



Episode 11

Using the Library without Losing Your Mind Guest: Jamie Martin

Sarah: I'm Sarah Mackenzie and this is Episode 11. A few weeks ago, I took all six of my kids to the library. Now, if you're new here to the Read-Aloud Revival, you may not know that I have six kids. I do, and half of them are two and under. So things around here are lively. At any rate, in a moment of characteristic optimism, I got all six of them loaded up into our ginormous van and decided a quick library trip was in order.

My 10-year-old needed the next Percy Jackson book. My budding reader needed something more to practice on. And I needed to pay the ridiculous fine on our family library card, so off we went. It all went fine for approximately 7 seconds. By the time we left, I was cueing frantic *take the toddler and go* signs at my 12-year-old while running the books under the self-checkout scanner at lightning speed. And by the way, let me just take a brief moment here to say that a mother of many did not create self-checkout stands. There's just no way.

Anyway, the twins were squalling in the stroller because they wanted to get out and the other kids were arguing over who had to carry the heaviest bag out. And I was hot and

frustrated and sweaty. By the time I got to the van, I was snapping the twins into their car seats and telling the big kids to stop poking at each other and teasing each other and looking at each other for the entire ride home. It was fantastic!

I have a feeling some of you can relate. I know that Jamie Martin can. And that's why I invited her on the show. On that very afternoon, on the way home, I decided that I would shoot Jamie an email as soon as I got home and ask if she would pretty, pretty please come talk to me about successful library use. And she did. So that's what I have to share with you today.

I am so happy to be chatting with my friend Jamie Martin today. You probably already know who she is. Jamie is the editor of the wildly popular SimpleHomeschool.net, and writes at her own blog [SteadyMom](http://SteadyMom.com). She has written several ebooks, including *Mindset for Moms*, *Steady Days*, and *The Steady Mom's Freedom Guide*. She's also written *The Secrets of a Successful Homeschool Mom* and I'll tell you how to go pick up a copy of that at the end of the show.

A couple of years ago, Jamie wrote an excellent post called *On Why I Stopped Taking My Children to the Library*. In that post, she discussed her family's struggles with using the library and how she had shifted gears to make the most of the awesome free resource that a library is in a way that met her family's needs at that time. This is something I hear about constantly, whether it's that you rack up library fines like I do or your toddler throws an epic fit or, in my case, all three of them do. Or you can't convince your kids to leave the twaddle on the shelves and pick something more worthwhile. Visiting the library can be both incredibly rewarding and unbelievably frustrating. So today, Jamie and I are going to chat about strategies that might help your family make better use of the library, how she decides which books are worth reading, and what reading aloud looks like in her home right now.

Sarah: Hey Jamie! Thank you so much for taking my call.

Jamie: Hi Sarah! Thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Sarah: I appreciate you carving out some time on your family vacation for us. This is a real treat.

Jamie: You're welcome. It worked out perfectly so Steve is out with the kids on the beach, I think.

Sarah: Perfect. Well, can you share a little bit about your family before we get going?

4:42 Jamie shares about her family.

Jamie: Yes. I would love to. We live in Newtown, Connecticut. And I have three children. Jonathan just turned 10 this week on Monday, and he was the first child who joined our family. Then we adopted Elijah who is from Liberia, West Africa. And there are only six months that separate the boys so Elijah was the second to join us. And Trishna, my daughter, is from India originally. We adopted her. She was the third child to join our family but she became our oldest child because she is older than the boys, and now she's 11. So right now, the kids are 11, 10, and 9. And then for half of the year, the boys are the same age, and the other half, they kind of stairstep like that.

Sarah: That's fun. Do they play that up a bit?

Jamie: They do. Well, the funny thing is that the boys are exactly the same height and all three of them weigh the same and they wear the same shoe size. And it's all a bit wild at times. And then Steve and I have been married for 16 years and he's from England so in total we have four countries represented in our family of five. And Steve's from England. He works for a charity called Love146, which helps children who have been involved in human trafficking and helping to get them to a safe and restored place. So that's our family and that's what we do on a day-to-day basis.

Sarah: So you've written about how libraries have been indispensable to you as you've been parenting and at one point, you stopped taking your kids to the library completely. Can you tell me about that and what spurred that decision?

6:40 Why Jamie stopped taking her kids to the library — do what works best for your family right now.

Jamie: Sure. Well, it's so funny because I find that that post draws a real reaction from people, either like "Thank you for saying, for giving me permission to say that I don't like taking my kids to the library," or on the other hand, people are kind of horrified that I was suggesting that the library isn't the most incredible thing to do as a homeschooling or a book-loving family.

But really, I have to say that it just comes down to finding what works for your family in that season. And really that's what I want to give permission for people to do in this case with the library — or really in any case that comes to you in parenting or homeschooling. There's so many times I feel like we turn to experts or we look to bloggers and we feel like they are saying what we should be doing, and so I just wanted to lay out a disclaimer before we go on to discuss anything that really, you are the expert on your family, each of you.

And what spurred our decision was that, was me saying, "Okay, this isn't working. What can we do differently? How can we transform this for now, for what we need now?" And now it's transformed because that was a few years ago. Now it's transformed again. So that's my disclaimer to you — toss out anything in this podcast that doesn't resonate with you, to keep whatever does, and to feel the freedom to do that.

And so back to the library, our library history... When the kids were little, we had a great library setup where the library just

catered to preschoolers, and by having not just books but they had a train table, and they had puzzles and little toys and things like that as well. And so what I found was all the picture books were there together. The toys were in the middle. The chairs around and I could sit and they could toddle over with their book and we could read for a minute and then they could toddle back to the train table, and because it was kind of enclosed in the space, I could also stand up and be right there while they were playing and looking at books on the shelves myself. And that just worked really well.

And then when we moved, it had nothing to do with that — that it was a bad library. We have an excellent library now as well. But it just had to do with logistics and I had never realized that before in the old library we'd been to, how much just the setup of it had helped us to be successful there. But in this library, the picture books are in the middle but then lining the walls are the chapter books — not really young adult where the content would be inappropriate for a 5, 6-year-olds — but just the mid-grade kind of chapter books are all lining the walls.

And the first time that we went — I mean, it's not like the kids were super little, I would say maybe like 9, 8, and 7 or 8, 7, 6, that kind of range. But it was so just a bit of chaos where my youngest Elijah, he was just attracted to books with scary covers.

Sarah: Yes.

Jamie: I feel like everybody has that kid. And especially because a lot of the chapter books, these kind of books for older kids, they had them facing out so you see the covers and you can be drawn to them and so while I'm

trying to make sense of my library list or think through intentionally how can I get a few quality books, I felt like he was just running up to me with like one after another, with scary book covers, and then me trying to explain that we weren't going to check that out...

And so I felt, well, he probably just needs to get used to this and we need just a few weeks and we'll kind of find a rhythm and our method. And so we did that for a few weeks. And every time, it was similar. And I just didn't feel like it was a really quality experience. I felt like it was kind of hot air drill: get in, get out, checkout before anyone loses it or we embarrass ourselves. And so...

Sarah: That's what we do now, when we pull into the library. I look at my big kids and I say, "Okay, these babies will probably hold on for like 8 minutes. Go!"

12:14 Jamie's new way to approach the library: alone, with a list.

Jamie: Exactly. And so after a few tries, I just thought, you know what, let's just think of a different way to do this. How can it work differently? And so I just decided to start going by myself. And maybe twice a month, I would go, usually in the evenings, and choose books and really enjoy myself because I love libraries and always have even since I was a girl.

So I would really enjoy it and I would get things that... I would keep a list at home of things the kids mentioned, if they were interested in a topic or had just brought something up, I would just jot it down and take that with me so that then I can look for

that and I had the time to do it. So then what I brought home, I mean it was like... It felt like Christmas morning when I walked through the door to the kids. We have this tradition that we spread all the books all over the floor when we get home from the library. And we've always done that, so that they come in and they're just thrilled.

And they were just always so excited that I had been to the library and brought books. And there was no real pushback on that, like how come we didn't go or anything like that. There was no, where is the book with the scary cover?

Sarah: Well that was something you mentioned in your post that I love and I thought... Yeah, you mentioned that there was no focus on the things they weren't allowed to take home or you didn't want them to take home, like there would be if you'd brought them with you. They just see all the good stuff that you've got and that's exciting.

Jamie: Exactly. Exactly. And so it was a different way then. I mean I never anticipated we would use the library that way. But it was so good and honest, it was just a really sweet season and I think we enjoyed it just as much doing it that way.

14:26 Approach your family life as seasons.

And then my surprise is that really — I know you were mentioning looking at things as seasons of your family's life, seasons of time. And it really just was just that, because I would say even less than two years later after that, I found that I was able to take them all again. And now we go more than we've ever

gone, which is funny reading my posts back, looking at it, where we've ended up.

And I guess that's also something I would tell people is just that to do what you need to do for now and not anticipate or think about what does this mean for the future? My kids will never learn to go to the library or behave there. Not to kind of generalize or worry about it because it was just kind of a developmental place in our family and we did what we needed to do and now I just absolutely love taking them. They're all so focused now that I have my older two really independent, focused readers. When they go they're kind of on a mission and then they just sit down and start reading and I have plenty of time to even look things up on the computer or they all know now where their favorite sections are. And it's just such a beautiful thing to see, having out of that experience was just that we responded to the needs of the moment and we're doing that now and now it just looks different than it did then.

16:18 We all forget that WE (as the parents) are the experts on our family.

Sarah: Well there's a couple of things I love about that. I love that you say, you're the expert on your family, you're the expert on your kids, because I think there is such — we all fall into this tendency to look at... I think parents have probably always done this with the experts and books, what am I supposed to be doing? But maybe we're more likely to do it now that there's this proliferation of blogs on parenting and mothering and homeschooling or whatever speaks to our

mode of parenting. And so we kind of look around and see what we're supposed to do and then we feel like we should do it like the people who are blogging about that particular topic.

16:54 Focus on what's working now.

But I think it's probably really helpful for us to think of our parenting in seasons. One of the things that I've done kind of haphazardly on my own blog is read about what's working now and it's been interesting to me. Usually it's about homeschooling and I just sort of bullet point out a few of the things that are working right now in our homeschool and as I've looked back on those old posts, I'm amazed at how different things two years ago looked than they do...

In our home, we've had a pretty dramatic shift because we've added three babies in two years. And so there's a big difference what our homeschool looked like three years ago to what it looks like today. But it's really helpful to realize that the way you're doing things in your homeschool, or if you're not homeschooling, the way you're doing things in your family life today, just do what works for your family right now in this season and then realize it doesn't always have to look exactly like that. So if it doesn't match your ideal vision of how you want to use the library, that's okay. Use it as best as you can now and that's exactly what you did with your family which I think is really inspiring.

17:59 The next phase of library: one-on-one research.

But I know you mentioned wanting to move into another phase of using the library. I think you called it like a library plan, sort of like the next phase in using the library for our family I'm hoping would be one-on-one research, where I take one child to the library and help them learn how to look something up or research a certain topic. So were you able to make that happen?

Jamie: It's funny because I anticipated that being the plan because I anticipated that I would never be able to take my three children to the library successfully together based on what we were currently experiencing, and instead I found that now we can and so actually that hasn't happened that I've taken them one at a time.

But I really like that idea and I think it still could be something that we implement in the future, especially as they are getting older and they just have their own unique interests. You really want to fuel that, and the concept of how parents sometimes take their kids on individual dates and things like that. I think what a great place to go for a date with your kids, is to the library.

Sarah: My kids would probably love that, ice cream and the library or something.

19:44 The beauty, and convenience, of interlibrary loans.

Jamie: Yeah, and just as a really fun one-on-one way to look at things without having the distractions of other children around. So we haven't really done that much except for here

and there where I will just need to run in and I've got someone with me, that kind of thing. But another thing I use all the time is interlibrary loan, and that has just changed our whole life, that you can request a book online, any book really, and if it's not in your own library, they will get it for you. And I just think, oh my goodness, that type of thing just boggles my mind and makes me fall in love with libraries.

Sarah: Yes, me too. At our library, we can request interlibrary loans to get books that aren't in our library system at no cost and we can ask for books from the other libraries in our system to be shipped to us at no cost — not to our own home but shipped to our home library. But my friend Pam's library charges for that service. So what does your library do? I'm just curious.

Jamie: Yeah, ours has no charge. It's incredible and they also have no limit. One time, they joked with me when I was checking things out that they might have to impose one simply because of my usage [laughter] which is to say how much I take advantage of the system that's out there. It's just remarkable. But I was in a library system previously where they did. I can't remember if they charged or just if they had a limit of the number of books you could request within a certain time period. So I know that there are some like that. Ours, they will even get books from out of state if they don't have it anywhere in the state. So yeah, it's just phenomenal that we have this free service available. I just think it's incredible.

21:26 Developing a relationship with your librarian.

Sarah: So it sounds like you have a relationship with the librarians at your library. I think a lot of people want that but they don't know how to start that conversation or to kind of start that relationship. How did that unfold for you?

Jamie: Well kind of slowly, but I wanted to... Right off the bat, we're a very different-looking family because we have different races in our family, different nationalities, and we homeschool, and so I always want to kind of put us out on our best foot forward, and so the very first time we went to the library in Newtown — which is just a fabulous place and we love it — I introduced myself to the librarian that was there in the children's section and the kids, too, and said that we homeschool and she had a really positive response to that, which I was very happy about, that there were a lot of homeschoolers in the area. So it was something that they were familiar with and that in itself was very encouraging.

And because of my writing work, I will often write at the library as well, so I go there so often that I have just become a very familiar face. They just can't get rid of me even if they wanted to. So through that I've met one of the head librarians and just tried to chat with her, say hello, tried to remember her name and the names of the people that I see there most frequently so that I can just greet them by name. And it's always special that someone takes the time to remember your name, and then I made sure to introduce the kids to her and just mention different books we've enjoyed, or things we're looking for. I

think one time when we were coming on a vacation, a different one, we were looking for audiobooks and so we just had a little conversation about that and about our upcoming vacation.

And then the last time I was in the library, my mom was visiting from out of state and I even introduced the librarian to my mom. So I think maybe because this is a small town we feel a little bit more at ease with doing that, but I do feel like I initiated that because I see these people as even mentors for my kids and I see the work they're doing. It's just really valuable for our community and I want to acknowledge that and also feel like we're part of it together. And you can only really do that if you take the small steps to build relationship. So that's kind of how it has worked out for us.

Sarah: That's great. And I think that's... I worked in a library for several years in circulation and so I worked pretty closely with some of the librarians there and I think for the most part, they just crave that interaction with the patrons who come in and they really want to help you find the resources you're looking for and make connections. I know the librarians I worked with loved it when they knew the families well enough that they could see something new that would come across the stacks and put it aside for a child that would love it, that kind of thing. I think maybe if we get over our fear of starting that conversation and realize that's what they're for. They really want to do that. That's why they went into what they do.

Jamie: Exactly. And these people, they just love to see children who love books, because they love books. That's why they're doing it and say... I can remember one time we were

checking out books and she asked if this was for a school report. And it wasn't. It was just things that we were interested in and she was a little bit surprised that it wasn't for a school report. And so I think they really enjoy that, too, to see kids that love books. It's simple. It doesn't take much.

25:45 How to handle twaddle.

Sarah: Maybe we can talk a little bit about twaddle. This is my biggest — well, no, this is not my biggest struggle — my biggest struggle is probably toddler tantrums. I have a whole bunch of library struggles at the moment. [laughter] I have to interject here that I took my kids to the library maybe two weeks ago and it was one of those days where I got back in the car afterwards and saw all this twaddle in my bag that I didn't realize we had checked out and the babies had thrown this big fit and I thought I'm going to call Jamie and find out if she will do a podcast with me because we need to talk about libraries. I need all the help I can get.

But one of my biggest struggles is a couple of my kids seem a little bit more drawn to picking up books that I would rather them not read and I don't have a problem with them reading some fluff a little bit here and there as long as it's not their steady diet. And I definitely don't read twaddle to them. But I don't mind if they want to read the Disney fairies books or Babysitter's Club or whatever here and there on their own.

But one of my children in particular has this tendency to just bring home stacks of it unless I head that off at the pass. So I'm curious to know how you keep that from happening now in your home with your kids?

Because my older kids are about the same ages as yours.

Jamie: I think it's nothing earth-shattering that we've done. Probably what we've done is similar to what you're already talking about, in that I know that what I'm reading to them at home and the books that we've invited into our permanent home library are all really high-quality classics or not just classics in the traditional sense but they have the spirit of a classic, whether they're new or old, which is just that inspirational kind of impulse, that you feel that the book or the story is about more than it is about. So there's depth there.

And like you're saying, because I know that our shelves are filled with that at home and when we go to the library, you feel you can allow your kids freedom to choose for themselves for the most part. And we try to keep a limit on the number of books that we check out at a time. It's still a high number, I feel like, maybe 30 to 40.

So I think most people would think that's a high number, but I will actually count them while we're making our stacks and while we're there. And if we reach where we're kind of close, I will show Trishna or Jonathan or Elijah, okay, you've got four books here, maybe on the same topic even or maybe in the same series, why don't we take two of them and save the other two for another week? Or something like that. So that way they're not taking the whole section off the shelves. And that has helped a little bit.

And I would do the same. I'll put a couple of mine back so that it doesn't feel like that it's just them having to do that type of thing. So that has worked for us. But I do try to... It hasn't become much of a problem with

chapter books, I would say. We just haven't really reached that. I haven't had to deal with the issue of checking out kind of twaddly chapter books yet. So I'm not really sure what I would do in that, and since Jonathan's really into Hardy Boys and the mystery-type series right now but I don't see that as twaddle. And he will get just a couple each time we go.

So I haven't come across that. But with picture books, we definitely have. And it's just been kind of give and take and just trying to find a flow without making overarching rules and...

Sarah: Has he found The Roman Mysteries? Have you gotten your hands on those before?

Jamie: No, I haven't.

Sarah: RomanMysteries.com There's a whole list there but they're by Caroline Lawrence and my girls love these. We just discovered them but they're all mysteries set in ancient Rome. I think AD 79 is when they start. And they are these kids that are on these sort of detective mystery adventures and they're just really awesome. They're really well done. I haven't read any of them aloud but I've flipped through lots of them and my girls... It's one of those books where they finish them and they come and they want to tell me every detail of everything that happens. But if he likes some Hardy Boys and mystery series, he might like these.

Jamie: And I'll definitely look into that because it sounds like something that he would love. He's really into that right now.

Sarah: My kids are learning Latin too and there's some little Latin messages or things they have to decode here and there, just

woven into the stories so I think that's kind of fun because it's one of those things that they're already studying so that's kind of fun.

Jamie: That's cool.

31:32 Reading aloud in Jamie's home: lots of pegging onto mealtimes.

Sarah: So tell me a little bit about what reading aloud looks like in your family with your kids the ages they are. Because they're all able to read to themselves sounds like. So what does that look like for you?

Jamie: We do a ton of reading aloud still and plan to keep doing that and I think like a lot of people, we ended up falling on mealtimes as a really good time for read alouds since everyone's kind of occupied and everyone is together. So I read at breakfast and I will read our main chapter book then, usually one chapter, sometimes two if we're all into it. Then at snack time I usually read our Bible passage or story for the day and then at lunchtime I will read more chapter book if there is an interesting library book if I wanted to read to them, I will read that. Or also Trishna is really into writing and she writes whole chapter books. She has kind of her own mystery series going herself, so also we will celebrate when she is done with one of her books and we will read it aloud.

Sarah: Oh that's so great!

Jamie: Yeah it's been fun. And then we just very recently, maybe even in the last month, my husband Steve started reading at dinner. We had done that in the past with reading a short Bible passage after dinner. But we just started doing that with regular books as well.

So we've just started *The Chronicles of Narnia* together as a family and it's the first time we've really done that as a whole family read aloud and it's been really fun. We kind of just wanted to see would this work out and Steve had the clever idea of kind of five-minute period before dinner is actually on the table when you are plating up that or you're filling cups, and that is always like a crazy time, and so Steve suggested, "Why don't I start reading then, that way I get everyone calmly at the table." If I'm still in the kitchen plating things up, it's still right there because it has been kind of planned. So I can still hear.

And so we'll start the chapter then, and that's been really a great peaceful transition and then I'll plate up, bring the food and then we just take a break while we eat and usually whoever — if I finish my dinner first I'll continue reading until he finishes his or vice versa. So that has been a really fun new thing that we've started doing.

Sarah: I don't think I would have thought of that. That's a great idea.

Jamie: I know, I thought so too. And it has worked out really nicely. And how can it get better than *Narnia*? And it makes me so happy.

Sarah: That's a great reminder too just to sort of figure out what works. When we just had the three older kids, we read aloud more often during mealtimes. Now, with the three toddlers, mealtime's pretty loud and crazy. So I'm right now trying to experiment with our schedule to see when we can... Because we're not getting quite as much read-aloud time as I'd like to, so kind of mess around with our schedule a little bit and see how we can fit

more in maybe when the babies are napping or whatever, but that's a really good reminder that it can look a little different depending on how old your kids are and what works now might not work a year from now.

Jamie: Yeah, definitely. And we didn't always do it that way, either. And I think what's unique about our situation is that we have our three kids who are less than two years between all three of them, and so when we hit a phase, like you and your younger three, when you hit a phase you are all in the phase. And then when you leave the phase, it's like oh, we just left that phase, I guess. And it's kind of you plunge headfirst into the next phase and there are real advantages and disadvantages to that.

The disadvantage being is if it's a hard phase, you're really in the hard phase. But the advantage being, when we're all together, we're all interested in more or less the same things and at the same conversation level and all of that, so that makes our situation different. But I like there's a solution for everyone out there, for your unique situation, because everybody has different things to factor in.

Sarah: Yes, definitely. Well I know we're running up against time, but I like to ask one more question. I love to see if my podcast guests can answer it without freaking out. I've asked this to Melissa Wiley and Heidi Scovel.

36:52 Jamie's favorite desert island read-alouds.

Imagine that your family is stranded on a desert island and you only have three books with you, which would you want those to be?

Jamie: Well, I can't do it with three but I could with five.

Sarah: Okay, five is good. Boy, you must be a homeschooler, always bending the rules. [laughter]

Jamie: Yes and I'm so glad that you gave me a little heads-up for that question beforehand because otherwise, I don't know if I would have been able to... It feels like a big question.

So I would take the Bible because that's our handbook for living. And then I would take *Leadership Education* which is our handbook for how we educate the kids. That's by Oliver and Rachel DeMille, so that's kind of our bible for education in a way, if you will. Then I would take The *Little House* series because that is what we've been doing this whole year, as me with the kids and then we actually did a Little House site field trip this summer which was a real experience. So those books have just taken on so much meaning, and what I love about Little House, I mean one of the things, is just you have the whole gamut of child development within these books because they've span from Laura as a little, little girl to her as a young woman and then finally an adult. And so I feel like they're some of the best parenting books out there as well. Forget about just the enjoyment of the story which is there, too. So those have helped me a lot as a mom.

Sarah: Well those are some family favorites of ours, too. We love especially the audio versions read by Cherry Jones. They're so well done and I think we've listened to the whole set twice now. It's been a little while since we've listened. But they're the stories that you can read over and over again. And

the enjoyment of them just doesn't really fade.

You have some blog posts, I think, about your Little House adventures this summer, right? So I'll make sure I link those up.

Jamie: I do. I do. I have a lot of them. Actually, I have a tag for Little House at the bottom of my blog because I have written about it so many times now.

Sarah: Okay, I'll make sure I'll link to that tag in the show notes so people can find it.

Jamie: Yeah, that would be great. So I would pick *Little House*. So then I was trying to think of maybe something a little bit different and I thought of *Jane Eyre*. I think I would take *Jane Eyre* because I was thinking about being on a desert island as a really, really challenging place to be stranded and that you would just need to pull from the best within yourself.

And that is what *Jane Eyre* is about — about a girl coming from really, really harsh, hard circumstances and yet not losing hold of this part of herself that tells her that she can overcome, that she can be more, that she can get out of a difficult situation. And it's really just about overcoming. So I think that would be a good choice.

And then I was talking about it with Steve this morning and he suggested that I should bring *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale, which is also a book that I like, and then his thought was like, you would really need some serious positive thinking if you were going to get yourself off of the island.

Sarah: That's so true.

Jamie: And I like that book a lot. So that would be my five.

Sarah: Awesome. So the Bible, *Leadership Education* by the DeMilles, the *Little House* books, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Power of Positive Thinking*. That's an awesome collection. I'm always so impressed with the different ways people think through the answer to that, so it's fun. Well, is there anything else that you wanted to say before we close off?

Jamie: I never tire of just encouraging people to explore books with their kids and it's one of my greatest passions and I think also to just say that it's okay if it's not one of your greatest passions, because that means that there's something else that is. And really it is passion that unlocks love of learning for our kids and so much of that — especially I would say in the 12 and under age range — is about them seeing you passionate about something.

So for example, when I chose to do this Little House unit study with the kids, I really didn't choose it for them. I chose it for me because I knew that I would love it and I knew that if I loved it, they would love it. And then it is even so much more than just about the books because you created this whole family culture that's become inspired and not that that means that every time we sit down and read it's just an incredible experience because it's not. It's like, *take your feet off your brother. Okay, you spilled your water, got to get a towel.*

So I don't want to romanticize it at all. But I just want to say that it's about taking your passion. I do believe very strongly that books are so critical and especially in this day and age of kids being over-screened in ways that

aren't always the best for them, that books still have a really significant part to play in their development in every way.

So to find whatever your passion is and to translate that into a way that you can engage with books. And that will look so different in each family and that's the beautiful part. We're not meant to be robotic copycats — it will be so individual and that's where you really find the life of it, is where you define it for yourself. So I would love to just encourage people to run with that and just really enjoy it.

Sarah: Oh, that's so good. Well, thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate you taking an hour out of your vacation and talking with me about libraries and reading aloud and I think our listeners are really going to be blessed by it, so thank you so much for that.

Jamie: Welcome. Thank you, Sarah.

Now it's time for ***Let the Kids Speak!*** This is my favorite part of the podcast, where kids tell us about their favorite stories that have been read aloud to them.

“Hi! My name is Jonathan Martin and I'm 10. I'm from Connecticut. I like *Pollyanna* because I like how in the beginning Miss Polly is really hard and cold and at the end she becomes very nice and very thankful, all because of *Pollyanna*.”

“My name's Elijah. I'm from Connecticut. I'm 9. My favorite story is *Ragweed*. He goes on many adventures.”

“Hi! My name is Trishna Martin. And I'm 11 years old. I live in Connecticut. One of my

favorite books is *A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman* by David Adler. Harriet's story has inspired me to free slaves, too. This book has also inspired me, what is her life is like being a slave."

Those were Jamie's kids - Trishna, Elijah, and Jonathan. Thank you so much for your messages. That was super fun.

You can get in touch with Jamie at steadymom.com or simplehomeschool.net and you can get your hands on her awesome free ebook there, *Secrets of a Successful Homeschool Mom*. It's definitely worth the read. And it's absolutely free!

Of course, I'll link to it and everything else we discussed during today's podcast in the show notes. You can find those as always at ReadAloudRevival.com. That's it for today.

I'll see you next time at the Read-Aloud Revival. Until next time, go build your family culture around books!