



RAR #52 Bonding Through Reading Aloud, Tricia Goyer

Sarah: You're listening to the Read Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that inspires you to build your family culture around books.

Hello, hello, thank you so much for tuning in. I'm Sarah Mackenzie, your host for the Read Aloud Revival podcast. Hey, it's a big month at the Read Aloud Revival. Make sure you're getting our Read Aloud Revival weekly email so you don't miss out on any of the big news you definitely want to know what we have coming right around the corner. So, head to ReadAloudRevival.com to get on the email list. When you do, we'll send you a carefully curated list of our favorite read-alouds. That's ReadAloudRevival.com.

If you're familiar with Tricia Goyer's work you know that she writes about women overcoming challenges, and I think one challenge she has dealt with beautifully in her own life is going to inspire you so very much. Tricia Goyer is a writer, a speaker, and a homeschooling mother. She's written, get this, more than 50 books, and has published over 500 articles in publications like *Guidepost* and *Home Life* magazine. In addition to her fiction books which include *The Big Sky* series and *Seven Brides for Seven Bachelors* series and a whole host of others, Tricia writes non-fiction books about family and parenting. She's the mother of 10, grandmother of two, and an adoptive parent who credits reading together with helping her get her new family adjusted and form a wonderful bond, so I know you're going to love hearing from her, I'm so excited to chat with her. Tricia, welcome to the Read Aloud Revival.

Tricia: Thank you so much for having me, I love listening to you so it's fun to finally chat with you.

Sarah: Well, when you sent me an email the first time, I have to say I had a little fan-girl moment over on my side of the computer screen, so I'm really thrilled to be talking to you today. Do you want to give us a little background on your family and your work, anything that I didn't mention already?

2:10 A little background from Tricia

Tricia: Sure. Well, you covered a lot of it, like you said I'm a mom of 10. We have three biological kids and we adopted seven over the last four or five years. I've been a homeschooling mom, my oldest is 27, he's married with two kids, so I've been homeschooling since 1994 and it's like, I don't know 12 years to go, or something like that.

Sarah: Who's counting? Don't count, it's overwhelming when you count.

Tricia: Oh yes, almost 40 years of my life will be spent homeschooling. I was a teen mom, I had my first son when I was 17 and gave my heart to the Lord when I was pregnant with him, so really have just been doing this mom thing for a really long time and I also mentor teen moms, that's another thing that I just love doing.

Sarah: Yes, and you wrote a book, you've written a couple of books for teen moms, is that right?

Tricia: I have. *Life Interrupted*, and then *Teen Mom: You're Stronger than You Think* is my newest release for young moms. So I just love just encouraging other moms out there and just letting them know that they can do great things and that God has big, big plans for them.

Sarah: So beautiful. OK, so tell me about your family. You have 10 kids, some you've added to



your family through adoption, some are biological, is that right?

Tricia: Yes. So we have three biological: Cory is 27 and he is married with two kids, our 24 year old Lesley, she's a missionary in the Czech Republic and she just got married last year. She fell in love with a wonderful Czech guy and she's over there teaching English, and then our 22 year old Nathan still lives at home and he is like my right hand man, he is such a huge help I told him he is not allowed to move out because I just depend on him so much. And then we've adopted seven. So we adopted Melissa, she's six now. We adopted her as a newborn, and then we adopted two from foster care, Casey and Bella, they were two and five when we adopted them a couple of years ago. They're five and eight now. And then we adopted four girls from foster care and their adoption was just finalized this year in January.

Sarah: Oh, congratulations!

Tricia: Then Maria is 16, Jordan and Lauren are twins and they're 13, and Florentina is my very extroverted 11 year old, she just has energy and glows wherever she goes.

Sarah: And they're all biological sisters?

Tricia: Yes, and they're biological. And they actually have an older sister that aged out of foster care who's 19 and she's married with a baby, and so technically I have three grandkids because we just, kind of, adopted her into the family too.

5:00 The drama and holiness of adoption

Sarah: Right. I think I've heard you describe the adoption process as emotional, dramatic, and

holy. So tell us more about what you mean by that.

Tricia: They have had traumatic backgrounds, so that is part of the emotional and dramatic part. With each adoption, the first year was not fun. All of them had special needs for emotional needs so we had some post traumatic stress stuff going on, we had depression going on with some of the older girls. So really, the first year there was a lot of drama, lot of fits, yelling, screaming, just all those horror stories you hear about...

Sarah: Yeah.

Tricia: ... we experienced those with the girls, and it was hard, but we were just committed. And a lot of times with those kids they have just been thrown out and moved on. Our littles they were only two and five and they had been in 12 homes...

Sarah: Oh wow.

Tricia: ...in one year. Both of our sets of siblings had failed adoptions before us, so they actually moved in with other families and the other families couldn't handle the situations and sent them back, so they came to us very hurt, very broken. So we knew it was going to be hard, and it was hard.

6:00 Reading aloud as family bonding

Sarah: So you told me that reading aloud has been an important part of your family bonding. Can you tell me more about that?

Tricia: Absolutely. Well, we always, from our biological kids on have read at bedtime, so at first it was we wanted to get our kids to actually stay in their beds at the time.



Sarah: Yes!

Tricia: That's how it all started, so John and I, or I would sit there and have me read a chapter of a chapter book, until they're almost settled in and falling asleep, so that is how we kind of got started on reading out loud. And then with homeschooling it worked in over the years reading out loud, but with our adopted kids, we just wanted to really say, 'this is our family, this is who we are, this is what we do' and it was just a wonderful way for connecting. First of all, when our girls were just doing visits, I would read aloud to them when we had overnight stays because we had about three months of visits before they actually moved in with us, and then I would send them home with some of the books. A lot of them were my books that I had written, which is kind of fun, they thought it was pretty cool ...

Sarah: I bet!

Tricia: ... to go home with books ... but once they moved in we just made it part of the nightly routine so one of the books I read then was actually one that I wrote, Love Finds You in Lonesome Prairie, Montana but it's about a young woman who's an orphan and she is part of an orphan train, so it's so funny because I've been writing about adoption for years not even really thinking that we would adopt.

Sarah: Yeah, yeah. It's almost like God was preparing you in a very unique way by having you write ...

Tricia: Totally.

Sarah: ...the stories and connect with these characters. I would imagine, I don't write fiction, but I would imagine that when you're writing fiction you have this really deep, meaningful connection with your characters and not really

realizing that was like probably fertile soil for God to work in you before you adopted. That's beautiful.

Tricia: Yeah, absolutely. And then another book is called, In Between by Jenny B. Jones, and one of our 13 year olds, Jordan, had read it and said, "Mom, we need to do this for our night time reading." So after we finished reading, Love Finds You in Lonesome Prairie, Montana we started in that, and I didn't have any idea what it was about, I knew it was this teen/tween book, but it was about a girl in foster care and moving in with a new family and how she was so certain they were going to kick her out, that she was just acting out, and it's all in this novel, and as we were reading, Jordan's like, "Mom, that's how I felt. That's how I felt." And so she was able to kind of communicate with me her emotions and her fears through a novel, which I think was so helpful that we were able to say that the characters were going through different events and it just opened these wonderful conversations.

Sarah: And I'd imagine that as a teenager specially, you're not really sure about whether or not what you feel is valid, so maybe hearing a character say it or experience it gives you a safe place to go, "hey that's how I feel too" and then a platform or not a platform so much as a safe place to approach those conversations with you. I could see that being just a really helpful way for especially those uncomfortable feelings or hard feelings.

Tricia: Absolutely, and I think a lot of times during our read out louds they'll stop me and they'll just want to talk about it, and it's been almost like therapy for us, that they can open up and share what the character's doing and maybe the situation isn't exactly the same. There have been books we've read, of course, where the



characters aren't in foster care or adopted, but we talk about fears or worries or whatever the character's going through, I think it is a wonderful time for just to talk about those emotions because it's so hard for them to process everything that they [****inaudible**** 9:42] it's just a little way that fiction kind of opened up the conversation so maybe reading one chapter would take an hour because they'd want to stop and talk, and for me, see, I really want to go to bed but also [****inaudible**** 9:53] really, really good. And then we started homeschooling them, we can share more about that too, then we did a lot more reading aloud. So it has just been wonderful for our family just in uniting us.

Sarah: OK, well first I want to tell our listeners that if you're wondering, hey! what were those book titles Tricia just mentioned? We will have links to all the books that Tricia mentions during the show today in our show notes. If you head to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for episode 52 you'll be able to see all of the books that we mentioned during today's show so you don't have to feel like you need to stop folding the laundry or pull off the road to write them down. We will keep track of them for you.

OK, well you mentioned that you started homeschooling them at one point. One thing you wrote that was just really wonderful and encouraging on your site under the "How to Homeschool" tab about homeschooling adopted children is, and I'll quote you here, "Just because you believe homeschooling is the best choice, doesn't mean it is the best choice for your adopted kids today." I would love to hear any advice or encouragement that you have for families who are adopting and thinking about homeschooling.

11:00 Adoption and homeschooling

Tricia: Absolutely. You know, I had been a homeschooling mom since our oldest was four, so homeschooling was totally what we did, and when we brought home Bella and Casey at birth, she was five, Casey was two we had so much struggles with her, just emotionally, they were actually considering institutionalizing her just because of all her difficult attitudes and the idea of adding homeschool on with a five year old who was just having such a difficult time just connecting at all with anybody I knew it would just be so hard if it was me saying, it would just put me in, kind of, an authoritative director type of person in her life, and during that time I just needed to mommy. I need to be mommy to ... you know, still read books but not academically.

Sarah: Right.

Tricia: So, for a year she went to a private Christian school and it's a therapeutic school so it's kids with special needs, they have autistic kids or lots of other kids that had been adopted but had emotional issues, and so for one year she just went there, and I almost felt like I need to hand in my homeschooling card because my child is going to school, but we just really needed it. And after a year we were doing so much better, emotionally she was doing better, we were bonded, then we were able to start homeschooling and it was OK. So, so many times the kids have so much to deal with right away and they don't even understand what a mom and dad, what their roles are, they don't have those roles in their mind in a positive way, and so trying to add homeschooling may not be the best thing for that time, and it was really great for us, just to take a year, just to have that time for me to be



mommy instead of homeschooling teacher for her.

Sarah: Yeah, I think that's beautiful. I think it's relevant to all of us in some way or another because I think a lot of times in the homeschooling world we tend to idealize homeschooling itself as the thing, we kind of forget that it's just supposed to be in service to us as a way to help us raise our children, you know, our children are the thing. And then even for families who aren't homeschooling I think parents in general we tend to do this, we kind of have this ideal vision of what we think is the best choice and sometimes we forget that that choice is actually supposed to help us raise our children, you know, it's supposed to be in service to us and so we end up putting whatever it is, whether it be homeschooling, whether it be a certain way of eating, or whatever it is, a certain way of living that we think is the best possible way, sometimes we have to wriggle around on that a little bit to give our children what they need right now, which I think is exactly what you're describing.

Tricia: Absolutely, yes.

Sarah: So, give me some other books that you've enjoyed reading. I know you've mentioned the books by Jenny B. Jones, right? Did I get that name right?

Tricia: Yes, Jenny B. Jones.

13:50 More read-aloud recommendations from Tricia

Sarah: What other books have you enjoyed with your adopted kids as you've been, kind of getting closer?

Tricia: Well, once we started homeschooling we had a lot more time for reading out loud and so

when they were in, actually, the four girls that we adopted went to public school for six months because we couldn't homeschool them while they were still under DHS care, our local the State of Arkansas they would not allow it. So when they were in school it was crazy, we had hardly any time for reading aloud at night, it was like, here's your homework and I'm so thankful for the time now. Once we started homeschooling we started using Sonlight and so we read a lot of books. We did *The Golden Goblet*, *Mara Princess of the Nile*, a lot of the world history books *Hittite Warrior* and even their science books, whatever Sonlight had for that day, I would mostly read out loud. There were three of them and the 16 year old would kind of jump in so we were doing the core for 6th-8th grade and then the little ones would kind of listen, so I was just reading out loud for hours and hours and I don't think they realized that most homeschooling isn't like that with mom just reading out loud all the time, I just wanted them all to have that time just hearing my voice. For the other kids we did a lot of online classes and we did workbooks, you know, different things because I had that relationship with them, and we'd already had hours and hours and hours of them hearing my voice and connecting with me, but really, I just wanted to have their homeschool curriculum be 'this is mom and you connecting time' and so we just did a lot of reading, we did a lot of Bible reading and really, going through cough drops and water because I was just reading so much, but I just want them to have years of me just hearing my voice and hearing them read to, and making that part of their homeschool, so it's not just about the education it's about us really connecting, and them being connected to me as their mom.



Sarah: Fantastic. So, for our listeners who may not be familiar with Sonlight. Sonlight is a literature based curriculum program that is primarily read alouds. Would you say that is a fair way to describe it?

Tricia: Yeah.

Sarah: OK, and then also we'll put a link in the show notes so you can look into it if you're interested, and the new curriculum called Book Shark is created by the same people with a slightly different focus and so we'll put links to both of those so if you're looking for literature based curriculum for your homechool those are good places to start; lots and lots of homeschoolers love Sonlight and Book Shark, and we have lots of read aloud revivalers who are using one or the other of those curriculum providers as well, so if you're a member in our forum, and you have questions about Sonlight or Book Shark or other literature based homeschool programs you can ask there and I can almost guarantee that somebody there will be able to answer your questions, so that should be helpful. So, of course, homeschooling gives you more time to read aloud to your kids during the day which is fantastic. One other thing I wanted to talk to you about a lot is your writing. We have quite a few listeners who are also writers, we have quite a few young people who are want-to-be, who want to grow up writing, and you're just incredibly prolific, that's really super inspiring to me because I'm a writer and a mother of many and I want to know more about what that looks like in your life, what that looks like in your day to day.

17:00 Writing in Tricia's day to day

Tricia: Yeah, you know, I started writing when I was 22 and I had three little kids at home. So I had just started homeschooling around that time and like, I'm going to be a Christian fiction writer, it was just my goal, and the amazing thing is I didn't grow up around books. I don't remember books in our home when I was little, I don't remember my mom ever reading out loud. The gift from God was that when I was in 6th grade we moved about a mile from the library and so while other kids were at the ballpark or out swimming or doing those things I was at the library, and so when I was this young mom and thought about what do I want for my future I had a friend who was writing a book and when she said that I just thought back to that little girl who just rode her bicycle everyday to the library and said I want to do that too, and so just started during my kids' naptimes would write articles and send stuff out and got tons of rejection. I went to my first writer's conference which was huge. If you have a Christian writer's conference close to you it's such a wonderful way we connected with a lot of published authors, a lot of want-to-be authors, Robin Jones Gunn is a dear friend, she just kind of took me under her wing and mentored me as this young mom wanting to be a writer, and just encouraged me and inspired me but mostly just connected with the other women there. There were 15 of us and we just started doing an online, like email prayer group, this was before FaceBook groups, we just prayed for each other and encouraged each other and multiple books published now. It was just like that iron sharpens iron, that encouraging each other really made a huge difference so my first book came out in 1999, it was a devotional book for Focus



on the Family, it's called Mealttime Moments it was just re-released as Whit's End Mealttime Devotions and then my first novel came out in 2003, it's a World War II historical novel about the liberation of a concentration camp in Austria and I was there just with friends and came upon this amazing story about the liberation of the concentration camp and was able to talk to some of the veterans that had been there and interview them in person so that was amazing. And really, through this whole thing, this dream has been there as a mom, and I'm interviewing these people and going on research trips and the whole time I'm like, "but I'm just the mom, but I'm just the mom" which I think, at times, has been great. It has given me the flexibility if they're working on something there have been times, like, OK, I'm going to work on this chapter too while you guys are doing your math, or whatever. But there are other times that I thought, "Man, other parents are doing all these wonderful science projects and you know, we're going on another research trip" or you know, I'm telling my kids, "No, I just need to write for an hour" so there has been a struggle with that too, but what I've found is, especially with my three older kids that were there from the beginning, it's been such a good example to them of what it means to like, see your talents and follow God, and sit down and do hard work, they've seen me when I've had nothing published and just working really hard, they've been on the research trips with me and they see when the books come so it's really been a wonderful example. We say we want our kids to grow up and use their talents and do big things for our God or follow the goals that they have set for themselves, I think we really need to model that, and for years what I thought was a disadvantage to them have actually turned out to be an advantage because they've seen, look

what mom can do, and I can do that too, you know, my 24 year old is living in Europe. She started college when she was 16 and graduated with her Bachelors when she was 21 and packed up and moved to Europe when she was all of 22 years old. She knew a church over there that wanted to work with her and she just did it, and I'm like, Oh no! but I realized I was the example, I had been an example and we read tons of missionary books when she was growing up and of course, that's what she's going to do. So it's amazing to see it kind of go in full circle in my kids' lives now.

21:00 Modeling for our children

Sarah: That's really encouraging me to because I will say that since I've started writing and working a lot more than I used to there's been this weird tension. I was just talking to my sister about this last week. There's been this weird tension about feeling like we all have to make a trade off and one of the trade off's I feel like I make as a writer and as someone who runs the Read Aloud Revival is that my kids, I do less things that I see other people doing with their kids, especially homeschooling moms, kind of the amazing projects and things like that. We all feel guilt, I think, for all the things that we're not doing, but listening to you talk about the richness that comes from this life too, or whatever life God has called us to, that's really encouraging and beautiful to me.

Tricia: Yeah, and that's just how our family has lived. They've just been along with me as we've been interviewing people or been on trips or every trip we go on I'm researching something and we go to some museum where we meet up with people. You know, they've met amazing authors, we've had people - amazing authors -



stay at our home, we've had missionaries stay at our home. They just have this rich education that I didn't plan on and so they don't even know that we totally miss making homemade marshmallows or whatever things ...

Sarah: Yeah.

Tricia: ... are going on at the time that other homeschoolers would be doing. They don't understand. In my mind I was thinking, 'oh they're missing out' but really, they don't miss that. This is just our life and how we have lived as homeschoolers and it's really benefitting them just the world that they've explored that maybe never would have happened if I hadn't been writing and speaking.

Sarah: Yeah, I love that. I think about that a lot too, how I want my kids to grow up and to use their talents and live out their full potential and to contribute to the world in the unique way that they've been created to contribute and yet, I feel guilty when I know that I'm doing that myself, and so it's kind of funny, so it's like that, you know, remembering this is that modeling that I'm doing for them, this is the kind of thing that I hope my kids get to do someday, is work in the areas and in the ways that God has uniquely suited them to work and to contribute.

Tricia: It's so amazing to see, like, the things that our family, you know, we served, and we gave, and the things that we focused on, that was just the seeds for them going farther. I never have been a missionary in Europe, my daughter is. So the seed, the books we've read, we served with teen moms or whatever in our community, how that was a seed that grew into something bigger and so it's just amazing how those things that God does put in our hearts and the goals He's given us, the dreams He's given us will someday

grow into something even more in our kids that we never maybe even dreamed, they are just seeds we're planting and He knows putting what parents with what kids and what I love, how that will impact what my kids are going to love, and so it's just cool to see that it's just a bigger picture than sometimes we even think when we're sitting down with our books to read.

24:15 Tricia's writing schedule

Sarah: Exactly. So you're saying you have been published for less than 20 years but you've written over 50 books, right?

Tricia: Yes.

Sarah: Or written and co-written over 50 books, that's amazing. So do you write every day? Is that a fair guess?

Tricia: I try.

Sarah: OK.

Tricia: Especially since we've had the adopted kids there's a lot of, they go to therapy and we have different, it just seems like it's busy but I try to write every day, and I think it's actually been a benefit having kids at home and homeschooling because my writing time may be an hour or two hours and I'll say "OK, I have to write 1000 words or 1500 words in these two hours" whereas I have writer friends, I mean, not to compare all the way, sometimes they have eight hours and they'll strive for 1500 words. I think it's benefitted me because I have such a limited time I can't play solitaire.

Sarah: Exactly.

Tricia: Or organize my desk. I've always had kids at home since I've written, so it's just been this is my writing time and I just have to get something



done. I have a novel due in less than two weeks and it's like every day I'm like, OK, that laundry's going to have to wait, I'll have to do that tomorrow or I just have to have the priorities there to be dedicated to get something done almost every day, and then it's amazing how when you work for an hour or two hours on a daily basis what a lot of work you've produced.

Sarah: Absolutely. Like, all those little bits add up. That's what I was telling somebody not too long ago Teaching From Rest is a pretty short book but it still, I wrote it in these 15 minute chunks, I had just had the twins, the twins were six months old when I was writing that book, and really I wrote it in 15 minute chunks over a period of a while, and that just added up to being finally being a finished product but I also like the freedom of being able to kind of write in the nooks and crannies of the day if I can, so I agree that's really helpful.

26:20 Books from Tricia's childhood

So you said you weren't really read to much as a child. Did you read? You were a reader after you moved next to the library, is that right?

Tricia: Yes, absolutely.

Sarah: So what were your books that really influenced you as you were growing up?

Tricia: The Little House on the Prairie books, anything by Laura Ingalls Wilder, I don't know how many times I re-read those. Nancy Drew, I'm pretty sure I've read [****inaudible**** 26:29] Brown, and then I would get Helen Keller, I would just have the library find anything that they could on Helen Keller, so I read short books about her, long books, I just would get on this character /

person and read, read, read. And it was crazy because I wasn't read to, I don't remember my parents reading, and there was just something in me that would just come home with piles of books, and in fact, I remember one summer day I had checked out two plastic bags full of books and I put them on the front of my bicycle and there was actually a hill that would go from the library to the house and I was going down the hill and the books on the front weighed more than me because I ended up flipping over the handle bars

Sarah: Oh my goodness.

Tricia: [****inaudible**** 27:13] Cars had to stop because there was like me and books everywhere, so reading can be dangerous at times when you check out too much books at the library. I remember even in 6th grade I would take home piles of picture books because I hadn't read them, it was like I just discovered this whole new world of reading and would just read everything that was out there.

Sarah: Have you read Miss Spitfire by Sarah Miller?

Tricia: No.

Sarah: OK. I read this, oh gosh, must have been a handful, more than a handful of years ago. I know it was published in 2010, it's called Miss Spitfire Reaching Helen Keller and it's a fictionalized book for young readers from the point of view of Annie Sullivan, so Helen Keller's teacher, and I remember enjoying it a lot. I want to say, it might be for, I'm trying to remember, it's been so many years since I've read it, but my guess is that it would be for somewhere between 10 and 16 or something, maybe tweens. But it was really, really... I really enjoyed reading it so if you are wanting to revisit your childhood favorites



Miss Spitfire might be a good new one to kind of take you back to Helen Keller stuff.

Tricia: I love that. I love how even as adults rediscovering books or discovering books with children. I recently discovered the Betsy-Tacy books, so this last year I read the Betsy-Tacy books with my kids and I had never read Anne of Green Gables, I don't even know why, so that's what I'm currently reading to my little kids during their bedtimes is Anne of Green Gables. And it's so fun as an adult, like, oh, what are we going to read next? I think sometimes I get more excited than they do.

Sarah: Me too! Me too, and I'll find that I like to read the first book in a series but then I don't really want to keep reading the series because I'm so ready to ... there's so many other books that I can't wait to read so a lot of times I'll read the first book in a series, like Anne of Green Gables is like my favorite, I think it's like the most perfect book ever, and so I like to read the first one and then just hand the next ones to my kids, but then I'll find myself sneak reading them on my own because they're so delightful. So I'm curious you're writing so much, your kids are seeing you write so often and watching that whole process of research and writing and thinking about writing, do any of your own children write, or do any of your kids want to be writers or write for fun?

29:30 How writing has influenced Tricia's children

Tricia: Absolutely. It's so funny because they never, like when they grow up they think I'm not going to be like mom and then they end up being exactly like mom. I think we had such a literature influenced home that it just naturally. So, my

daughter graduated, she has her degree in writing and editing, and she's teaching English like I mentioned in the Czech Republic now. She's a great writer. I tell her all the time that she needs to write more. She has a blog but I think she'd be great writing books but my sons actually are the ones that want to be writers. So my 27 year old, married, two kids, he kind of writes books on the side, but my 22 year old just finished a novel and so I'm reading through it, editing it, and his goal within the next couple of months is to self publish it. It's this time travel with a Christian allegory book, and it's really good. So I always taught writing to homeschooling groups, now I drag them along, so it's amazing to see that wow [****inaudible**** 30:26] that I'm dragging them along; so my three older ones. And then one of my adopted girls, the 13 year old, she is working on a book too, and so she won't let me read it yet but she spends hours a day on the computer and it's about a teenager that gets adopted by a band, so I'm curious to see what adoption on the road by a music band looks like in her eyes and her in mind.

Sarah: Yes, totally.

Tricia: I mean she spends hours every day working on it so it's wonderful to see that they, I think their love of books has just grown in them, and there's just this natural rhythm to their writing. I think so much from hearing reading out loud that they just have grown into some wonderful writers.

Sarah: I can totally see that. My oldest, 14 and 12 and 10, those are my three oldest kids, and they're all writing stories right now. I only get to peek when they tell me I can now read it, but my 12 year old is writing a fairy tale, she's combining fairy tale characters into a new story, it's really interesting. Anyway, I was reading through it the



other day (the part that she allowed me to because she's done with that part), and the turns of phrase and the vocabulary and the cadence of her writing I thought, 'this could only be achieved in a 12 year old who's heard, not just read a lot, but heard a lot of language, written language spoken out loud through the ear' because the cadence was so well done, it was interesting to me to read that and to think I wrote a ton when I was this age and nothing I wrote was this good. So that's really inspiring. Do you have anything you could tell our listeners who want to encourage their children's writing or encourage the young writers in their home?

32:15 Advice for young writers

Tricia: Absolutely. So, I did a homeschool writing group for years and years and we would do the same thing every time we met. They'd have to bring between 1,000 and 1,200 words of something they wrote and I told them "don't worry about grammar, don't worry about grammar, don't worry about spelling" and naturally they kind of pick it up as they go but I think so much times with having to get everything right that they lose their creativity, so don't even worry about that. And then we would bring it and everyone would have a chance to read it in class, so we'd have two or three a week, and then we'd have to share three things that we really liked about the writing and one thing that we thought that they could improve. And so they'd go around, there'd probably be like eight in the class and at the end I'd give my input. And usually by the time it got to me all the other kids had caught something, so if they have a chance to get with other kids that are writing, sometimes they can see what works and doesn't work more in somebody else's writing than their own. It really

just helps to get the story on the paper; let them be creative, don't worry about writing and spelling and editing and all those types of things, just get it on the paper. Or come up with fun activities; one activity that I love to do with my kids that are in a group is we'd come up with a whole pile of just little pieces of paper that had a setting, and then a whole pile of papers that had a character, and then a whole pile of papers that had a problem. And then they'd have to choose one from each and then they'd have to write on it. So I remember one that we did in our writing classes, like a nun, and then she was on an airplane and she had to save someone that was trying to explode a nuclear missile or something...

Sarah: Wow, yes.

Tricia: So, it just stretched their writing brain, and it was so much fun to see what they came up with. And it's really fun, because two of my students are published authors now and it's so fun to see that well, just by encouraging them and not limiting their creativity really just opened those worlds to them, so that's what I'd just encourage parents, just let them write, don't be worried too much about it, and then help them come up with creative things to write about and just to grow those writing muscles.

Sarah: I love that. I remember as a child, I think I must have been maybe 10, and I had gone to a young writers' conference, which I remember thinking it was like a dream come true, it was so much fun. I remember one of the exercises we did was, I can't remember what the sentence was, but one of the writers stood in front us and gave us the first three sentences and then told us, set a timer for, I don't know what it was, maybe five minutes or something, and told us just to keep writing, that was the story. I



remember feeling like, because I didn't have that pressure of, like, you can write about anything, now come up with something amazing, being given a starting place, really, really helped turn my creativity on.

Tricia: Yes. Another thing that we did, one more activity, is that they'd pick a favorite novel. So something that they just loved and loved to read and loved the style of it. And then we would just make a photocopy of a couple of pages and then we'd highlight all the action in red, and all the dialogue in blue, all the interior monologue in yellow, and they'd just color it all up, and then you could see a pattern with the colors, because sometimes they would have, kids when they would write would have stuff like, description and no dialogue or nothing really happened because it's all in someone's head, and so going through a favorite novel they'd see the patterns and then we would say, "now, you write something that you want to write using the same pattern," so then they'd see a line of dialogue followed by a line of interior monologue followed by two lines of action and that was another way for them to see how writing works, not just writing to get thoughts on paper but how a novel would be set up or short story would be set up, and that was another activity that they'd really enjoy. And like you said, it just helps them get a starting place, because we'd say "yeah, be creative, sit down and write" and then they're like, "ah, what do I do?" or "how come this doesn't sound like sometimes what mom's reading to me or when I'm reading a book and not another ..."

Sarah: That's a really good point, because I know myself, as a writer, I have a tendency to compare my writing process or as-I'm-typing-it writing to someone's finished edited book, you know, and that gives me, as an adult who knows that's not

how it works, you can't compare your process to somebody else's product but that gives me anxiety about my writing, so as a child I can see that being, if they're listening, especially to wonderful books like Little House and Beverly Cleary and all of these wonderful writers and then they sit down and write and think, 'why doesn't this sound like what I'm reading?'

Tricia: Right. And so that's just a tool to teach them that there's patterns to writing and there's patterns to their favorite authors, and if you did like Beverly Cleary, if you did read three of her books you'd probably see a the patterns in it, just in the first couple of pages. And so it just helps them to see yes, you have your own story but there are patterns to writing, and then it helps them like, "OK" and feel more confident to be able to do it without writing a page and feeling so discouraged because it doesn't look like anything that they read.

Sarah: So encouraging. Well, Trisha, this has been wonderful. I feel like our listeners are really going to appreciate your insight into helping to meet our children where they're at by reading aloud to them and kind of forging those bonds, and then also encouraging our kids to write and become who God created them to be by modeling it. So this has been a wonderful conversation, thank you so much for joining me.

37:40 Let the Kids Speak

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.

Child1: Hi, my name is Audrey, and I'm five years old. I live in [**inaudible** 37:59]. My favorite book



is Chronicles of Narnia because Aslan defeated the witch. Bye.

Child2: Hi, my name is Lily. I'm three years old. I'm in California. My favorite book is Little House in the Big Woods when Pa thinks a tree stump is a big bear but it wasn't.

Child3: Hi, my name is Asher, I'm eight and a half years old. I live in Springfield, Missouri. My favorite book is Harry Potter the full illustrated series. I like it because Harry Potter and his friends solve mysteries at Hogwart's because Harry Potter's a famous guy from the Potters.

Child4: Hi, my name is Levi, and I'm five and a half years old. My favorite book is Alice in Wonderland pop-up book because the pictures pop up.

Child5: Hello, my name is Jude. I am eight years old, and I live in California, and my favorite book is The Secret of Skull Mountain because it is really scary and finds a lot of skulls.

Child6: Hi, my name is Aubrey, and I'm six years old. I live in Virginia. My favorite book is The Green Ember. I like it because Picket, the spoiled rabbit learns not to be stubborn and this girl rabbit, Heather, protected her brother from the wolf pack and attacked the wolves while she sent him to safety of seven mounds. My favorite character is Heather and she's my favorite because she took care of her brother when he was to take care of her.

Child7: Hi, my name is Som. And I am five years old and we all live in Virginia. And my favorite book is The Black Star of Kingston. I like it because there's this rabbit named Black Star and that's Picket favorite character, and I like him because he's brave and there's a king named King Whitson and that's how I like about him.

Child8: My name is Katie, and I am seven years old, and I live in Big Spring, Missouri, and my favorite book is My Father's Dragon. My favorite part is when they're **[**inaudible** 40:37]**. I was laughing so hard.

Child9: My name is Phil, and I'm three years old, and I love Frog and Toad, because they're so nice. [Mom: And where do you live?] North Carolina.

Child10: My name is Haddon, and I'm five years old. I live in North Carolina and I love the Jesus Story Bible, it's good to learn about.

Kids, wonderful job. Hey, that's it for today. If you enjoy the Read Aloud Revival podcast would you leave us a rating or a review in iTunes? Doing that helps us get the word out about the podcast and inspire more families to create their own family culture around books. Head to iTunes, search for Read Aloud Revival and then just leave us a rating or a review. I read every single one of those and I appreciate them so very much. It only takes a few seconds but it goes a really long way toward telling the iTunes fairies that more families should be shown the Read Aloud Revival as a recommended podcast. So, thank you so much for doing that. Again, you can just search for the Read Aloud Revival at iTunes or you can head to the show notes of this podcast, episode 52. So you head to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for episode 52 and we'll have a link that sends you right there. We'll be back in two weeks with another episode. Until then, go build your family culture around books.