



## RAR 80 – Fantastic Gifts for Young Readers

**Sarah:** You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.

Hey, hey, hey, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 80 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. Really excited about this episode because the holidays are right around the corner and if you're like me you're looking for gifts for the young readers in your life. I'm always trying to get books or bookish kinds of gifts for my kids, for my nieces and nephews; it's just sort of my favorite thing to do. And I had a lot of fun putting together this episode. Today, I'm going to share 20 gift ideas for the young readers in your life and these are a lot of fun. I'll tell you what—you're going to want to see the links and the pictures for all the things I talk about today. I have a picture up on the site of each of the gift ideas as well as a link so you can find it really fast. So, what you want to do is go to [ReadAloudRevival.com/80](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/80) (episode 80). Bookmark it on your phone so you have it when you're out shopping or pull it up online when you're doing your online shopping and you will have, at your fingertips, a whole bunch of ideas for young readers in your life whether they're toddlers, they're grade schoolers, they're tweens, teens, even yourself or your favorite bookish friends and family, there is something for everyone on this list. OK, we're going to jump right in because twenty's a lot of gifts to talk about and I don't want to keep you here all day.

## 1:49 Book Sets, Treasuries and Music

The first one I want to mention is just a boxed book set. A boxed book sets are fantastic gifts for readers because they come in a nice collection, of course. If you come over to the Show Notes you'll see we have 35 different boxed book set recommendations for all ages; board books for the youngest kids, gift sets for preschool age, gift sets for middle grades, and then gift sets for tweens and teens. We cover them all. So, 35 different boxed book set ideas but boxed sets are really nice to tuck under the tree. That's a great gift idea. Another great gift idea is a picture book treasury. So, I did a whole episode, a couple of episodes back, it was episode 78 on picture book treasuries and how they are an affordable, convenient way to build your own home library especially around the best authors and illustrators. So, I collected a dozen of my favorite picture book treasuries and you'll find those listed as well. Remember, you can just go to the Show Notes for this episode, episode 80 and that will take you everywhere, so you don't have to keep track of all the different places to look. Just go to episode 80 and then you'll see a link to the boxed sets and the picture book treasuries and all the other gifts I'm going to mention. I don't know if you've heard of Maestro Classics. These are (my kids love these), basically, they're stories and music. They're a classical music series for kids and families that are written for a narrator and an orchestra. They're really designed to help our families cultivate a love of music and stories together. I can't believe how much my kids love them. We have over a dozen of these ourselves. My kids love *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel* (that's one of them), they love *Peter and the Wolf*,



*Carnival of Animals, The Nutcracker, The Tortoise and the Hare ...* those are just some of the favorites. There are several. There is a little booklet that comes with each one so that if you wanted to go deeper into it. For the most part, I will just put the CD on for my kids while they're building with blocks or coloring and they love it. But there's several different stories that are really good for older kids as well. Now, I have them as CDs, they also come as mp3s. It isn't just any orchestra either. It's the London Philharmonic, so we're talking about gorgeous music, really high quality narration. So, I'll put a link in the Show Notes to Maestro Classics because you're going to want to check these guys out.

## 4:14 Book Accessories

Book lights, I think, are essential for kids who share a bedroom with siblings. At least, each of my kids over the age of 5, has a book light clipped to their side of the bed. We like Hammerhead-shaped Mighty Brights – those are our current favorite, because I don't actually expect my kids to go to sleep when I send them to bed. I expect them to do a little reading! I mean, that's what I do. So, Mighty Bright book lights. A book light is a fantastic gift. It tucks really well into a stocking or ships really well if you're sending a gift in the mail. So, it's a great gift idea. Another really good gift idea is a Read-Aloud Revival book bag. Now, our book bags are ... I'm just sayin' ... I'm kind of biased but they're pretty awesome. They're not your average book bag. We sell them in an assortment of colors, they're canvas and they have grommets for durability because we know how many books you are hauling around, and they also have an interior zipper pocket for library cards because, for real, you go to the library and your kids have

lost their library card or your trying to gather up all the cards before you leave, and nobody knows where they are, even you. So, that was essential when we were creating our Read-Aloud Revival book bags—we said they have to have an interior zippered pocket, not just a pocket where they could fall out, but a zippered pocket. These are important—mothers know these things. Our book bags say, “I'd rather be reading-aloud.” We love them. They come in a whole bunch of different colors. I don't know if you're going to think this is a good gift for your kids or maybe it's going to be a really good gift for you. I did tuck one of these under the Christmas tree last year. It's a personal library kit and they're kind of nostalgic, they're probably more nostalgic for us than for our kids because our kids aren't really experienced in these. They're the old library card that you'd stamp the date on and you'd initial, you'd write your name on who checked it out, but the library kit you can use with your own books especially if you're lending them out or if your kids want to play library at home (I don't know if your kids play library but mine have all loved playing library and it makes a huge, ginormous mess with the books about the house so I'm not always the most excited about that game) but this personal library kit makes a really fun library, sort of make believe center, or a great kit for your child or yourself if you're loaning books out to friends. You can help your kids make books their own with book plates and I have linked to a whole bunch of different book plates that are stickers, that are lovely. There are some that are a little more nature, some that are a little more cartoonish, a travel the world one that looks a little bit more sophisticated. And these are book plates where your child can then stick them into the front covers of their books and make their books their own. So, I know in a family like mine, where we have a lot of kids and



a lot of books that are the whole family's and then a lot of books that belong to particular kids, it's important for us to know if a particular book belongs to a particular child because it's really easy for the family to acquire personal belongings, so book plates are a really helpful way to help kids keep books their own. And, I've linked to several different ones that I really like in the Show Notes for today's episode. In addition to book plates you can help your child customize their books with a custom book plate stamp. I put a link in the Show Notes to one where you can customize it with your child's name and they're really lovely looking. I kind of love these. So, if you're not keen on the book plates as stickers check out the book plate stamp. Something else we sell in the shop, the Read-Aloud Revival Shop, besides our awesome book bags are handmade pottery mugs. And these are our favorite mugs in our house- they're lead free, they're microwave and dishwasher safe— actually, they're the kind of mug you can put in the microwave and the water gets hot or the hot chocolate (whatever you're making) gets hot but your handle doesn't. We have an assortment of colors in the Shop and I love when I see them on Instagram. Sometimes I'll see people have given their kids each their own color mug and that's the mug they get to go fill up with tea or hot chocolate for their special read-aloud time or for their quiet time in the middle of the day – really fun, so we'll have a link to those as well. Those Read-Aloud Revival hand thrown pottery mugs are pretty special.

## 8:32 Reader Life Favorites

Once you start using book darts to mark your favorite passages in books you will never go back to your old ways. I'm telling you! They're not

really bookmarks because you're not just marking the part in the book that you finished reading. You use these to keep track of your favorite passages in the books. They, in fact, point to the exact line. So, you slide them on to the side of your page and they don't crimp the pages, they're reusable, they're these lightweight metal darts. And you kind of have to come see the picture if you don't know what I'm talking about. I started using these earlier this year and they have changed my reading life. I will never go back to not using them again. They've actually kept me from doing a whole lot of writing and scrawling in a lot of the books that our family shares—which is really helpful. And, in an earlier episode of the podcast I talk about simple reading journals and the simple system that we use to remember and create more deep relationship with the books that we're reading, and book darts end up playing a pretty significant part for us. That, by the way, is episode 75, and if you haven't listened to it yet I bet you'll really enjoy it. But, you know, these book darts they can be popped in a stocking or even put on top of a package on the outside of a package as sort of a flourish—that's really fun. My kids love their book darts. Another gift idea that would be really fun to either tuck into a stocking or to use as a flourish on a gift package are book marks from the Carrot Top Paper Shop. Jenny Williams makes these beautiful bookmarks based on our favorite literary heroines. So, her bookmarks feature heroines like Anne of Green Gables, Jane Eyre, Jo March, Scout Finch, Flannery O'Connor, Hermione Granger, Laura Ingalls Wilder, so, our favorite literary heroines of old and modern in modern books. It's really fun, they're really well done. I have one that I absolutely love that actually has, "Read it, I know you'll love it" which is, of course, Meg Ryan from the movie, *You've Got Mail*. And I love it, it's my



favorite book mark. This is a perfect handmade gift to tuck into a stocking or tie onto a gift to make it extra beautiful for a girl in your life. We'll have links to that in the Show Notes as well. Another thing that she has at the Carrot Top Paper Shop that are just so fantastic are these gift sets. So, if you have a child who, let's say, adores *Anne of Green Gables*, then you're in luck because these gift sets have these lovely little prints, a handmade card, a handmade bookmarks, these really cute to-do lists. Anyway, you'll have to come and see in the Show Notes if you're interested, if you have an Anne lover. It's a good gift, it's a good way to go.

## 11:07 T-Shirts, Puzzles and Story Cubes, Story Cards and More

We own an embarrassing number of shirts from Out of Print at our house. We love every single one of them. I love them. I love the way they fit. I love the way they're cut. And, I love, of course, what's on the shirt. They have *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*, *Good Night Moon*, *Harry the Dirty Dog*, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Call of the Wild*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*. I mean, I could just go on and on and on... so many. You will not have a hard time choosing something for every single person in your family from the grownups to the teens to the littlest tiny kids and babies. So, if you use the link in my Show Notes you'll also get \$5.00 off your first order and these are really, good, high quality shirts. So, the first time I ordered them I wasn't totally sure—you know, you never really know. Is it going to be a t-shirt where I'll only wear to bed? Or is it going to be a shirt that I'm going to wear all the time? They're really soft, they wash really well, and we wear the heck out of ours and they just stay nice and

bright looking, so they don't get all faded. I've been really, really impressed with the quality. I kind of think the only thing as satisfying as reading on a cold winter afternoon is doing a book puzzle on a cold wintry afternoon. You can find tons of bookish puzzles online but I've selected a few of my own favorites and put them in the Show Notes. My favorite way to do puzzles is to play an audio book. So, we have little kids and bigger kids so if I'm doing it with my little kids, of course, we'll sit down and do a big floor puzzle of *Good Night Moon* or *Eric Carle's Alphabet* puzzle or something, and turn on an audio book that's to their level. And after they go to bed a lot of times my older kids and I love to get out a bookish puzzle and sit there and listen to an audio book together. It's so fun. Put some hot chocolate in some mugs and, oh! It's perfect. I put some links to favorite bookish puzzles in the Show Notes and you're going to want to check those out. And when you do check them out you can just hop around and see if there are other puzzles that your kids would like as well. Puzzles are perfect, right? A friend recommended that I check out Rory's Story Cubes and these are really fun because we know that young readers are often aspiring young writers as well, and if you have an aspiring author on your hands then these (they're called Rory's Story Cubes) are a great gift. You can just tuck them into a stocking or something, but basically, they're a collection of dice that have different pictures on the sides and you use them in creative ways to make stories and come up with a problem and you learn a lot about story structure and really how fun it can be. It can be a great group game and it can also be a great game that they can play on their own. Another idea to generate story ideas is to use the eeBoo Create-a-Story Cards. And these are illustrated by Melissa Sweet. I love Melissa



Sweet. She illustrates the *Baby Bear* books if you're familiar with those, and also the E. B. White biography (that I love! That came out last year, *Some Writer*. I love the whimsical way her art looks. I love that. I've always loved her art. And these are Create-a-Story Cards. They're a way to spark your child's imagination and help them learn how to tell stories. They're really, really fun and there are a couple of different kinds. You can use them with kids as young as 3 and then going up to much older because you can get more sophisticated with the way you use them. But, I'll put a link to one set in the Show Notes and you can see how beautiful they are.

#### 14: 34 Book Games, Lithographs and Bookshelves

My twins love the book, *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site*, and we got a matching game based on the book that gets regular play time around here. My 4 year old twins and my 5 year old daughter, and I guess we've been playing it for at least a year now, they love this game. It's got great little funny pictures from *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* and it's basically a memory game. We'll have a link to this in the Show Notes because if you've got a little one who loves that book they will pretty much squeal with delight when they see this game. Another game that we haven't played yet, but I am going to buy it, I can say that because the one child who this will be for doesn't listen to the podcast or read the website so I can say it now, this is Deluxe Baker Street Board Game. It's because my 14 year old is a major Sherlock Holmes fan and this is basically a Sherlock Holmes master detective game. So, it sounds really, really fun. They say it's for ages 10+ and you can play it with two or more players. And there are a ton of

cases that you try to crack. I think it's like over 200 cases in this game. So, I think this sounds like a really fun family game, you know, solve mysteries, drink tea and have coffee cake, yeah, I'm totally planning on getting this one. I know what I want to be doing in January and February this year after the littles go to bed. It's playing this game with my big kids. So, I'll put that in the Show Notes as well. Another thing I'm putting in the Show Notes are Lithographs Posters. OK, have you seen these? If you've seen any of my videos that I've done from my office you may have seen a *Corduroy* print behind me. What you probably can't tell on video is that the words of the book are used to create the actual picture and they're beautiful. Lithographs makes dozens and dozens of these. They have them for *Little Women*, *Corduroy*, *Peter Pan*, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *Hardy Boys*, *Nancy Drew*, *Hamlet*, *Persuasion*. I can just think of tons of them and I just have the *Corduroy* one. They have them in all different sizes and colors and you can actually choose the color and the size when you order from their website. So, I'll put a link to their website in the Show Notes, too. I found a floating bookshelf online. I haven't actually bought it yet but I'm putting a link to it in the Show Notes because it has great reviews so, I think it's probably pretty good quality and I'm going to get it for one of my kids, another one of my kids that doesn't listen to the podcast, so I can 'fess that up here. It's a superhero floating bookshelf. It actually looks like Superman holding a stack of books in the middle of the wall. It's kind of clever, really funny, and so what I'm going to do is I'm going to get this floating bookshelf and let my son put some of his very favorite books on it in his room so he can display them. It's just really funny. When you go to the Show Notes you'll see the picture and I bet it'll make you laugh. I hope that gets your creative



juices going for how you can nurture your child's reading life over the holidays. I know buying gifts for our kids can get a little overwhelming, it can get frustrating. I know as a parent I often feel that 'Oh my gosh, we don't need more stuff' but when it cultivates my child's reading life it feels different. And also, I think it helps my kids get excited about books and about being readers. And I know that my very favorite gifts are all bookish in nature. If they're not books themselves, which of course make awesome and wonderful and probably the most wonderful gifts, then something a little bookish like a new book light, a set of book darts, a library bag, or a beautiful bookmark—these kinds of things can really just light up your reading life and get you excited. And, I think it tells our kids, 'Hey, we take your reading life seriously and we also know it's an important part of who you are.' That's something we want to communicate, right? So, head to [ReadAloudRevival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com), go to episode 80, you'll see links and the lists and the pictures of all the things I've mentioned today. So, if me rattling off 20 different gifts is kind of been overwhelming just know it's all in one place and you can get it there. I hope it helps you choose gifts for the young readers in your life.

## 18:30 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:** [Mom: what is your name?] Alex. [Mom: and how old are you?] 3. [Mom: 3, and what is your favorite *Henry Higgins* story?][\*\*inaudible\*\*] [Mom: and why do you like the Henry Higgins' story?] I just like it. [Mom: you just like it.]

**Child2:** [Mom: what's your name?] Evan. [Mom: and how old are you?] 4. [Mom: and what state do you live in?] Tennessee. [Mom: and what book are you listening to right now?] *Henry in the Clubhouse*. [Mom: and who wrote that, do you know?] Beverly Cleary. [Mom: So, what's your favorite story from *Henry in the Clubhouse*?] When he gets locked in the clubhouse. [Mom: and how does he finally get out?] Ramona and Beezus. [Mom: Ramona and Beezus help him?]

**Child3:** My name is Maddie. I'm 13 years old. I'm from New York state and my favorite book is *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer, and I like it because it's a mix of fairy tales and sci-fi.

**Child4:** [Mom: what is your name?] Charlie. [Mom: Charlie, how old are you?] 6. [Mom: and where are you from?] Texas. [Mom: could you tell me a little bit about your favorite book?] My favorite book is *Little House on the Prairie* because I like Laura.

**Child5:** Hi, my name is Katie. I'm 9 years old. I live in McKinney, Texas. My favorite books are the *Betsy-Tacy series*. I like the *Betsy-Tacy series* because Betsy is just like me, she likes to write and she likes to read.

**Child6:** My name is Everett. I live in Minnesota and I'm 10. My favorite book is *Zane and the Hurricane*. I like it because Zane risks his life to get his dog back.

**Child7:** My name is Calhoun, and I'm 7, and I live in Minnesota. [Mom: and what's your favorite book?] *Adventure Time*. [Mom: and what do you like about *Adventure Time*?] Because I like the part where the donut drinks the sweat. [Mom: ew.]

**Child8:** Hi, my name is Oscar and I live in Minneapolis, and I live in the state of Minnesota,



and I like the book *Crispin* because I like when he runs away and finds out that he's the son of a king. [Mom: and how old are you, Oscar?] I'm 9.

**Child9:** Hi, my name is Ruthie, I'm 7 years old. I live in Texas. My favorite book is *The Book with No Pictures*, and my favorite part is the part at the end when it says, "The End. Bonk. I didn't want to say that."

**Child10:** Hi, my name is Judy Anna. And I live in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and my favorite book is *The Holy Bible*. And my favorite part was when Jesus was born.

**Child11:** [Mom: what's your name?] **[\*\*inaudible\*\*]** [Mom: and how old are you?] 3. [Mom: and we live in Stillwater, Oklahoma, right? OK, what's your favorite book?] *Hattie and Hudson*. [Mom: *Hattie and Hudson*, yes, by Chris Van Dusen, yes, we love that book. And, what's your favorite part?] Splash Hattie. [Mom: when Hudson splashes Hattie?] Yeah. [Mom: yeah, that's a good part. Alright, say bye-bye.] Bye-bye.

**Sarah:** Alright, don't forget to grab your gift guide, go to [ReadAloudRevival.com/80](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/80)—that's the podcast episode 80 and you want to just check out the gift guide there to make your Christmas shopping really easy for the young readers, and the older readers in your life, too, because there's plenty of ideas there for all ages. Next week I'll be back with episode 81 and I'm just going to tell you right now that episode 81 is my favorite episode of the Read-Aloud Revival that we have ever done. I'm not even kidding. I got to talk to one of my heroes and it was amazing. We also got permission to read something of hers that's out of print on the podcast. But that's all the teasing I'm going to do. I'm not going to tell you who it is yet, you're going to have to come back next week to the

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