

EPISODE 167: **Advent and Christmas with Tomie dePaola, Winter at RAR**

- Sarah: [00:00](#) Hey, quick note here at the top before we get started. If you are looking for great Christmas read-alouds, we've got you covered. We've got lists of our favorite read-alouds, whether those are picture books, short stories, novels, audiobooks, all the good stuff at [readaloudrevival.com/Christmas](http://readaloudrevival.com/Christmas). So check it out. You can see our free book list. You can get easy links or print them out, and you will not be wondering how you can turn up the read-aloud magic in your home this Christmas. That's [readaloudrevival.com/Christmas](http://readaloudrevival.com/Christmas).
- Sarah: [00:42](#) You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Mackenzie, homeschooling mama of six and author of *The Read-Aloud Family* and *Teaching from Rest*. As parents, we're overwhelmed with a lot to do. It feels like every child needs something different. The good news is you are the best person to help your kids learn and grow, and home is the best place to fall in love with books. This podcast has been downloaded 7 million times in over 160 countries. So if you want to nurture warm relationships while also raising kids who love to read, you're in good company. We'll help your kids fall in love with books and we'll help you fall in love with homeschooling. Let's get started.
- Sarah: [01:33](#) Well, winter is upon us in the Northern Hemisphere anyway. It's time to put logs on the fire, pour a mug of hot cocoa, read a nice stack of books. If you've been listening to the Read-Aloud Revival Podcast for long, you know I'm giddy whenever we're announcing what we're up to next in RAR Premium, and today is no exception. And I think whether you're in the Northern Hemisphere or not, you're going to like our lineup. On the show today, I want to let you know what we're doing in RAR Premium next and invite you along for the ride. So first, what is RAR Premium? Well, it's our online community of Family Book Clubs, WOW: Writers on Writing workshops and professional development for homeschooling moms. And what we do is we help your kids fall in love with reading and we help you fall in love with homeschooling.
- Sarah: [02:23](#) It's easily the best thing going at Read-Aloud Revival. It's where we tuck all of our best trainings, resources. We've released book lists early. Everything is just better in RAR Premium. Nikki, one of our premium members mentioned that she was skeptical that premium would be worth

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joining, but then after she did, she went on to say that it's turned out to be, "Easily the best money we spend in our homeschool." Amber said on Facebook that her family would give up Netflix video streaming before they'd give up premium. That's how much they love it. So you can get all the details and join RAR Premium for \$15 a month at rarpremium.com. But let's talk about what we're doing next in premium. So December; December is a busy month for all of us, right? Our focus here at RAR Premium is going to be to help you wait in joyful hope, using the picture books of our late and beloved Tomie dePaola to guide us.

Sarah: [03:24](#) We're calling it Christmas school. Sounds good, right? And each week you'll have a plan for a Tomie book to read and a Christmas carol to sing and do copy work with. We'll have a suggested treat and directions for an ornament to make that goes with that week's book. So you could do Christmas school every Friday or whatever if you wanted to have one day a week just for Christmas school, or you could really make Christmas school, your school-school, because we'll have a whole bunch of ideas in that Christmas school guide of what you can do to wait in joyful hope for the coming of the King in your homeschool. Now, the book you absolutely want to buy to go with our Christmas school guide is Joy to the World by Tomie dePaola. It is a lovely treasury. It has three of Tomie dePaola's Christmas stories and several Christmas carols.

Sarah: [04:21](#) And then it's just loaded with Tomie's uniquely wonderful Christmas art. He is a favorite, favorite here, of course, at Read-Aloud Revival. So I think you're going to love that Christmas school guide and you are going to love reading through Advent and Christmas with Tomie dePaola. We're also - early in December - we're going to gather for a mama's Christmas meetup on Zoom, where we'll sip some cocoa, we'll swap some ideas, we'll swap some favorite books suggestions, and talk about what we're doing, or maybe more importantly, *not doing* to make the season merry and bright. So that's Christmas. Now in the new year, we're going to resume circle with Sarah. Circle with Sarah is professional development for homeschooling moms. So these are classes that I teach regularly that help you create the homeschooling life you love because at Read-Aloud Revival, we know how easy it is for your ideals

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and your dreams for your homeschool, just to fall by the wayside, right?

Sarah: [05:23](#) Especially as soon as nitty gritty life comes into play. So we are committed to supporting your homeschooling journey and helping you fall more in love with your homeschool every month. So you love it more every month than you did before. And we do that with circle with Sarah. So our January circle with Sarah session - so much alliteration there - our January session is called The Seashell Approach. I have been waiting for this one. I'm very excited about it. This is a class that's really going to help you make a shift in your homeschool from being principally the teacher in a very teachery sense of teaching to instead inviting your kids into wonder. How do we invite our kids into the wonder of learning? How do we stoke the fire of curiosity instead of trying to just fill our kids and our students up with information?

Sarah: [06:12](#) Well, at Read-Aloud Revival, we call it the seashell approach and in January I'll be leading a session all about practical steps we can take to make it a reality in our homes and invite our kids into wonder every day. Now each month we also invite an author to come to Read-Aloud Revival premium and teach what we call WOW: Writers on Writing. Our favorite way to learn to write is from writers themselves. And so we invite our favorite writers and your kids' favorite writers to come share their methods and their secrets and their skills with us. These are easily the highest attended sessions at Read-Aloud Revival premium. There's no question why. They are unlike any writing class your kids have taken before. They're so good. They're very engaging. And they each focus on one specific skill. So your kids get really good at one specific skill and you'll see progress in your kids' writing as a result of that.

Sarah: [07:08](#) In January, we're turning our attention to research, creative ways to research. Research is something our kids will do a lot over the years, right? But there are more ways to research than we might usually think of when we tell our kids, "Hey, research this topic," and authors are superbly qualified at teaching us some of these creative ways to research because they do it in real life for their real jobs all the time. Well, one of our favorite authors, Barb Rosenstock is going to come teach us creative ways to

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research and she'll shed some light on how she does research for her own picture book biographies. That's our January, WOW: Writers on Writing workshop. Now those sessions do happen live. Those workshops do happen live, and they're also available on replay. So whether or not your kids watch it live, or you watch it spaced out over time, or you watch it at a later date, doesn't really matter. You'll have access to all that in premium.

Sarah: [08:13](#) That month, January, our family book club selection is The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken. Have you guys seen this book? Well, I'll tell you first, we have heard from a lot of you and we know that we are not the only ones whose kids struggle with perfectionism. Well, this is my favorite picture book that helps kids release tension around mistakes. Corinna is a fantastic author and illustrator and her book, again, it's called The Book of Mistakes, it's a great exploration of what to do when you're drawing a picture say, and it doesn't come out the way that you hoped. So if you've got any kids who get easily frustrated when they're drawing or writing and things are just not looking the way they wanted, you want to get your hands on that book. The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken, that's L-U-Y-K-E-N.

Sarah: [09:01](#) And we're going to have her at RAR Premium. So the Book of Mistakes is our January family book club. And that means we'll have a family book club guide, as well as an exclusive interview with Corinna herself, where your kids can ask their own questions and get them answered in RAR Premium. We're also going to start our winter mama book club in January. We do a mama book club each season. And this time the game is afoot. We're reading Sherlock Holmes this winter. It seems like a good choice to read next to a crackling fire with a pipe, well, or a cup of tea. You can expect a mama book club guide and rousing weekly discussions as we read The Hound of the Baskervilles together. Really, really looking forward to that. All of that starts in January. Now in February, we're going to revisit that circle with Sarah topic we covered the previous month.

Sarah: [09:58](#) So The Seashell Approach; an invitation to wonder, right? The previous month in January, we're doing this circle with Sarah session on the seashell approach. That really is a lot of alliteration. In February, the whole Read-Aloud

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Revival team, myself, Kortney Garrison, who is our community director and Kara Anderson, who is our podcast manager. We're all going to be live on Zoom and we're going to keep the discussion going. We're going to troubleshoot where you're getting stuck implementing it. We're going to celebrate your wins. We're going to just deepen our understanding of what it looks like and how it can be that we can invite our children into wonder. This is really a chance to implement. We just want to make sure this is coming to life in your homeschool. We know that a successful homeschool is built out of a series of small actions that are taken on purpose.

Sarah:

[10:47](#)

And so what we're doing with these sessions is we're giving you the time and the space to really make sure that what we're learning in our circle with Sarah sessions are able to take root in your homeschool. So we're calling this a member huddle, and we're going to just implement that circle with Sarah. We will troubleshoot it, figure out where we're getting stuck, all that good stuff in February. So January and February, you're really going to be inviting your kids into wonder in your homeschool and seeing a difference I think. Our February, WOW: Writers on Writing workshop is going to be taught by the utterly fabulous and completely kid-favorite teacher, Jonathan Auxier. You know him. He's one of our favorite authors. He's written lots of books like Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes, Sophie Quire and the Last Storyguard, Sweep. The newer books, The Fabled Stables. He's come before. He's come to do author interviews.

Sarah:

[11:42](#)

He's come on the podcast. He has been a Writers on Writing workshop teacher before. Everyone loves him. This time he's coming back to let us in on the secrets of storytelling. So this workshop is ideal for ages, I don't know, I'd say eight to 16, and it's really going to help your kids who are into writing stories, think like a writer. So I'll just tell you a workshop with Jonathan Auxier is absolutely always worth the time. I should tell you this, I know some published authors, some of your kids' favorites probably, their Read-Aloud Revival favorites, they are members of RAR premium just to learn from these workshops and author interviews. So some of them tell me the best teaching they get, professional education they get for their writing comes from watching these WOW: Writers on

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Writing workshops and our author interviews that go with our Family Book Clubs.

Sarah: [12:34](#) That's how good they are. So your kids are getting top notch education here. Okay. So let's talk about our family book club for February. We're going to be reading *Before She Was Harriet*. And if you haven't seen this book, you want to get your hands on it. It's written by Lesa Cline-Ransome, illustrated by James Ransome. That's a husband and wife team. I love that. It's really an exquisite book. It's a picture book biography. It's poetry, it's so well done. *Before She Was Harriet*, all about Harriet Tubman. We're going to have a family book club guide to go with it, of course. And I should tell you those guides, if you haven't seen one before, or if you used to be in premium and it's been a while, you probably want to revisit just to check those out. We've really up-leveled our family book club guides.

Sarah: [13:20](#) They are super wonderful. They're packed with really great open-ended questions and conversation starters, shared experiences, usually a meal or a snack idea and more learning and growing ideas related to the book that really help your kids make this one of the books they remember with fondness. Our goal is that, 10, 20 years down the road, when your kids are walking through the store and they happen to see the cover of this book, they'll say, "Oh my goodness. I so remember when we shared that meal and talked about that book and met that author", and it just really comes to life for them. So, of course, we're meeting the author and the illustrator in fact. Lesa and James are coming as featured guests and they will answer your kids' questions in RAR Premium in a live video. Now, each month we do a picture book, family book club, and those picture books are chosen specifically for a wide range of ages.

Sarah: [14:16](#) So yes, absolutely, they're fitting for your teens and they'll learn lots from them. But each season we also choose one novel for our family book club. That way your kids are getting both picture books and novels as part of their book clubs. I could not be more excited about our winter novel pick. It is *Adventures With Waffles* by Maria Parr. It is easily, easily, easily one of my all-time favorite read-alouds for all ages. People ask me what ages do you recommend it for? All of them, everyone, just read it to everyone. You

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will laugh and you will cry. It is such an absolute delight. This book actually comes to us in translation. The author is Maria Parr. She's Norwegian. And this book was translated into English first for the UK under the name Waffle Hearts. And then for the US and yes, we are going to have a family book club guide to go with it.

Sarah: [15:10](#)

And you better believe there will be waffles happening. And we are indeed going to get to talk to Maria Parr herself. She's going to stream live video with us from her home in Norway. It promises to be an absolutely wonderful time. Your kids can ask their questions. I cannot wait. So that's winter. Pretty good stuff, right? If you are a premium member, make sure you log into premium and that way you can download your printable calendars. That way you can keep them on your fridge. We've got a printable calendar for the whole season for all winter, and then we've got one for each month. And that way you don't miss a thing. Now, if you are not in our RAR premium yet, I want to invite you to join us because it really is something of a magical place on the internet. Our forum that's for homeschooling moms, it's such a bustling, joyful, life-giving place.

Sarah: [16:03](#)

That's where I go to get the best book recommendations, to get encouragement and advice in my homeschool with my kids and my parenting from others who are just like me. Like-minded moms who are in love with their kids, who want their kids to love reading and who want to fall head over heels with their homeschooling life. So, you know, if you love Jesus, if you love your kids and you really want your kids to fall in love with reading, and you want to love your homeschooling life, there is no better place on the internet for you than RAR Premium. It's \$15 a month. Although you save a little bit, if you join for a quarter or a year. Most of our members end up doing that because they want to stick around. And of course, we do have a 30-day money back guarantee.

Sarah: [16:43](#)

So you can always join for a month, see if it's a good fit. And if it's not, all you need to do is cancel and request a refund. There's no problem there at all. So that takes away all the risk. You don't have to worry about it. One question we get a lot of is, what if I can't make it to the live events? Whether that's a Writers on Writing workshop or an author interview that goes with our Family Book Clubs, or one of

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our trainings for homeschool moms or Circle with Sarah's or whatever, we record everything. So when you join RAR Premium, you get instant access to our RAR Premium library, and you will actually find family book club guides, and video replays, and Writers on Writing workshops and all the good stuff. You will find all of it in the RAR Premium library.

- Sarah: [17:27](#) So when you join and you log into your dashboard, you're going to see two main areas at the top. One's called For Mamas, and one is, For Kids. And so whether you're going there, because you need some training, support, help, resources, classes, any of that for yourself to fall more in love with your homeschool, or you're looking for Family Book Clubs, or writing workshops or drawing, we have lots and lots of drawing classes. In RAR Premium for your kids you can look in, for kids' library and you can have access to everything we've done. So it is really the best way to help your kids fall in love with books and help you fall in love with homeschooling. If you've got more questions about it, you want to know more, go to rarpremium.com. That's where I'll be all winter long in RAR Premium reading these books, loving on my kids. I cannot wait.
- Sarah: [18:21](#) Now it's time for let the kids speak. This is my favorite part of the podcast where kids tell us about books they've been enjoying lately.
- Oak: [18:38](#) Hi, my name is Oak and I'm seven. I live in Pennsylvania. My favorite book is Christmas in the Noisy Village by Astrid Lindgren.
- Noah: [18:49](#) Hi, my name is Noah and I live in Pennsylvania and I'm four, and my favorite book is Lemonade in Winter by Emily Jenkins.
- Abigail: [19:03](#) Hello, my name is Abigail [Blakely 00:19:06]. I am nine years old. I live in Greenville, South Carolina. My favorite book is The Land of Stories. I like that book because it has adventure and that everyone just gets into some sort of trouble at any part.
- Megan: [19:42](#) Hello, my name is Megan, and my favorite book is What is Sleep, because I love it.
- Ava: [19:52](#) My name is Ava, and my favorite book is the Magic Tree House book and the American Girl books. I liked them

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because, well, the Magic Tree House, I like it because it's really, really adventurous. And they get to go to different places and the American Girl books. I like the Molly books because they're funny. Sometimes they can have a little funny [stuff 00:00:20:34].

- Speaker 1: [20:35](#) And how old are you?
- Ava: [20:36](#) Six.
- Speaker 1: [20:38](#) And where are you from?
- Ava: [20:39](#) Jackson, Michigan.
- Brianna: [20:41](#) My name is Brianna, and I am nine years old, almost 10, and I live in Jackson, Michigan, and my favorite book is the American Girl book series. And my favorite book out of the series is Meet Felicity.
- Stacia: [21:09](#) Hi, I'm Stacia and I'm 12 and a third years old, and one of my favorite books is The Penderwicks on Gardam Street because they're funny and they make me laugh. And I'm from Jackson, Michigan.
- Jonathan: [21:21](#) My name is Jonathan. I'm 12 years old and I'm from Pennsylvania. My favorite books is The Land of Stories by Chris Colfer. I couldn't put these books down because they're so suspenseful.
- Claire: [21:32](#) My name is Claire. I am seven years old. I live in Pennsylvania. My favorite book is, Ivy and Bean No News is Good News. I like that. It's really funny.
- Anna: [21:43](#) My name is Anna. I am 10 years old. I'm from Pennsylvania, and my favorite book series is Notebooks of a Middle School Princess by Meg Cabot. I like the books because it is about Mia from the Princess Diaries long lost sister, Olivia.
- Wendy: [21:58](#) Hi, I'm Wendy. I'm 11 and I live in Fredericksburg, Virginia. My favorite book is Wings of Fire, Darkness of Dragons by Tui T. Sutherland. It's my favorite book because the main character is really analytical and I want myself to be like him.
- Serena: [22:15](#) Hello. My name is Serena. I'm nine years old. I live in Fredericksburg, Virginia. My favorite book series is Wings

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of Fire by Tui T. Sutherland. I love this book because the dragons are the main characters and humans are prey, and it's really easy to love.

Speaker 2: [22:47](#) My name [inaudible 00:22:47] Richard Scarry. Very good.

Daniel: [22:57](#) Hello. My name is Daniel and I am seven years old and live in Fredericksburg, Virginia. My favorite book is Hatchet by Gary Paulson. I like it because the main character is in like on the edge to see if anyone's going to rescue him from the wilderness, because he's just basically stranded out there.

Cecily: [23:23](#) Hi, my name is [Cecily 00:23:26] and I am five, and I live in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and my favorite book is Birthday for Francis.

Sarah: [23:44](#) Oh, thank you, kids. I like Birthday for Francis too Cecily. Actually, I like a lot of the books you kids mentioned today, so well done. Don't forget, you can grab your lists of great books to read aloud for Christmas. Those are free at [readaloudrevival.com/Christmas](http://readaloudrevival.com/Christmas). You'll find lists for picture books, lists of novels, list of short stories, audio books, lots of good stuff for you there. And I'll be back in a couple of weeks. I'm coming back with a special edition. Many of you know, we love Jim Weiss. He's a storyteller we can't get enough of. I know a lot of you love his work too. He's given us permission to release a few Christmasy stories he's going to tell on the podcast. So we've got some of those stories for you in next podcast that comes up on December 1st. So you can turn those on for your kiddos and get into the Christmas spirit. And of course you want to join us for Christmas school in RAR Premium too. That is bound to be a wonderful way to keep your holidays merry and bright. Okay. So that is it for me today, but I'll be back with that episode for you in a couple of weeks. And until then, you know exactly what to do. Go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids.