Using Children’s Literature to Share Stewardship Themes
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There is something about the “child within” in all ages that engages us in the art, creativity, imagination, and simple messages in children’s literature. When these stories are read aloud, adults and youth listen as raptly as young children and connect with the themes as much as youngsters—sometimes even more deeply. Though the list below is divided into several areas of stewardship, some books apply to a variety of topics. You probably know more titles!

CHOICES
1. The Butter Battle Book, Dr. Seuss. Random House. *Children get the idea right away that there are better choices. This book provides a great way to begin a discussion about conflict.*
2. You are Special, Max Lucado. Crossway Books.
3. Just the Way You Are, Max Lucado. Crossway Books
4. The Coat, Lauren Mills. Little, Brown & Company
6. I’m in Charge of Celebrations, Byrd Baylor. Charles Scribner’s Sons. *The story and southwest-style illustrations by Peter Parnall help open us to the delights in daily life and show how we can choose to celebrate each moment with deep gratitude to God.*
7. For Every Child, adapted by Caroline Castle from “The UN Conference on the Rights of the Child in Words and Pictures”

CREATION
1. Old Turtle, Douglas Wood. Pfeifer-Hamilton Publishing. *Watercolor illustrations by Cheng-Khee. This fable is a good introduction to gaining a deeper understanding of the earth and our relationship with all the beings who inhabit it. Some proceeds from the sale of the book are donated to projects promoting environmental healing and international understanding.*
6. The Lorax, Dr. Seuss. Random House
7. This is the Earth That God Made, Lynn Downey. Augsburg Fortress
10. Forest of Dreams, Susan Jeffers. Dial Books for Young Readers
12. **Play Lightly on the Earth**, “Nature Activities, Experiments and Ideas About Living Lightly on Planet Earth”, Kathryn Sheehan & Mary Waidner, PhD. Council Oak Books. *A bibliography at the end of each chapter lists more books to share with children, as well as resources for parents and teachers. A “notes” section gives more information or helpful suggestions, approaches, poems, resources, and/or illustrations.*


15. **She Who Watches**, told by Willa Holmes. Binford & Mort Publishing


**COMMUNITY**

1. **See Old Turtle**, above.


4. **Stone Soup**, Marcia Brown. Aladdin Paperbacks. *Like multiplying the “loaves and fishes” a community learns to share its resources to make something delicious together.*


6. **Grandpa’s Soup**, Eiko Kadona. Eerdman’s Books for Young Readers. *A grieving grandfather remembers the delicious meatball soup his deceased wife used to make for him. He tries to copy the soup and finds the aroma brings new visitors to his door. He discovers that sharing with new friends is the best cure for loneliness.*

7. **The Other Side**, Jacqueline Woodson. G.P. Putnam’s Sons. *A lyrical narrative told in the hopeful voice of a child confused by the fence someone else has built in her yard and the racial tension that divides her world.*

8. **The Sneetches and other Stories**, Dr. Seuss. Random House. *Sneetches is a comical story about prejudice and stereo-typing that cause division between people and cultures.*


12. **The Gift of Nothing**, Patrick McDonnell. Little, Brown and Company. *A character wants to give a gift to a friend. After a long struggle to decide, he gives “nothing” but the gift of sitting and being with his friend.*
**GIFTS AND TALENTS**

2. *In God’s Image*, Janet Neff Brewer. BRIDGE Resources
3. *Earth Child*, Kathryn Sheehan & Mary Waidner, PhD. Council Oak Books
5. *The Peddler’s Gift*, Maxine Rose Heer. Dial Books for Young Readers. *Tells about a peddler “cut from a different cloth” who gives a gift to last for all time.*
7. *Badger’s Parting Gifts*, Susan Varley. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books. *A book that deals with the death of someone special, but also helps us see the value of sharing our gifts with others while they are alive.*
8. *The Friendly Beasts - an Old English Christmas Carol*, illustrated by Tomie de Paola. Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers. *One by one the creatures at the manger tell of the gifts they shared with the newborn Christ-child. A simple arrangement of the music is included.*

**WELLNESS: BODY/MIND/SPRIT**

4. *See Designed by God So I Must Be Special, above.*

**SPIRITUAL LIFE**

1. *All You Ever Need*, Max Lucado. Crossway Books
2. *All Through the Day, All Through the Year, “Family Prayers and Celebrations”*, David B. Batchelder. Augsburg Fortress
3. *In God’s Name*, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. Jewish Lights Publishing
4. *The 11th Commandment, “Wisdom from our Children”*, written and drawn by the children of America. Jewish Lights Publication. *This book asks, “If there were an 11th Commandment, what would it be?” A blank page invites children to share their visions for a more holy world. Adults see the world from this hopeful child’s view.*
1. The Quiltmaker’s Gift, Jeff Brumbeau. Pfeifer-Hamilton Publishers. A modern-day fable with designs in the quilt-blocks that gives clues to the story. A website helps expands the rich heritage of this book with puzzles and games, stories of generosity from around the world, quilt block lore and quilting activities for all ages.


3. A Rose for Abby, Donna Guthrie. Abingdon Press. A thoughtful and touching true story about a little girl who comes up with a way to help homeless people.

1. The Table Where Rich People Sit, Byrd Baylor. Simon & Schuster. A family sits down at their old wooden dining table and discusses how “rich” they are. The teenager is incredulous and cannot imagine how the parents actually believe they are rich - until they put a monetary values on EVERYTHING they hold dear in their lives.

2. Francis, the poor Man of Assisi, Tomie de Paola.Holiday House, Inc.

3. The Giving Box, Create a Tradition of Giving with Your Children, Fred Rogers. Running Press. This kit includes messages for parents and children, multi-cultural folktales and fables for varying perspectives, and a small “giving box” for children to save their money.

4. In God’s Hands, Lawrence Kushner and Gary Schmidt, Jewish Lights Publishing. A delightfully humorous tale of how rich man and a poor man who attend the same synagogue learn about the miracles of sharing.