



## RAR 90 – Easter Basket Ideas 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.

Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. This is episode 90 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. If you're looking for ideas of books or Bibles to tuck into your child's Easter basket you're in for a treat today. I've got a handful of recommendations for each age group, so if you're looking for Bible recommendations or books or bookish accessories to tuck into your child's Easter basket we'll have you covered. You'll find links to everything we mention on today's show in the Show Notes; that's at [ReadAloudRevival.com/90](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/90). And hey, if you haven't looked at those in a while go check them out because we have rebooted our Show Notes and they're pretty awesome. What you'll find in the Show Notes is a time-stamped listener guide and that has basically these time stamps where you can hop around to different parts of the podcast, which is perfect if you're short on time, or if you wanted to listen to a particular part again; we've got really detailed notes, some of the best quotes pulled out, links to everything we talk about, and a full transcript. So, they're pretty awesome. That's [ReadAloudRevival.com/90](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/90) to get to today's. Today on the Show, after we talk about Easter book basket ideas for your young readers, you're going to get to hear from a brand new children's book author about her debut picture book, which just recently came out. So, it's a packed episode today. You ready? Let's do this.

## 2:01 Youngest Kids

Alright, we're going to start with ideas for your very youngest kids' Easter baskets. These recommendations are perfect for kids up to age 3. My favorite read-aloud Bible stories for kids under 3 are *The Read-Aloud Bible Stories* written by Ella K. Lindvall, illustrated by H. Kent Puckett (remember that these links are going to be in the Show Notes so if you just go to [ReadAloudRevival.com/90](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/90), you don't have to jot all these down, we took notes for you, and you can just click right through to them). These read-aloud Bible stories are really well done. They've won all kinds of awards for a reason. There's several volumes of them and really, the reason that they're so delightful is the illustrations that the really simple text pulls; it's just wonderful to read-aloud, it will hold your very youngest ones attention, but then the illustrations, they're different than anything you've ever seen before. They, kind of, give you a different perspective, help you read a Bible story from a perspective maybe you hadn't before. I have found them to be very wonderful to read with my little kids, and I don't ever get tired of them. I believe Carole Joy Seid recommended them to me first and that would have been on a very old episode of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast, and then I got them, and totally loved them. Another favorite of mine, for the younger set, are books by Sally Lloyd-Jones, and you're going to hear her name a lot today, because she's written a lot of books that are pretty much perfect fits for lots of different age kids' Easter baskets. But, the ones I want to talk about for the very youngest kids, there are three: one is called *Found: Psalm 23* and this is a board book that tells Psalm 23 with illustrations by Jago, he's the one who did the illustrations for *The Jesus Storybook Bible* along



with Sally Lloyd-Jones' *Storybook Bible* as well. And, it's basically a version of Psalm 23 that is really comforting and sweet and well done for young, young children. And, another one that's in that same series, I guess (I don't know if they're official series or not, but it sure looks like it) is called *Loved: The Lord's Prayer* and it's the same thing; it's a board book that takes The Lord's Prayer and offers it to the very, very youngest babies and toddlers with great illustrations, so *Found* and *Loved*, those are books by Sally Lloyd-Jones. Another one I really like by Sally Lloyd-Jones, for this age, and even for kids a little older than this, in fact, is *Bunny's First Spring*. This is a sweet, sweet story about how the world's rebirth assures us of something more. So, after the death of the earth in the winter, when it comes back to life in the spring, that speaks to something deeper – that's perfect for sharing on Easter. I don't think this one comes as a board book, I think it's only a picture book with a hardback that has pages you could read it with an under 3 year old, and you could also read it with kids older than that, for sure. Whimsical, whimsical, beautiful illustrations by David McPhail, really love that one, *Bunny's First Spring*. And, another one that I really, really like – we've had this book on our shelf for quite a long time, is *The Easter Story*. We have the board book version, I think there's a few different versions. It's by Patricia A. Pingry and the illustrations are done by Mary Ann Utt, and it's a very brief retelling of the very first Easter – it gives us a picture of Jesus' ministry through the crucifixion and the resurrection, and one of the things I really appreciate about this board book with my very, very young ones is that the illustrations are not at all gruesome or disturbing to a very young child (I mean, they are disturbing because it is a disturbing story, but they're

disturbing in a good way – they're not gory at all, not that kind of disturbing). And so I really like this one and we've had this one for a long time (I don't remember where we first got it, but it's been a staple around our home for a long time).

## 5:54 Ideas for kids 4-7

OK, let's move on to a few books that are good recommendations for kids about age 4-7. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is easily my favorite Bible to recommend for kids. There are several different versions. I love the gift edition – it's gorgeous. The cover's gorgeous but there's an ordinary edition that's also lovely (we have that one), there's a deluxe edition that comes with the CDs because the audio of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is really well done as well. You won't go wrong with any version that you get. My very favorite we'll put in the Show Notes – it's the gift edition, because it's the most beautiful (I think). This is written by Sally Lloyd-Jones, illustrated by Jago, and I just love *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Another one I like for this age is *The Story of the Easter Robin* by Dandi Daley Mackall, illustrated by Anna Vojtech (I'm sure I'm butchering her last name). I'm a little bit picky with Easter books because I don't want them to be overly preachy, and I want them to be beautiful and stir up wonder and adoration in my kids without talking down to them or making it sound like a Sunday School lesson, so this book does that really, really well. It's captivating, and it's a story of compassion, it's a story of faith, and it's a perfect story for Easter basket. Another one I like for this age is Tasha Tudor's *A Tale for Easter*. I love everything by Tasha Tudor, there's nothing I don't love that she made. While she was still alive she made some beautiful books for kids. *A Tale for Easter* is a sweet book, it's very simple but her



illustrations are just lovely and I think it would be a good one to tuck into an Easter basket for sure. And then another one is *Simon and the Easter Miracle*. This is a traditional tale. It's written by Mary Joslin (who's written some really good books for kids). This one is illustrated by Anna Luraschi, and it's a retelling of this traditional, European tale and it tells the meaning of the first Easter. So, it is not a play-by-play telling of the Easter story, like a literal account of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection. It is instead metaphorical, you can almost think of it as a folk tale that cuts right to the heart of what Easter means. It's beautiful – lots of symbols in here. This one is not as abundantly available, so for example, my own library doesn't carry it but it was worth adding to our shelf so it's a great one to tuck into the basket.

## 8:23 Matthew Paul Turner's books

Just like you're going to get to meet a debut author a little bit later on in today's show, next week I'm bringing you another picture book author that I want you to meet – that's Matthew Paul Turner, and he is the author of *When God Made You* and *When God Made Light* – I love these books. They're beautiful! They're poetic. They feature diverse characters in just ordinary everyday life. I don't even know if that's fair, they're not ordinary, everyday; they're very whimsical, fantastical, beautiful picture books, and I think either *When God Made You* or *When God Made Light* would make wonderful books to tuck into an Easter basket. There's another *When God Made You* that I love. There's one by Matthew Paul Turner, illustrated by David Catrow, and that's the one we'll talk about next week again, but that's *When God Made You* and *When*

*God Made Light*. But, there's another one by Jane G. Meyer that I adore. It's called *When God Made You*, it's illustrated by Megan Elizabeth Gilbert, and let me just read a portion:

"When God made Elina, He pulled moonlight from the north, starlight from the south, sunlight from the east, and candlelight from the west. He planted the four lights around the steadfast soil of her soul, and beaming with gladness, God said, "Elina, pray." Basically, each page spread is a new child in a different setting around the world who is made specially by God with this unique set of talents and gifts to offer the world; things they're interested in, things they're talented with, it's a short little poem of how God breathed those talents into the child and then said to the child, "Make your art. Write your story. Play your instrument. Say your prayers." It's so beautiful. It is probably one of the most beautiful picture books I've ever seen. It's called, *When God Made You*, written by Jane G. Meyer, illustrated by Megan Elizabeth Gilbert – definitely check that one out. Another gorgeous book is *In the Candles Glow*. This one is by Elizabeth Crispina Johnson, it's illustrated by Amandine Wanert. Ancient Faith Publishing put this book out, they also put out that book *When God Made You* by Jane G. Meyer – they have this knack for really beautiful lyrical poetic text married to absolutely stunning illustrations. I mean, really, nobody does illustrations like Ancient Faith Publishing's picture books. They're gorgeous! *In the Candles Glow* features a beekeeper and it's a beautiful story about prayer and the beauty of the earth and the work we do with the earth all around us. I don't want to give away too much, but if you head to the Show Notes you'll see the cover right away because I bet it will catch your attention, even amidst all the other books tucked in there. So,



now, let's move on to recommendations for kids about ages 8-12. And remember that these age recommendations are really squishy – so a really good book appeals to kids of multiple ages and there aren't really books that are just 8-12's – I'm just giving recommendations that will appeal to certain age groups particularly. So, that being said, 8-12's. One of my favorite collections of Bible stories to read to kids this age are by Amy Steadman. These ones are published by Sophia Institute Press. It's called *The Read-Aloud Book of Bible Stories*. I love to read that with kids in this age group. Really, kids from, I'd say, 7 to 12-14 would really enjoy it. There's lyrical language, rich storytelling; they're told conversationally and I really appreciate that. I think it makes for a great read-aloud and discussion starter with kids. Again, that's *The Read-Aloud Book of Bible Stories*. Another Bible I really like for this age is the *Egermeier's Bible Story Book*. This is written by Elsie Egermeier. You'll never be able to spell it so make sure you check out the Show Notes. They're illustrated by Clive Upton, and the stories of the Bible are told in chronological order in this version. I like to hand this one to my independent readers but, it also makes for a really great read-aloud. And, you can read it with older kids and younger kids than this particular age group. My son loves *The Action Bible* by Doug Mauss and Sergio Cariello. This is, basically, the Bible in graphic novel form, and so, your kids could read it on their own. There's also a really well done audio version of it that they could listen to. So, sometimes my son likes to listen to it while he's reading, while he's looking at the pictures, and because it's graphic novel there's a lot of really detailed illustrations in there, and it's just great, because then he can focus on looking at the pictures while he's listening to the stories. There's lots of different

versions—there's devotional version, there's a storybook Bible version, so check it out, *The Action Bible* – really like those, and I know lots of boys who do (and girls, too, for sure! but especially boys will like to get their hands on that). And, the Bible made it into one of my son's Easter baskets one year and the devotional version made it in another year, so I'm obviously a fan.

## 13:21 Fictional stories

Now, not just Bibles, but a lot of times stories, fictional stories can make wonderful Easter basket gifts, especially if you're trying to find something religious or that will, sort of, inspire the wonder and awe of God's amazing love. There are novels (I was going to say picture books – there are picture books that do that, too, but we're going to talk about novels), here's some wonderful novels you can tuck into your child's Easter basket, especially if they don't need a new Bible or if you're happy with the Bibles you have for your kids and you just want to tuck something else for them to read or to read-aloud together. So, for kids 8-12 or so, I would recommend *Henry and the Chalk Dragon* and *The Rise and Fall of Mount Majestic*. Both of those are written by Jennifer Trafton, and you're not going to read them and think, 'This is a Christian book,' but I can tell you, they're lovely stories that really point to truth, and goodness, and beauty, and the beauty we were created to make and bring into our world. *Henry and the Chalk Dragon* is her newest one, and then *The Rise and Fall of Mount Majestic* is her older one – both of them are wonderful. If you want something to laugh, if you need some comic relief in your family, don't miss *The Rise and Fall of Mount Majestic*. It's hilarious, and really fun to read-aloud. You can read-aloud





that one with everybody, from your 5 year old to your 15 year old – everybody will enjoy it.

## 14:34 Easter ideas for teens

Now, let's go onto teens, and I actually don't have specific teen Bible recommendations because in my home we generally have our teens reading and reading aloud from whatever version that we use in our home, and that's what I would encourage you to do as well; to give your kids Bibles that are in the version that your church and family uses to study God's Word. And so, I'm going to give you some recommendations for other books that aren't Bibles for your teens. One of them, we're going to go back to Sally Lloyd-Jones. It's called *The Story of God's Love for You*. Here's the secret: it's *The Jesus Storybook Bible* without the pictures. It's just the text of *The Jesus Storybook Bible* but if you've read *The Jesus Storybook Bible* you know it's very profound. The way Sally Lloyd-Jones has written it is just incredible. So, I'll tell you a little story: one of my favorite people is a sweet, older lady who comes to our house every once in a while to help me. She helped me a lot when we first had the twins (the twins who are now 4½), when I was first pregnant with them and needed a lot of help, she would come and help me with the kids and so, she's become, kind of, an adopted grandma in our home, and so she comes to the kids' piano recitals and sports events and brings them St. Nicholas gifts, and cookies, and treats, and just comes and plays with them. We love her. Her name is Rosalie and we adore her. And, recently we were at a piano recital and I had brought Bibles for my little kids to look at during the piano recital to keep them quiet. And, so, Rosalie had one of the twins on her lap and he was flipping through *The Jesus Storybook Bible* and she

ended up reading it over his shoulder silently to herself, and was so struck by it she asked if she could borrow it. She took it and she read it, and she even used it in her Bible study group. She brought it back to me recently and said, "This is the best re-telling of Bible stories." And, I mean, she's a grown woman, right? And I have heard this countless times. And I would agree, that sometimes the way Sally has rewritten the Bible stories for *The Jesus Storybook Bible* is exactly what my heart needs. And, clearly, I'm not alone because they republished *The Jesus Storybook Bible* as a book. It looks like a paperback trade nonfiction book, but it's called *The Story of God's Love for You* and it is the text from *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. And, I think you could tuck that into any child's Easter basket, aged 7 all the way through their teens, and not tell them what it is, and they'll read it, and it will be beautiful, and they will love it, and you might enjoy it, too. *The Story of God's Love for You*. And, another one is *Thoughts that Make Your Heart Sing*, and I shouldn't actually put this in the teen section because it's probably perfect for kids like 6-12, but *Thoughts that Make Your Heart Sing* are devotional thoughts in Sally's beautiful, deep, profound, and poetic way of writing. And, so we'll put a link to that in the Show Notes as well. OK, back to teens – so I'm going to recommend *The Wingfeather Saga* by Andrew Peterson which is fantasy. Think *Lord of the Rings* meets *The Princess Bride*, that's how Andrew Peterson self-describes it. I think it's very accurate. This is a set of books, stories that are about the same tone and reading level as *Lord of the Rings* fantasy, they're more intense than *The Chronicles of Narnia* (which is also, by the way, I should have mentioned those earlier – *Chronicles of Narnia* would make a great Easter basket gift, too – I'm going to have to stop this or you guys are going



to have 100 ideas). *Wingfeather Saga* would make a great Easter basket gift. This is a story that your kids will not even know how much truth they're uncovering as they read it because it's not at all preachy, it's just a glorious, glorious series. A wonderful to set into an Easter basket, I would say for any kids who are age 10 and up, but my teens really, really love *The Wingfeather Saga*. Another one is *The Wilderking Trilogy*, and you've heard me talk to Jonathan Rogers before. He came on (I think it was episode 63) to talk about *The Wilderking Trilogy* which was one of my very favorite finds last year when I was reading. I just absolutely love this trilogy. It starts with a book called, *The Bark of the Bogowl*, and I think it's one of those sets of books it's better if you don't know much about it before you start reading, so I'm not going to give you much description, but I can tell you that these books made Jonathan Rogers one of my very favorite living authors. I adore them. My kids adore them. If you have not introduced *The Wilderking Trilogy* to your kids yet, put it in their Easter baskets; any kids 9 and up, and your teens – oh my gosh – your teens will love it. OK, and then another one is *The Green Ember* series, *The Green Ember*, *Ember Falls*, *Ember Rising*, there are some other short stories like *The Last Archer* and *The Black Star of Kingston* that go along with them. It's basically a whole universe and Read-Aloud Revival listeners love these books, so if you haven't gotten your hands on *Green Ember* books, the first one you want to read, or to give your kids, is called, *The Green Ember*. So, you don't want to get any of the short stories or the prequels or sequels or anything like that until you've read *The Green Ember*, and that would make a really great Easter basket gift. If you have teens who've already read *The Wilderking Trilogy* and loved it, I would really recommend *The Charlatan's Boy* also by

Jonathan Rogers. It's set in the same world as *The Wilderking Trilogy* but it's not part of the series. Like, it's a whole separate story. You don't have to read *The Wilderking Trilogy* first, but I definitely would. And, *The Charlatan's Boy* I don't think it's even young adult, I think it might be an adult novel, but it's perfectly acceptable for a teenager. I loved reading it, and if you have a teen who has read, say, *Wingfeather Saga* and *Wilderking Trilogy* and *Green Ember* and wants something more, I would recommend *The Charlatan's Boy* by Jonathan Rogers. Now, outside of just book recommendations, there's a few other accessories you can tuck into your Easter baskets for your young readers. And, my three favorite (I recommended at Christmas, I'm going to recommend again, now, because if your kids don't have them it's a great time to, sort of, boost their reading life by helping them with some good resources), one is a good book light – my kids always take a good book light to bed with them and they read before they go to sleep. I will link in the Show Notes to my favorite kind of book light, although, I have also heard people use headlamps. Heather Woody who's in our Read-Aloud Revival premium member forum, recommends headlamps because their batteries last way longer and I think that's kind of brilliant to give your kids a headlamp to read with at night. We have book lights, but you know, when those finally die (and they always do after a while) I might replace them with headlamps. Another idea is our Read-Aloud Revival custom book bags. These are heavy duty, canvas book bags, metal grommets, because we know how many books you're hauling to and from the library. They have an inner pocket that zips to put your library card in and they're definitely Read-Aloud Revival listener favorites. We'll put those in the Show Notes as well. Book darts are my favorite. I love



giving them out, I love filling my house with them, I never read without book darts anymore. If you haven't heard of book darts yet, well, you're about to love me, we'll put a link in the Show Notes. These are really thin, metal arrows, basically, that you slide onto the pages of your book. They don't crimp your pages, they don't permanently mark your books. You can do this to library books, to your own books to mark specific passages you don't want to forget or you want to come back to. Book darts are always a favorite gift and a perfect thing to tuck into an Easter basket. OK, I hope that gave you some ideas for all the different ages and that you found something that you can tuck into an Easter basket for your young readers. Hang tight because in just a minute I'm going to introduce you to somebody who's written her very first picture book—that will be in just a moment, right after this message.

We'll get back to today's episode in just a moment. But, I wanted to take a quick minute to make sure you know about *The Read-Aloud Family*. This is a new book I wrote just for you. Here's what I know: you will never, ever regret the time you spend reading to your kids. Connecting deeply with our families can be, kind of, difficult, right, in our really busy and technology-driven world? But reading aloud is one of the best ways to be fully present with our kids even after they can read to themselves. In the new book, *The Read-Aloud Family* you'll find the inspiration you need to start a read-aloud movement in your own home. You'll discover how to prepare your kids for academic success, how to develop their empathy and compassion, all through reading aloud. You're going to learn how to find time to read-aloud in the midst of your really busy day; school, sports, dinner dishes, all those pressures

on your time and attention. And, you'll learn how to choose books across a variety of sibling interests and ages. The best part is that you'll discover how to make reading aloud the very best part of your family's day. *The Read-Aloud Family* also offers age-appropriate book lists from infancy all the way through adolescence. So, from a toddler's wonder to your teenager's resistance, you're going to discover practical strategies to make reading aloud a meaningful family ritual. The book releases wherever books are sold, March 27, 2018, but if you order the book before March 27 you're going to get some extra gifts and I am so excited Zondervan let me do this, because I made you a brand new video Master Class to show you how to choose books for your kids. So, you know that feeling when you walk into a library or a bookstore or maybe you're cruising around online or something, and you don't know if a book is worth your time or attention or your child's time and attention? In this video Master Class you're going to find out exactly which two characteristics make a book worth reading and you'll find out the three question test I use to decide if a book deserves a place on my family's reading stack. So order *The Read-Aloud Family* before March 27, 2018 to get a promo code to access that Master Class for free. I am thrilled Zondervan is letting me do that. Go to [TheReadAloudFamily.com](http://TheReadAloudFamily.com) to grab your copy. I can't wait to get it in your hands.

## 24:26 Meet Linsey Davis

**Sarah:** Linsey Davis is a correspondent for ABC News who's received several honors for her reporting, including a couple of Emmy Awards. She's covered major news stories around the globe but, today, she's here to talk to us about her brand new picture book, *The World is Awake*:



*A celebration of everyday blessings* published by Zondervan, which is part of Harper-Collins' Christian publishing. I've got the book right in front of me as we speak and it's just lovely. It's a celebration of God's World from the nature we find in our own backyards to the wonder of creatures at the zoo and the relationships around us. The illustrations are done by Lucy Fleming. They're bright, they're bold. It's just a lovely book. Linsey, thank you so much for joining us here at the Read-Aloud Revival.

**Linsey:** Sarah, thank you so much for having me. I couldn't be more excited about this new project.

**Sarah:** Tell me about what compelled you to write the book?

**Linsey:** Well, I guess it's kind of two-fold. One is, almost four years ago I had a little boy, and so that was really the first time that I actually started reading children's books. I mean, of course, I had read them and been read the books when I was a little kid but, just really hadn't picked up a child's book, a children's book in maybe thirty years or so. And so, in having my son and then really paying attention to the kinds of things that we were reading to him and buying for him, it made me realize that there was something missing, that it wasn't so easy to find a particular kind of book, and ultimately, I decided, 'Well, I'll guess I'll try my hand at writing a book.' And so, that's what I did. So, it's kind of like two things. One is, really initially I was trying to get him some books that would really introduce him to God as a toddler, and so it was actually something that he said to me one day. The woman who watches him during the day while I'm at work, she has a real green thumb and so they go out and they're really one with nature and they garden. And so, one day in the car he said to me, "Mommy, does God open up the flowers?" And, I thought about it for a

minute, I said, "Yes! He does." And he proceeded to ask me a number of questions about what he thinks and what he perceives as God's presence in the world around us, and I felt like that was key. And, at the time he was just 2 years old, so for a 2 year old to have this introduction to who God is, and this very mysterious person who he really wants to see, and is He in the clouds, where is He? He wants to know what does He do and what does He look like? And it touched me when he said, "Does God open the flowers?" He's in the painting of the sunrise and the sunset, and He's in the animals and all these things that we see every day. And so, it was really me having a 2 year old and 3 year old kind of guide me through revisiting, "Yes, that is God's handiwork right there. That is an example of the presence of God in the everyday," and so that's why we have just underneath the title the world is awakened and it's a celebration of everyday blessings.

**Sarah:** You said there were a couple of things you were looking for in books or that you didn't find in books when you were reading with your son. Was there anything else?

**Linsey:** So, since I've been going down this process and I've been a news person, a journalist, a reporter/correspondent, however you want to call me, for the last 20 years, this is my first foray into becoming an author and kind of, throwing that hat on. And so, it's just really been interesting to go down that road and research and just see the background of children's books, which again, is something I just started exploring recently, and especially, because my son is African-American, and when I started researching the idea, and if you go and you look for books where the characters are black, it's really difficult to find. Thank God for the internet because that makes it a little bit easier. But when I started





researching it I came across some statistics, that was more than 90% of the protagonists in children's picture books are white, and so that clearly is not reflective of if you look at the statistics that suggest that 50% of America's children are not white. You can also look at the research and studies to suggest how detrimental that is and problematic that is for kids to grow up reading books that they don't see themselves reflected in. And, I ended up finding more research to support the idea that every children's book needs two things: they need a window and they need a mirror. They need a mirror to be able to reflect themselves and they need a window to see outside of themselves and see the world around them, that they normally wouldn't get to see. And so, I think that that's what we've really tried to accomplish with *The World is Awake* because this isn't just about black children. We have everybody in this book reflected; there are white kids, Asian kids, ambiguous kids, there are just multicultural kids. And, in shopping for books for my son I found that need; just not seeing characters that look him. And, that's another hope that I hope that people who are reading this and being read to that they're going to see that these are just kids. I don't want white children to look at them and think anything differently than they're just enjoying the children's book, but in the meantime, subliminally, they're taking in diverse, a diverse population of people, and I think that that's so important especially in our times right now, because it's often things we're not familiar with that we decide that we don't like, and they're different from us.

### 30:08 Diversity in picture books

**Sarah:** So true. OK, so I'm going to link to the article – I'm so glad you brought up the windows

and mirrors. I love this idea; Rudine Sims Bishop wrote this article called, *Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors* in which she talked about the need for kids to see themselves in the stories and also to see life from another point of view, and the first person who ever mentioned this to me was Grace Lin who has written some wonderful books of Chinese folktale middle grade novels. We've had on the Read-Aloud Revival before. We just love her. She told me when I was chatting with her that growing up in America, she was the only Chinese kid in her entire school, and she was a voracious reader, but she never read a single book about a child that she could identify with because none of the characters in the books were Chinese, and so grew up, and now writes these amazing books featuring Chinese-American kids—just wonderful stories. And, she introduced me to that whole windows and mirrors and sliding glass doors. I'm going to put a link to the article in case any of our listeners haven't seen it and want to hear it, and also to Grace Lin's TEDx talk where she talks about the importance of having windows and mirrors. I'm so glad you brought that up, Linsey, because there is a real need for us to have more books that feature diverse characters that aren't issue-based books. Many picture books and middle grade novels that feature diverse characters, they highlight social issues, or historical events, or racial tension, and those are obviously incredibly important books, especially right now – I'm so glad there are so many of them. We also want to make sure our bookshelves have plenty of books with diverse characters who are just doing everyday kinds of things, like you said, so that when people read these books they just see children, and so that we stop seeing the color of skin as a thing, now it's just they all see children. We're going to link to that – a whole book list in



the Show Notes. And, I was going to mention that we're putting *The World is Awake* on our book list. We have a book list called Diverse Pictures Books to Celebrate the Everyday that's a collection of picture books that just show diverse characters doing everyday stuff. Things like, *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (which I just love that book).

**Linsey:** My hat's off to him. I mean, I have the utmost respect because, for those who don't know, Ezra Jack Keats was a white male who published the first ever picture book that featured an African-American character. So, of course, we're talking about *The Snowy Day* and it's actually a series that he did, but he saw the need, because it's like 1902, and I believe the first modern picture book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter was published, it wasn't then until 60 years later, so 1962 when Ezra Jack Keats realized, 'Look! We have a problem here.' And I love that he wasn't black, that he was a white person, realizing how problematic it was that we didn't have any kinds of black children represented in children's books. I think that that really says so much, speaking to how large the problem, how problematic it was, and in just like the shortage, and anyway I just find that that's so significant and hats off to Ezra Jack Keats for *The Snowy Day*.

**Sarah:** Linsey, have you seen Andrea Davis Pinkney's picture book? It's a picture book for older kids, so it's called, *A Poem for Peter*, it's basically the story of Ezra Jack Keats and the creation of *The Snowy Day*, and it is told like a poem. It's so beautiful. It's definitely wordier, I wouldn't necessarily read it with a 3 or 4 year old, I don't think it would hold their attention (they'd like to look at the pictures probably). My older

kids love it, and it was my favorite picture book of 2017. I just loved it so much.

**Linsey:** *A Poem for Peter*—I'm writing that down.

**Sarah:** You'll have to check that one out.

**Linsey:** Thank you.

**Sarah:** And, I have to say I love, I can hear the news correspondent coming out in you because you said you were totally unfamiliar with the world of children's books and now you're spinning out all these times and dates and ...

**Linsey:** Yes, that's the researcher in me. Well, part of it was I wanted to see was this just me believing there was a need because the neighborhood bookstores that I was going to, I wasn't finding the books, or was this really still a problem? Because, I was thinking about it, I grew up in the 80's (I was a child then) and I didn't really collect many dolls or anything but I really wanted a cabbage patch kid because that's what you had to have when you were a child growing up in the 80's, and this was before the internet, so this was back when my mom and I would flip through the yellow pages (really dating myself now!) to the toy stores in order to find toy stores that had a black cabbage patch kid, and it was so difficult to find a black cabbage patch kid. It took weeks for us, and many times we were venturing out to the stores only to be disappointed. And that's what is so strange to me, is that now we're talking more than 30 years later and we still have this same difficulty. And again, this is – just to paint a picture of our bookshelves – we have all kinds of kids colors, animals, letters, and everything possible, because I'm not just looking for one particular image for my son to see, I want him to see everything. And, so my point is that it's just been kind of difficult to see everything and still



continues to be. And, so we're making improvements here and there but still have a long way to go.

**Sarah:** We'll put a link in the Show Notes so you want to go to [ReadAloudRevival.com/90](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/90) and we'll also put a link in there to our list of Diverse Picture Books to Celebrate the Everyday. It's a great list; you'll find *The World is Awake* has been added to that list as well. Thank you so much for carving out some time to chat with us, it has been lovely to talk with you.

**Linsey:** I have so enjoyed the time, Sarah. Thank you.

### 35:55 Let the kids speak

**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.

**Child1:** My name is Emma and I am 7 years old. And, I live in Georgia. And, my favorite book is *The Courage of Sarah Noble* and my favorite part is when they play a game about where you get to hide a rock in a moccasin, and guess which moccasin it's in.

**Child2:** My name is Stephen, I'm 4 years old. I live in Georgia. My favorite book is *The Little Red* [**\*\*inaudible\*\***]. My favorite piece is when it always came back.

**Child3:** My name is Leila, and I'm 5. I live in Kyle, Texas and I love *Babar* because it has a queen that has my teacher's name, and also I love *Run, Bug, Run!* because it has so many stories and I love to read them. I'm learning how to read and that's why I love those two books.

**Child4:** Hi, my name is [**\*\*inaudible\*\***]. And I am 6 years old. I live in Perry, Ohio. My favorite book is [**\*\*inaudible\*\***]. Bye.

**Child5:** [Mom: what's your name?] Nathan. [Mom: Nathan. How old are you, Nathan?] 5 and I live at Perry, Ohio, and I like a book called, *Not Norman*. [Mom: why do you like *Not Norman*?] Because it's just my favorite. Bye.

**Child6:** My name is Naomi. I am 6 years old. I'm from Lansing, Michigan. My favorite book is, *Milly, Molly, Mandy* by Joyce Lankester Brisley because *Milly, Molly, Mandy* runs everywhere.

**Child7:** My name is Paul and I'm from Lansing, Michigan, and I'm 4. My favorite book is *Dot the Fire Dog* because Dot saved the kittens.

**Child8:** My name is Abigail and I live in Peru, Indiana. I am 6 years old, and my favorite book is *Dark Day in the Deep Sea*. I like it because it's got a bunch of adventures and there's a giant octopus.

**Child9:** [Mom: what's your name?] James. I love *Sleeping Beauty*. I am number 3 years old. [Mom: why do you like *Sleeping Beauty*?] because I like it, because I like the dragon. [Mom: oh, that's great.]

**Sarah:** Thank you, kids. I always love hearing from you. So fantastic. Hey, don't forget to check out the Show Notes for this episode. You'll find a transcript, you'll find links to all the books I recommended for Easter baskets, you'll find a time-stamped listener guide so you can hop around to different parts of the podcast if you wanted to hear particular parts again without listening to the entire thing. That's all found at [ReadAloudRevival.com/90](http://ReadAloudRevival.com/90), or you can just go to [Read Aloud Revival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com) and look for episode 90. Also, don't forget to preorder your copy of *The*



*Read-Aloud Family* before March 27 to get access to that video class on how to choose books for your kids—really excited to get that to you. I just can't wait to get this book into your hands. Hey, I'll be back next week with another episode of the Read-Aloud Revival, but until then, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.