

“Catholic Baby’s First Prayers”

Summary

“Since 1989, nearly 3 million copies have been sold of The Beginner’s Bible. During this time it is the largest selling Children’s bible in the world. For the first time, it is available for the Catholic market. Children will delight in the unique and colorful artwork.”

Community Reviews

Elizabeth Rogers: “For the younger ones – ‘Catholic Baby’s First Book of Prayers.’ My kids like this book and when my son was little we read it frequently.”

“Little Catechism on the Eucharist” by Father Roberto Coggi

Summary

“This pocket-sized book, with an Imprimatur from Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz, first gets to the root of some important questions: What do we believe about the Holy Eucharist? How do we prepare for Holy Communion? What is the correct way to receive Holy Communion? How do we show reverence to the Blessed Sacrament?After improving the reader s understanding of the Holy Eucharist, the book then guides the reader s participation in the Sacrament through the inclusion of a glossary, prayers to recite before the Blessed Sacrament, and a list of Indulgences that can be gained in relation to Eucharistic Devotion

Community Reviews

Sara Sheeley: “We bought this book to help our son prepare for FHC. Straightforward, easy to read, and the pictures are amazing.”