



Honey for a Child's Heart: The Imaginative Use of Books in Family Life

Gladys M. Hunt

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Family favorite now revised and updated, including an annotated list of books for ages 0-12

Everything parents need to know to find the best books for their children

Since its publication in 1969, this has been an essential guide for parents wanting to find the best books for their children. Now in its fourth edition, *Honey for a Child's Heart* discusses everything from the ways reading affects both children's view of the world and their imagination to how to choose good books. Illustrated with drawings from dozens of favorites, it includes an indexed and updated list of the best new books on the market and the classics that you want your children to enjoy. Author Gladys Hunt's tastes are broad, her advice is rooted in experience, and her suggestions will enrich the cultural and spiritual life of any home.

Honey for a Child's Heart: The Imaginative Use of Books in Family Life Details

Date : Published April 29th 2002 by Zondervan (first published 1969)

ISBN : 9780310242468

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Format : Paperback 251 pages

Genre : Parenting, Education, Nonfiction, Writing, Books About Books, Reference

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From Reader Review Honey for a Child's Heart: The Imaginative Use of Books in Family Life for online ebook

Heather says

I have the third edition.

Stacy says

This guide to teaching children to love books is divided into two sections: the philosophy of how to teach your children to love good books, and book recommendations by age and subject. Though the back cover says nothing of Christianity, the author approaches the subject with a Christian background and assumes the reader does as well.

I really enjoyed a lot of the author's insights and plan to use her recommendations as my little girl grows. She came across as down-to-earth, well-spoken/articulate, and thoughtful. I will be paying more attention to the authors of children's literature, and be sure to include poetry in our library, thanks to her suggestions.

Poiema says

This book was a lifeline to me when I was a new Mama. I knew that I wanted to read the "best" books to my children, but had no idea where to start. I had my children late in life, and I could recall only a few classics from my own childhood. Gladys Hunt writes a compelling case for keeping a literature rich environment, and then gives wonderful book lists categorized by age. I have given this book away as a baby shower gift many times. It is invaluable for starting new moms on the path to reading with their children.

Nancy says

I bought this strictly for the reading list at the back of the book. I had no expectation for the actual text of the book. This book has surprised me in every way! Gladys Hunt and I think just alike about reading and raising kids. This book encouraged me and spurred me on to make Bible reading a consistent part of our daily lives.

Jessica Dudenhofer Beery says

Great reference on WHY it's important to introduce good books to your children/family with an extensive checklist in the back with author-selected "good books." I'll be pulling this one out frequently.

Jami Balmet says

I don't know why it took me so long to read this book! It was so so good and I highly recommend it to EVERY parent, whether or not you homeschool! So much encouragement and so many tangible ideas packed inside ???? I got it cheap on kindle but as soon as I finished it, I ordered the hard copy because this book is a keeper!!

Sarah Middlestead says

This is the book that caused me to fall in love with finding books.

Katie says

I am in love with this book! The author is a passionate proponent of reading and the importance of introducing it to a child early on.

The book's chapters include what kind of books to read to children, why to read to children, a tongue-in-cheek top ten list of "How to raise a non-reader", and of course, a list of "How to raise a reader".

The second part of the book is an annotated list of books for different ages and stages, up through the teen years.

"More than ever before, families have to repeatedly make conscientious decisions about what is valuable and then choose the best over the mediocre. If appreciation of beauty and the gift of articulation are meaningful to you, then I suggest that exposure to great writing is a necessity.

It's sometimes a choice; reading aloud to a child for a half hour, or calling a friend on the phone. Using the television as a morning baby-sitter, or finding a more imaginative way to entertain a child. Life is full of choices, and I find myself impatient with people who cry 'lack of time'. We make time for what we think is important, and in doing so we teach our children about what things really matter in life."

Lindsey says

This book includes a phenomenal book list for read alouds as a family and books for your children to enjoy, separated by age and genre. So helpful!!

Wendy Jones says

The first half of this book is comprised of simple facts that are well known about books, but it's beautifully worded. The best part of this book is the second half which is an awesome list of books categorized into different ages and for different seasons. I've used this book to pick out gifts for all of my nieces and nephews

with corresponding toys to match their books!! It was timely for this season!!

Jennifer says

This book was mysteriously sent to me by an amazon seller with 'The Hero With a Thousand Faces' by Joseph Campbell. I didn't order it and it came with no explanation, so I had to read it. Obviously. It turns out that the purpose of 'Honey for A Child's Heart' is to promote reading to children as a positive and worthwhile pastime. Cool. Too bad the message is ruined by Hunt's view that being gay is an "unacceptable" and "inappropriate" subject for books or discussions with children. She also denounces divorce and tragic events as unsuitable, and condemns video games and television. That all this is delivered with the sickly sweet insistence of someone who is "speaking as a mother", and therefore knows best, repels me all the more. This isn't a gentle Christian guidebook, this is an insulting text that reduces Christian values to hatred and ignorance. It wasn't even researched well, she constantly uses brackets to display her idiocy: "Lemony Snicket (fictitious name?)"...ERGH

Jeremy says

Recommended here. For a website with book reviews for parents, see here.

Chapter 4: Fantasy and Realism (read on July 30–31, 2016)

55: Alice applies her current situation to her own life [reading the story you're in; cf. *Tilt* and learning to see]; fantasy and realism combined in one chapter [cf. Ryken's *The Christian Imagination*, in which fantasy and realism get separate chapters; cf. *Children and Literature*, which says, "The more fantastic the fantasy, the more necessary it is to supply a firm anchor in reality. . . . [F]antasy grows from . . . firmly established realism" (398–99)]; less harm when reading about danger (as opposed to danger in real life); pleasure of reading good stories [cf. Sidney stuff from ENG 2301]; paying attention [cf. Wilson's *Writers to Read*] to see the second meaning

56: real/unreal; "Good fantasy helps us see reality in unreality, credibility in incredibility"

57: psychology of happy endings (in a book titled *The Uses of Enchantment*—cf. Charles Taylor and post-secularism theme); delight and teach

58: but fantasy is not just a dressed up moral (see p. 55); Greek for *fantasy* means "making visible" [related to *phantom*]; favorite fantasies are by MacDonald, Lewis, and Tolkien

59: fantasy fiction makes application easy (better than a sermon does [cf. Herbert poem]); "Good literature should always make life larger"

59–61: fantasy changes lives

61: fantasy is not just for children (see p. 56)

61–63: bad "realistic" fiction of the late 1960s (see morals on p. 58); "'realism' binge"; "those gray books" vs. "a new, more hopeful kind of book"; "message books" that push a liberal agenda; understanding and compassion are necessary; combine ✓ quotes; adults are affected too; fantasy has more realism than the books of the "realism binge" (p. 62)

63: stories should "illumine what is true in significant ways"

64: "realism" shouldn't burden readers; reality isn't superior to fantasy; certain kinds of literature [gritty "realism"?] often makes readers less, not more

Abbie says

Fantastic essays about why we should read to our children... and not just any books, but the great classic literature of the past (and present). Loved this.

Julie Biles says

I read the 2nd edition around 1983 as a young mother when my husband and I were figuring out the role of children's literature in our home. This book was most impacting! We often give the new editions to new parents today.

Margo Berendsen says

I loved this book! I jokingly told a good friend of mine that it's a great tool for brainwashing our kids into loving books (and it works even if they don't take naturally to reading). This book captures exactly the way I feel about books and kids and my family. Love is the #1 important thing I want to give my family, but yeah, reading is pretty much #2. (possibly food and shelter ranks #2 and reading is #3, but that depends on the day).

I started reading out loud to my kids in desperation. All four started out as slow readers, and instead of reaching a point where they started reading on their own, when I turned the TV off and said, find something else to do, reading was never that "something else" and when I suggested Why don't you read a book? they would roll their eyes or make faces. I had so many of my childhood favorites I wanted them to read. Zero interest. So, I started making them gather together at night time on our big bed and I read my favorite books to them. And then the nights I'd forget to gather them, they showed up anyway, eager to listen. And so started something wonderful. So wonderful in fact that I AM ACTUALLY THANKFUL MY KIDS DIDN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH READING ON THEIR OWN, because then I would have missed out on one of the most incredible bonding experiences I have ever known.

So it has been a thrill to read a book about another family that experienced this bonding and wanted to share it with the world.

Mostly the book reaffirmed my strong beliefs about the importance of reading together but I also got a few new good ideas, especially about how kids never outgrow the really good classic picture books (I never outgrew them, so why should I assume my kids would now that they are 10, 13 and 16?) So we are going to add some favorite (classic, high quality) picture books back into the mix once in a while. I read recently such books are a huge boost for dyslexic kids like my youngest daughter, that need so much repetition in order to gain fluency. if you have to read something over and over again to get the words wired into your brain, than the very best quality books that you love to come back to should be the ticket - instead of insipid readers that she's been forced to work through at school. I'm homeschooling her this year and we'll be re-reading the original Winnie the Poohs, Beatrix Potter books, Lyle the Crocodile, Blueberries for Sal, Velveteen Rabbit, Hans Christian Anderson's original "The Little Mermaid" and lots of other short classics, and some of our own favorite not-yet-classics like the The House in the Night and Where Did All the Dragons Go and the

McDuff books about a family in the 1940's with a West Highland White Terrier.

I was thrilled to discover all of my favorites listed in the book lists (and even mentioned quite frequently in the chapters). The Narnia books of course, the Hobbit, Robin McKinley's Beauty, and the Blue Sword; the Black Stallion books, George MacDonald's Princess books, the Bronze Bow... and this really excited me because I thought nobody remembered this author anymore! Kate Seredy! There were many I haven't heard of (some of them only recently back in print) that I'm going to try, like Little White Horse, the Wolves of Willoughby Chase, The King's Equal, and Out of the Dust.

I loved the author's lengthy defense of fantasy in the chapter Fantasy and Realism (without downgrading realistic fiction). Here's a great quote from the section "Reality in Unreality":

Some people object and say that all those hidden meanings are lost on children... Children suspect more is present than the actual story, and because there is little space between the real and the unreal world in a child's mind, they reach across with amazing ease and begin to ferret out the truth.

Another piece of wisdom from this section:

The most subtle and profound ideas are often found in books written for children. A kind of suspended reality exists in which what is true becomes more obvious. Good fantasy helps us see reality in unreality, credibility in incredibility.

At the end of Chapter 5:

A good book is not problem-centered, it is people-centered. It reveals how to be a human being and what the possibilities of life are; it offers hope.

I loved the chapter on poetry because this has always been my weakness in reading; I have a hard time appreciating most poetry and though now I have a few favorites, reading new poetry is not something I ever think to do. But there are so many advantages of reading poetry for kids, in learning beautiful words, discovering vivid images, and the rhythm and rhyming of many poems is supposed to be a huge help to dyslexic readers!

In Chapter 6, the Pleasure of a Shared Adventure:

The best teaching we have done in our family has been through reading the Bible and good books aloud together. It is really not such a profound concept. How would you best be enlightened to some truth? Is it being told that it was wrong to be nasty and thoughtless others, or to meet and come to love some character in a story and then feel her hurt when someone is unkind and says cruel things? ... But deeper than this have been those elements of great strength of character and largeness of heart... These are intangible things. One cannot drive a point home and say, "There he has learned that lesson." But by continual exposure to a variety of people and experiences, the real values of life are taught most profoundly. What we are

doing is helping our children collect "bits of perfection" of ideas and values on which to build their lives.

Some wonderful wisdom for reading the Bible with your children:

Parents, not uncommonly, invest time with small children, reading them favorite Bible stories and speaking of salvation. The failure comes in teaching children through their teens how this information fits together to form a true basis for life. Our goal is a valid world/life view -. This cannot be scolded into a person; we can only expose young minds to great truth and discuss it with them. Whether a child adopts a Christian world/life view is not our responsibility. Our job is to expose the child to what we believe is true (see Honey for a Teen's Heart for a larger treatment of reading the Bible with teens). Our need for a word from God is never finished. He speaks to our situation, ministers to our problem areas. We receive fresh insights, daily reminders, and new promises because the Bible is indeed "profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Tim 3:16) ... the idea that has worked best to ward attaining the goal in our family life. We have given this simple method years of trial and are pleased with its effectiveness in making the Bible meaningful.... everyone at the table (and this included our guests) had to ask a question and answer one. We made a game out of it: sometimes the question was directed to the person on our left, other times to the person on our right. We'd have to listen carefully, because sometimes the question we had thought to ask was usurped by someone whose turn came first, and we would have to think of another. At first our questions were simple. Where did Jesus go? What did Jesus do? Who went with Jesus? Children pick up the idea rapidly. Then we began to interject another kind of question. Why did Jesus say that? What does he mean? And then, What can we learn from Jesus... Children's questions invariably center on facts, but before long you will find them asking deeply penetrating ones. If Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead, why did he let his dear friend John the Baptist stay dead? Why did the Jews say Jesus had an evil spirit?

I'll end with a quote from near the beginning, so beautiful:

Take all the words available in the human vocabulary and read them from the dictionary, and you have only a list of words. But with the creativity and imagination God has given human beings, let these words flow together in the right order and they give wings to the spirit. Every child ought to know the pleasure of words so well chosen that they awaken sensibility, great emotions, and understanding of truth. This is the magic of words - a touch of supernatural, communication that ministers to the spirit, a true gift.
