

Faith

Character... It starts with me!

Vs. Ignorance

ROBIN'S READING LIST

JUNE 2013

I WILL:

- Expect the best
- Make right choices based on principles of character rather than whims of circumstance
- Believe the truth and reject a lie
- Not take things for granted
- Trust those who have proven character

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Confidence that actions rooted in good character will yield the best outcome, even when I cannot see how

Pre – Grade 3

If You Decide To Go To The Moon by Faith McNulty

In this lavish picture book, readers accompany a boy on a fascinating excursion to the moon. The lyrical text provides tips on what to pack and describes the distance to be covered. After blastoff, facts about space travel are mingled with descriptions of what the journey might be like: the loneliness, the lack of gravity, and how you might pass the time. After landing, the text warns: Your first step will be difficult. You will rise in the air and leap forward like a kangaroo, but once you learn how, walking will be fun. It also suggests that the moon's lack of sound and color may make it seem like a dream. After viewing the flag left behind by astronauts, it's time to depart. As Earth looms closer, a four-page foldout in a glorious burst of color marks our planet's contrast to the moon's black-and-white shades. These pages depict a variety of wonders: all sorts of animals and landscapes as well as people from different historical periods and locales. The narrative notes, Air and water are Earth's special blessings. We must guard them well.

Between Us Girls: Fun Talk About Faith, Friends and Family by Vicki Courtney

Following her best seller *Between*, Vicki Courtney's *Between Us Girls* is an all-new full-color and fun-paced megabook encouraging girls between the ages of eight and twelve to grow spiritually and socially in every area of life. Young readers will love the engaging articles, cool quizzes and games, and fashionable photos throughout. Parents will be excited about having a resource that wisely encourages girls to enjoy being their age rather than bowing to modern culture's temptations to grow up too fast..

The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds

A frustrated grade school artist, Vashti sits slumped over her blank piece of paper at the end of art class. "I just CAN'T draw!" she tells her teacher. Her teacher first uses wit, then subtle yet clever encouragement to inspire her student to go beyond her insecurities and become, in the words of a younger boy who "can't" draw either, "a really great artist."

Peter H. Reynolds crafts a quiet, pleasing story in *The Dot*--one that will strike a chord with children who have outgrown the self-assurance of kindergarten and begun to doubt their own greatness. His marvelous watercolor, ink, and, yes, tea illustrations are appealing in a Quentin Blakey way, especially as Vashti begins to go wild with her dots. The delightfully open-ended conclusion will have readers of all ages contemplating how they can make their own mark in the world. Highly

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recommended.

Just Kidding by Trudy Ludwig

Waiting to be chosen for a pickup game of basketball, D. J. hears Vince challenge Cody to a game of Rock Paper Scissors: "Loser gets D. J." It's not the first time Vince has crossed the line, but D. J. can't figure out how to respond. With a helpful suggestion from his dad and support from a teacher, D. J. begins to handle his problem. The story offers a realistic portrayal of a bully who uses words in hurtful ways but avoids punishment. It also offers hope that children can break the pattern, at least if the adults around them are aware of the problem, competent to deal with it, and supportive of the children involved. The book concludes with a list of "Teasing Dos and Don'ts" for kids. In addition, a detailed foreword offers suggestions to parents and teachers trying to help children in this situation.

The Spyglass: A Book About Faith by Richard Paul Evans

This original fable offers a lesson about faith through the fall and rise of a kingdom. A once-great realm has declined into poverty, both of wealth and of spirit, until a passing stranger loans a magical spyglass to the king. Through it, the ruler and his subjects can see "what might be." A barren pasture appears as a fertile field and a crumbling cathedral looks magnificent when viewed through the spyglass. These images restore faith to the people, who then work together to restore the land to its past prosperity.

Grades 4 - 8

Olive's Ocean by Kevin Henkes

Martha Boyle is ready to leave for a family vacation to visit her grandmother Godbee on Cape Cod, and she can't stop thinking about Olive Barstow, a girl she barely knew. Olive had died in a car accident, and though Martha knew her only by sight, she is now struck by the similarities between herself and the dead girl. Now she is filled with regrets that she didn't pursue a friendship with her. While on vacation, Martha begins to fear for Godbee's health, and she makes an effort to get to know her grandmother better than ever before. She finds herself being transparently honest with her grandmother about her feelings toward her family and her own desires and dreams. Complicating her vacation are the Manning brothers, especially the oldest brother Jimmy, who is suddenly paying more attention to Martha than ever before. After Jimmy tricks Martha into kissing him for his video recording, Martha feels ashamed and alone, and more than ever she is determined to honor the memory of Olive Barstow, the girl she barely knew. She determines to fill a jar of ocean water to deliver to Olive's mother when she returns home, but while filling the jar, she falls into the water and almost drowns. After this near-death experience, Martha gains a new sense of hope and purpose for her life and a new appreciation for her family.

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

Marty Preston lives with family in the hills of West Virginia, and he has always wanted a pet of his own. When he discovers a beagle near the river behind his home, Marty names him Shiloh, and immediately wants to take the dog home. Then Marty learns that Shiloh belongs to Judd Travers, a man who drinks too much, hunts out of season, and abuses his dogs. When Shiloh runs away from Travers, Marty plots to hide the dog in order



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to protect him from his abusive owner. He builds a pen for Shiloh, and sneaks food out of his family's house to feed the dog. As Marty works to keep Shiloh a secret, he finds himself involved in more and more lies to his family, his friend David Howard, the storekeeper Mr. Wallace, and Judd Travers himself. When Shiloh is attacked and injured by another dog, Marty's secret is out, and Marty bravely determines to tell Judd Travers that he is not going to return the dog. In the woods while on his way to confront Travers, Marty witnesses Travers shooting a deer out of season, and realizes that he can use this information to intimidate Travers into letting him keep Shiloh.

Moon Over Manifest by Clare Vanpool

Abilene Tucker feels abandoned. Her father has put her on a train, sending her off to live with an old friend for the summer while he works a railroad job. Armed only with a few possessions and her list of universals, Abilene jumps off the train in Manifest, Kansas, aiming to learn about the boy her father once was.

Having heard stories about Manifest, Abilene is disappointed to find that it's just a dried-up, worn-out old town. But her disappointment quickly turns to excitement when she discovers a hidden cigar box full of mementos, including some old letters that mention a spy known as the Rattler. These mysterious letters send Abilene and her new friends, Lettie and Ruthanne, on an honest-to-goodness spy hunt, even though they are warned to "Leave Well Enough Alone."

Abilene throws all caution aside when she heads down the mysterious Path to Perdition to pay a debt to the reclusive Miss Sadie, a diviner who only tells stories from the past. It seems that Manifest's history is full of colorful and shadowy characters - and long-held secrets. The more Abilene hears, the more determined she is to learn just what role her father played in that history. And as Manifest's secrets are laid bare one by one, Abilene begins to weave her own story into the fabric of the town.

Cal Ripken, Jr.'s All-Stars: Wild Pitch by Cal Ripken Jr.

Robbie Hammond is the hardest throwing pitcher in the Babe Ruth League. But what good is all that heat when he can't seem to find the plate? With Robbie struggling, the Orioles are suffering through a nightmare season, still looking for their first win. Robbie's teammates are whispering that the only reason he's even pitching is because he's the coach's kid. They've even given him a new nickname: Ball Four.

What the other Orioles don't know is that Robbie is still haunted by a fastball that got away from him and injured a batter in last year's All-Star Game. Now, with the pressure mounting, he's willing to try anything to get his control back, including listening to a mysterious boy who just might hold the key to helping Robbie—and the Orioles—save their season.

Safe At Home (Comeback Kids) by Mike Lupica

Nick Crandall feels like he doesn't belong anywhere. He doesn't fit in with his new foster parents. They don't know the first thing about sports - and he's not exactly the model student they want him to



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be. It's only a matter of time until they realize he's not the right kid for them. And Nick certainly doesn't belong playing varsity baseball. He's only twelve years old! His teammates want a catcher their own age. But Nick needs to prove that he belongs - to his parents, to his team, and to himself.

Cornelia and the Audacious Escapades of the Somerset Sisters by Lesley M. Blume

Cornelia Street Englehart's mother, a world-famous concert pianist, is always traveling, and Cornelia is left with the housekeeper. The 11-year-old has no interest in following in her mother's finger-steps; instead, she is enthralled by words. One afternoon, she meets her new neighbor in her New York City neighborhood: a captivating woman named Virginia Somerset, who lives in a stunning, exotic home. The only thing that equals the décor is Virginia and her stories of the four adventuresome Somerset sisters, world travelers who shook things up across continents from 1949 through the early 1950s. Cornelia treasures her time with Virginia, and she desperately hopes that no one, especially her mother, finds out about their friendship. Then, Virginia becomes ill, and a new understanding between Cornelia and her mother heals what has been until then an irreparable rift. Friends and storytellers don't last forever; it is their presence and invaluable gifts that live on in those close to them. Virginia encourages her young friend to share her audacious stories, as that is the purpose of telling a story.

Drifting (The Empowerment Series Book 2) by Alex I Rogers

With his troubled past behind him and his older brother away at college, Alex finds himself searching for more. No longer does he wish to merely exist but also to belong. In *Drifting*, the sequel to *I'm Only Human After All*, Alex is taken under the wing of a popular kid at school, Marcus, who introduces Alex to the underlying politics of the high school they attend. With a newly found social life, Alex escapes from the monotonous pressures of life through frequent outings and late nights. Things seem to be fine until one critical moment changes everything, causing Alex to step back and reconsider the new path he has chosen.

Notes from the Dog by Gary Paulsen

Finn, a shy 15-year-old who finds it difficult to talk to people, never dreamed that his life would change during the summer in Gary Paulsen's novel (Random/Wendy Lamb Bks., 2009). It starts out as usual, with Finn at the library with a stack of novels-but then Johanna moves in next door and everything changes. Before he knows it, the 25-year-old who is battling breast cancer has inspired him to spend his time making a garden in his backyard, to fundraise for her cancer benefit triathlon, and to ask Carla out on a date. From time to time, his dog, Dylan, arrives with notes in his mouth offering words of wisdom for him to consider. Finn, and his best friend Matt, learn about themselves and that family isn't always about whom you are related to, but rather the people you meet along the way. Nick Podehl's narration is spot-on, moving flawlessly from an awkward antisocial teenage boy to a 20-something breast cancer patient to a father and grandfather and back again.

Angel In My Pocket by Ilene Cooper

Thirteen-year-old Bette is a talented singer, but she hasn't been singing at all lately – not since her mother died. Making matters worse, her sister's left for college and her father's preoccupied with a jazz club that



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keeps him away from home a lot. Then Bette finds a coin with an angel embossed on it, and while it's in her pocket, things start to turn around. Three of Bette's classmates also benefit from the powers in the angel coin. Joe who's been getting into more and more trouble – stealing and bullying – finds a better way to cope. And twins Vivi and Andy both discover new beginnings with the help of the angel charm.

Against the background of preparations for their school's big musical production, each teen finds a new start and a way to contribute to the shared project that not only makes the most of their talents, but also lets some light shine through in this novel that touches on a popular belief and offers many reasons for hope. And hope's a thing every kid ought to hold on to.

Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech

Salamanca Hiddle and her Gram and Gramps are on a cross-country trip to Idaho to see Sal's mother. As they travel, Sal tells her grandparents about her friend Phoebe Winterbottom, whose mother mysteriously left the family, just as strange messages began appearing anonymously on the Winterbottoms' porch. At the same time, Sal thinks about her own past with her parents, including her mother's mysterious reasons for leaving her husband and daughter to take a bus to Idaho. These two stories unfold simultaneously as Sal continues the journey westward with her colorful, storytelling grandparents. In the end, Sal and Phoebe learn the truth about Phoebe's mother when she finally returns to her family: Mrs. Winterbottom has a son who she gave up for adoption many years before her marriage. Sal also faces the truth about her own mother, who died in a tragic bus accident just outside Lewiston, Idaho. Just as Sal recognizes the hard truth about her mother, she learns that her dear Gram Hiddle has died.

Grades 9 – 12

The Duck Commander Family: How Faith, Family, and Ducks Built a Dynasty by Willie Robertson and Korie Robertson

This book gives readers an up-close and personal, behind-the-scenes look at the family in the exploding A&E show—*Duck Dynasty*. This Louisiana bayou family operates Duck Commander, a booming family business that has made them millions. You'll hear all about the Robertson clan from Willie and what it was like growing up in the Robertson household. You'll sample some of Willie's favorite family recipes from Phil, Kay, and even some of his own concoctions; and you'll get to know the beautiful Robertson women. You'll hear from Korie about the joys and hardships of raising a family, running a business, and wrangling the Robertson men while staying fashionable and beautiful inside and out. Discover more about the family dynamics between the brothers Willie, Jase, Jep, and parents Phil and Kay. You'll even meet a fourth brother who isn't in the show.

Have A Little Faith by Mitch Albom

Albom delivers a command performance. He brings his two clergymen-protagonists—an elderly rabbi from Albom's home synagogue and an African-American pastor leading a ministry to



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Detroit's homeless population-to vivid life and conveys their messages of faith with sensitivity and respect. The most memorable moments feature the humility-and eccentricity-of the two spiritual leaders who, despite their deep religious commitment, refuse to be placed on a pedestal. From the ail-ing Jewish leader breaking out into whimsical songs in the middle of his grueling medical treatments and his Christian counterpart savoring the joys of barbecuing, Albom's characterizations brim with humor and compassion.

A Step of Faith: A Novel by Richard Paul Evans

Life is not lived in the long, downhill stretches of expressways, but in the obscure, perilous trails and back roads where we stumble and feel our way through the fog of our unknowing. Life is not a run. It is just one step of faith after another.”

Alan Christoffersen lost his heart when his wife was killed in an accident almost one year ago. He lost his trust when his business partner stole his advertising business. He lost his home when the bank took his house. So Alan decided to leave his painful memories behind and walk from Seattle to the farthest point on the map, Key West, but in St. Louis, he is forced to stop.

Because his severe vertigo is diagnosed as the side effect of a brain tumor, Alan must go to Los Angeles for treatment. He is surrounded by those who care most for him: his father, who is happy to have Alan back in his childhood home; Falene, who has been by his side through his most difficult times; and Nicole, who helped him recover from a mugging in Spokane. One by one, Alan alienates them all, and he resumes his journey in angry loneliness. The people he meets as he walks the dusty southern back roads have lessons to teach Alan about accepting love. He just has to have faith that life can be worth living again—and that the woman he rejected will be willing to forgive him.

Rachel's Tears: 10th Anniversary Edition: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott by Beth Nimmo and Darrell Scott

The Columbine tragedy in April 1999 pierced the heart of our country. We later learned that the teenage killers specifically targeted Rachel Scott and mocked her Christian faith on their chilling, homemade videotapes. Rachel Scott died for her faith. Now her parents talk about Rachel's life and how they have found meaning in their daughter's martyrdom in the aftermath of the school shooting. *Rachel's Tears* comes from a heartfelt need to celebrate this young girl's life, to work through the grief and the questions of a nation, and to comfort those who have been touched by violence in our schools today. Using excerpts and drawings from Rachel's own journals, her parents offer a spiritual perspective on the Columbine tragedy and provide a vision of hope for preventing youth violence across the nation.



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