

# Children's Focus Bibliography

## Stories for use in Worship, Home, or Children's Religious Education



Rev. Paul Beckel  
Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship  
1207 Ellsworth Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225

[paul@buf.org](mailto:paul@buf.org)  
[www.buf.org](http://www.buf.org)

### Introduction

The Children's Focus is a regular segment of our Sunday Service. Following our gathering song, the children congregate toward the front of the sanctuary around a storyteller/reader and enjoy a story on the theme of the service. Afterward, they leave for their classrooms. Below is a list of stories appropriate to this setting. Most are about five minutes long (some require a little judicious editing), and are relevant to and consistent with the principles of our worship tradition.

Most of these are picture books. In a very small sanctuary (or summer or children's worship), a picture book is an easy way to reach the whole group. But if anyone is being left out (too often the adults) because they cannot see the pictures, the format should be modified. *Most of these stories can be adapted to be told rather than read, and telling usually makes them more captivating and alive.* In the second column, I've marked those especially well suited for *telling* with a "T." Or, pictures can be scanned into slide presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint) and projected onto a large screen. This is a great way to celebrate the ministry of the visual arts. Those stories for which visuals are especially helpful are marked with a "V." (Or, try this way of combining showing and telling: rather than memorizing or reading a story, *read the pictures* by pointing out subtle details and letting the story come through your observations.)

Others are marked "S" for sure-bet – these are excellent, and applicable to a wide range of themes. My favorites are marked, "F." These "favorites" may challenge your congregation more than some of the others, but I have found them richly meaningful. Which brings up an interesting question about the children's focus: how emotionally heavy can you get, here? When I select material for the Children's Focus I am well aware that at times I am bringing up serious issues, with little time for debriefing. So there are some great books that I cannot use. But still, I don't shy from serious issues of life and death, fear and struggle.

Some stories are marked "D" for drama – those that should be acted out... and "M" if they have a musical component. And speaking of music, I've had wonderful experiences with solo accompaniment coordinated to move with the flow of the story. Finally, some stories are marked "L" for long...that is, they are so long that they become major components (if not the central component) of a one-hour program. This can work in a variety of ways: in a program with a series of stories, or with a story serving as the ground for a discussion, or with the story broken up into a few pieces separated by music or other traditional service elements. For best results, augment with additional visual, vocal, dramatic, and/or participatory techniques.

D=Dramatic  
F=Favorite

L=Long  
M=Musical

S=Sure-Bet  
T=for Telling

V=Visual

## Updates

Many people have contributed to this project – *Thank you!* Since I review every book personally before adding it to the list, I have not gotten to (or been able to find) all of your suggestions yet. *Still, I welcome and appreciate your ongoing contributions and corrections.* I continue to add to the website, and eventually I hope to add links to related resources, texts to hard-to-find stories, musical accompaniment, and some deeper discussion about the meaning, purpose, techniques, and alternatives for Children's Focus.

## Search Tips

Use Ctrl/f, or the binoculars icon, or the “find” command in the “edit” menu. A search will lead you to words in the “Themes” column, and to everywhere else in this document. *Search for word roots*, such as “vot” to get “vote” and “voting.”

## Alternate names for this part of the service

Small Talk; Story for All Ages; Moments for Young People

## Songs to exit by

*Go Now in Peace* (SLT #413); *Spirit of Life* (#123); *From You I Receive* (#402); *Turn Around* (Malvina Reynolds); many congregations have developed an in-house children's blessing.

## Collections of UU Stories and Intergenerational Worship Activities

*Windmills, Worship and Wonder: Ideas for Intergenerational Worship*, Abby L. Winkler Crowley, editor, Paint Branch UU Church, Adelphi, MD

*Hide and Seek with God*, Mary Ann Moore (Skinner House)

*What if Nobody Forgave?*, Colleen McDonald, editor (Skinner House)

*A Bucketful of Dreams*, Christopher Buice (Skinner House)

Creating Effective Intergenerational Worship Services: [www.uuintergenerational.org](http://www.uuintergenerational.org)

Themes	Title	Author	Synopsis/Comments
(Mis)judgment, creativity	<i>Emily's Art</i>	Peter Catalanotto	When the judge of the art contest misinterprets Emily's art, she learns to deal with her disappointment.
Ability, empowerment	<i>Elena's Serenade</i>	Campbell Geeslin	Elena is told she's too young... and girls can't be glassblowers. She imaginatively discovers a musical way to identify with and participate in her father's art.
Absurdity, identity, self-acceptance, friendship	<i>A Porcupine Named Fluffy</i>	Helen Lester	Fluffy finds that he's not fluffy. So he tries to change himself. He can't. He's upset...until he finds a new friend: a rhino named Hippo.

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Actions speak louder than words	T Fruits (in <i>A Bucketful of Dreams</i> )	Chris Buice	A traveling family learn that a thorn bush that calls itself an apple tree...and a man who calls himself good is also a fake because he's only interested in the appearance of goodness.
Adoption, birth	<i>Tell Me Again About the Night I was Born</i>	Jamie Lee Curtis	A child remembers happily the story told by her adoptive parents of her coming into the world and this family.
Adoption, children	M <i>Happy Adoption Day</i>	John McCutcheon	A celebration of adoption. Simple sheet music included.
Adoption, family	<i>Saving Sweetness</i>	Diane Stanley	Sweetness runs away from the orphanage and is followed by the sheriff. First she saves the sheriff from Coyote Pete, then convinces him to save her by adopting her.
Adoption, letting go, love	<i>The Coffee Can Kid</i>	Jan M. Czech	A father tells his adopted daughter the story of her birthmother and the difficult, loving decision she made.
Adventures in reading and learning	<i>The Bee Tree</i>	Patricia Polacco	A silly chase through a meadow leads to grandfather's presentation of this wisdom to his little girl: learning/reading is as sweet as honey, and it is worth the effort to chase through the pages of a book.
African American history, crafts	<i>Circle Unbroken</i>	Margot Theis Raven	The tradition of basket weaving transcends the changes of centuries, one generation teaching another.
African culture	V <i>Ashanti to Zulu</i>	Margaret Musgrove	A to Z descriptions of a variety of African social, family, and religious traditions. Long. It could be done as a series over 3-4 weeks.
Aging, memory, grandparents, music	<i>Georgia Music</i>	Helen V. Griffith	A girl comes to love her odd, aging grandparent just in time to see him decline. When he seems no longer able to communicate, music, silence, and the sounds of nature connect them. Long but editable.
Aging, teaching mentoring, generations, grandparents	S <i>Can You Do This, Old</i> V <i>Badger?</i>	Eve Bunting	Though Old Badger can no longer do a lot of things, he can still teach Little Badger some of the essentials of life.
AIDS, grief	<i>A Name on the Quilt</i>	Jeannine Atkins	A child confronts her grief as her family prepare a panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt.
Alzheimer's, aging, grandparents, mental illness, disability	<i>Grandma's Soup</i>	Nancy Karkowsky	A young girl confronts her grandmother's growing confusion and disability from Alzheimer's disease. Eventually grandpa begins making the soup, though he still calls it "Grandmas' Soup."
Ambiguous loss, absent parent	<i>If You Listen</i>	Charlotte Zolotow	A little girl wonders whether her father still loves her, and how she can know it, since he is not at home.
Ancestry, family roots, immigration	<i>Journey Home</i>	Lawrence McKay, Jr.	A Southeast Asian woman and her daughter journey "home," hoping to find family and a part of their identity.
Animals, nature	<i>Acorn Magic</i>	Maggie Stern	Simon's acorns lead him to a larger-than-life encounter with nature.
Appreciation, recognition, friendship, moods	<i>Badger's Bad Mood</i>	Hiawyn Oram	The forest animals don't know what to do to budge badger out of his bad mood. Finally mole throws a party with awards to recognize everyone for what they are best at. Badger, of course, walks away with several – and a smile!
Art, inspiration	<i>The Starry Night</i>	Neil Waldman	A young boy encounters Vincent Van Gogh in modern New York City, and is inspired to see things in new colors, and to begin to draw.
Atonement, Rosh Hashanah, second chances	<i>Gershon's Monster</i>	Eric A. Kimmel	Gershon swept his mistakes into the cellar and never really came to terms with them. But he is awakened from his carelessness and selfishness when the collected sins come back to threaten his family.

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Authenticity, integrity	F V	<i>A Bad Case of Stripes</i>	David Shannon	Camilla loves lima beans but doesn't eat them because she thinks other kids will think she's weird. Result: she begins to morph into all kinds of shapes and colors in response to what the other kids like.
Authenticity, difference		Tacky the Penguin	Helen Lester	The other penguins think Tacky is an embarrassment to penguin-kind, but they come to appreciate him when his antics steer the hunters away.
Authenticity, mission		<i>The Boy Who Dreamed of an Acorn</i>	Leigh Casler	Three Indian youth seek their dreams on a mountain. One finds the power of the bear, another the eagle. The third is disappointed to only dream an acorn. But he later discovers that his is a gift of wisdom, sturdiness, and generosity.
Autism, disability		<i>Ian's Walk</i>	Laurie Lears	A sister begins to come to terms with the odd behaviors of her brother, who has autism.
Autonomy, integrity, self-actualization	F	<i>The Missing Piece Meets the Big O</i>	Shel Silverstein	The Missing Piece discovers a self-actualized someone who only expects The Missing Piece to become whole unto itself.
Baggage, moving on, simplicity		<i>Maebelle's Suitcase</i>	Tricia Tusa	Binkle the bird has to fly south, but is reluctant to leave his baggage behind. So his 108-year-old hat-maker friend tricks him into loaning his things to her to create a very imaginative hat.
Beauty inside		The Beauty Contest (in <i>A Bucketful of Dreams</i> )	Chris Buice	A blind man turns out to be the judge of the beauty contest, and accurately assesses the contestants by the way they have treated him.
Beauty, self-image, stereotype, expectations, perspective, grandparents	V	<i>The Most Beautiful Kid in the World</i>	Jennifer Ericsson	A mom wants her daughter to dress up because Grandma's coming. The child wants to create her own (eclectic) look. Surprise: Grandma has a weird, flamboyant outfit on herself. Must be able to see the pictures.
Beauty, self-consciousness	T F	<i>Beauty</i> (in <i>In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens</i> )	Alice Walker	I was always self-conscious about my scarred, blind eye until one day my child looked up at me and said, "Mama, there's a <i>world</i> in your eye!"
Being oneself vs. living up to others' expectations		<i>Six Dinner Sid</i>	Inga Moore	Six different neighbors thing that Sid the cat is "theirs." When they discover the truth, they insist he change his ways. So Sid finds six new owners – who know up front that this is who he is.
Being oneself, fear, relationships		<i>The Knight who was Afraid of the Dark</i>	Barbara Shook Hazen	Sir Fred is unable to get together with his true love until he overcomes his fear of the dark.
Being oneself, self-expression		<i>A Firefly Named Torchy</i>	Bernard Waber	Torchy's light is TOO bright for the animals of the forest, and they insist that he turn it off. As he wonders about how he can fit in and be a good firefly with a soft glow, he encounters the bright lights of the city. After a night of florid self-expression, he's so content that he begins flickering with a soft glow.
Birth		<i>Welcome With Love</i>	Jenni Overend	The story of a home birth is told with awe -- and warm if somewhat graphic pictures.
Black history, courage, forgiveness		<i>The Story of Ruby Bridges</i>	Robert Coles	Ruby is the first black child to attend public school in New Orleans. Escorted through an angry mob by armed U.S. Marshals, she prays for her tormentors.
Black History, jazz, music, culture		<i>The Sound That Jazz Makes</i>	Carole Boston Weatherford	The development of jazz and the interplay of culture with history: from an African forest...to a slave ship...to a Harlem night club...to rappers on the street corner.
Boasting, modesty	S	<i>The Big Brag</i> (in <i>Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories</i> )	Dr. Seuss	Bear and Rabbit try to outdo one another with their amazing sensory powers. But worm sees most clearly: that these two are being foolish.
Body, parenting, normalcy, change		<i>Parts</i>	Tedd Arnold	A truly disgusting and very funny plea for help from a little boy who thinks that his body is coming apart...until his parents assure him that all these gross things are normal.
Buddhism, new		<i>Butterfly Boy</i>	Laurence Yep	"There once was a boy who dreamed he was a butterfly, and, as a butterfly, he always

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year				dreamed he was a boy....” A simple but enigmatic, thought provoking tale.
Burnout, disagreeableness	F D	"Alphabet Soup" (in <i>Sesame Street Unpaved</i> )	David Borgenicht	A restaurant patron is dissatisfied with his alphabet soup because some of the letters are missing. The waiter is exasperated when, once all the letters are there, the soup is too cold! No pictures, but an easy, very funny skit for two. On page 48.
Caring, fear, neighbors	T	<i>Miss Maggie</i>	Cynthia Rylant	A boy fears his odd old neighbor but over time reaches close enough to notice when she is in need of help...and by now he's close enough to want to help.
Caring, generations		<i>A Special Trade</i>	Sally Wittman	An older man delights in pushing the little girl's stroller and helping her to grow. In time we find her pushing his wheelchair with an equal devotion.
Caring, sharing	T	<i>The Brothers' Promise</i>	Frances Harber	Talmudic tale about two brothers who secretly try to support one another. In the end they discover one another – and there in between, holy ground.
Change, Black history		<i>Piano Man</i>	Debbi Chocolate	My grandfather's life as vaudeville entertainer and silent movie pianist...shifting jobs and surviving the abrupt changes in technology.
Chanukah, family argument,		<i>The Flying Latke</i>	Arthur Yorinks	An argument at the Chanukah dinner table leads to an international incident and – a miracle. A very ridiculous tale best told by one who can carry a Yiddish accent.
Child Dedication, babies		<i>Welcoming Babies</i>	Margy Burns Knight	Explores the way babies are welcomed around the world.
Children (spirited), spiraling into chaos		<i>Mortimer</i>	Robert Munsch	Mortimer makes so much noise when he's supposed to be going to sleep that he puts the whole neighborhood into an uproar. Then <i>he</i> sleeps.
Children, growing up, careers		<i>Eric Van Noodle</i>	Arlen Cohn	In a kingdom where young children must settle on their career choice, Eric defies the trend and walks his own path.
Children, parents, grandparents, stubbornness		<i>I Have to Go!</i>	Robert Munsch	A child repeatedly finds that he has to go pee at the wrong times.
Christmas		<i>December</i>	Eve Bunting	A homeless family encounter an angel on Christmas Eve. Heavy, but it ends with an eye-opening twist.
Christmas		<i>La Gran Fiesta</i>	Francisco X. Mora	The birds gather candies, fruits, and beauties to adorn a tree for La Gran Fiesta.
Christmas, gifts		<i>Wombat Divine</i>	Mem Fox	Wombat seems inept at playing every part in the nativity pageant, until he's given the part of baby Jesus (he's great at sleeping).
Christmas, giving back	F	<i>Silver Packages</i>	Cynthia Rylant	A poor Appalachian boy always hopes that his Christmas gift from the rich stranger will be a doctor kit. It never is. But years later we find that he has been transformed by the stranger's generosity.
Christmas, gratitude, poverty		<i>The Christmas Gift</i>	Francisco Jimenez	The child of immigrant farm laborers hopes for a simple Christmas gift, and is disappointed that even this is not possible. But then he learns of the sacrificial gift his parents have made for a couple in even more desperate straits.
Christmas, Hanukkah, interfaith		<i>The Trees of the Dancing Goats</i>	Patricia Polacco	A Jewish family bring Christmas to their Christian neighbors who are struck with scarlet fever.
Christmas, simplicity		<i>Angel Pig and the Hidden Christmas</i>	Jan Waldron	The pigs have no cash and so must make up a festive Christmas from what they have.
Christmas, strangers	F	<i>Tumbleweed Christmas</i>	Alane Ferguson	A family has car trouble in the desert on the way to a Christmas celebration. Received by an isolated mechanic, they brighten each others' lives for a moment.
Christmas, tradition, respect for nature		<i>Night Tree</i>	Eve Bunting	A family celebrates Christmas by going into the forest to decorate their living tree, and sing carols.
Civil rights, black	T	<i>I Have a Dream</i>	Martin Luther King Jr.	The full text of his famous speech, powerfully illustrated. Probably too long to read in its

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history, MLK			Scholastic Press, ISBN 0-590-20516-1	entirety, but a great resource for telling the story – just pick a few pages and tell it in the kids' language. I used the 'Lunch Counter' illustration as a major focus, with a few other pictures to offer context.
Civil rights, Black history, social activism		<i>Granddaddy's Gift</i>	Margaree King Mitchell	The story of a black man who had the courage to register to vote
Civil rights, Black history, social activism		<i>The Bus Ride</i>	William Miller	A little girl initiates a Rosa Parks-style bus boycott.
Civil rights, Black history, social activism, children	T	The Children's Crusade (in Colleen McDonald, ed., <i>What if Nobody Forgave?</i> )	Kate Rohde	How the civil rights movement carried on when the adults wouldn't march: In the face of dogs and fire hoses, the children did.
Co-dependence		King Looie Katz (in <i>I Can Lick 30 Tigers Today</i> )	Dr. Seuss	King Cat needs a tail carrier to ensure his tail doesn't get dirty...soon his carrier needs a carrier...and the whole kingdom is doing nothing but carrying each other's tails.
Collective action, courage, goals	T	Higgins: A Drop with Dream (in <i>A Bucketful of Dreams</i> )	Chris Buice	Higgins was just a drop in the bucket but his leadership inspired others until the water flowed like a mighty stream.
Color, vision, finding one's purpose in life		<i>The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush</i>	Tomie dePaola	A Native American boy finds his role in life to be an artist, and struggles to be patient as the tools and vision for his life slowly become apparent. Eventually the earth gives him the Indian Paintbrush for the vibrant colors he needs for his work.
Communication, differences	F	<i>The Cow That Went Oink</i>	Bernard Most	The Cow that Went Oink and The Pig that Went Moo are ostracized by the other animals until they help each other...and then find that they alone can speak TWO languages.
Communication, perspective	T	<i>Two Monsters</i>	David McKee	Two monsters on opposite sides of the mountain argue over whether the day is leaving or the night is arriving. Only after they have knocked down the mountain with hurled stones and insults do they see one another -- and one another's perspective.
Community	S	<i>It Takes a Village</i>	Jane Cowen-Fletcher	A little girl in charge of her little brother in the marketplace fears she has lost him. But she needn't have worried -- he has been cared for by all of the other vendors.
Community, spirit	F	<i>Finding the Green Stone</i>	Alice Walker	Everyone is born with a glowing green stone representing their spirit. When one little boy loses his, the whole community gathers to help him find it. Long, may need editing
Confidence, learning		<i>The Yellow String</i>	Francene Sabin	Duckling learns to swim when Mother ties a string around its neck. But he still can swim even when the string falls off.
Confidence, perseverance, dreams		<i>Flip</i>	Wesley Dennis	A young horse cannot jump the stream until, in a dream, he finds that he has silver wings.
Conformity, authenticity, fashion, self-image	S	<i>The Sneetches</i>	Dr. Seuss	The Sneetches and Star-Belly Sneetches go round and round changing their appearance to stay in fashion.
Connection, trust, spiritual sense		<i>Who Is Ben?</i>	Charlotte Zolotow	A child explores his identity: his beginning and ending; in dark and light; his body and his being; and concludes that he is a part of all things.
Cooperation		<i>Mountain Wedding</i>	Faye Gibbons	The children of two large families don't like the idea that they are about to be joined in marriage. It takes a swarm of bees and a runaway wagon to help these feuding families say, "We do."

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Courage, exploration	<i>The Deep</i>	Tim Winton	Simple story of a child overcoming fear of deep water. Good metaphors re depth, diving in, initiative, etc.
Courage, feminism, rules, fashion, leadership	S <i>You forgot your skirt, Amelia Bloomer!</i>	Shana Corey	Amelia Bloomer breaks the fashion mold by wearing pants.
Creation, Adam & Eve, Genesis, sexuality	<i>The Blessing Seed</i>	Caitlin Matthews	God sang everything into being with its own gift...Adam & Eve eat the apple...God responds: You ate it before it was ripe, so I will ripen your gift inside of you...go and spread this blessing seed throughout the earth.
Creation, animals, earth	<i>In Our Image: God's First Creatures</i>	Nancy Sohn Swartz	A Genesis-like creation tale, but the humans are created out of the best (and sometimes contradictory) qualities of all of the animals.
Creation, Earth, Awe, Being, The Web	<i>Becoming Me: A Story of Creation</i>	Martin Boroson	All-That-Is tells its own story of creation, and how YOU are a part of itself.
Creation, freedom	F A Little Jar Labeled T 'Freedom' (in Colleen McDonald, ed. What if Nobody Forgave?)	Cynthia B. Johnson	A lighthearted goddess adds to the mix of creation -- just to see what will happen!
Creation, humanity	<i>The People with Five Fingers</i>	John Bierhorst	A native Californian creation tale in which coyote and the other creatures bring people into existence.
Creativity	<i>Sand Cake</i>	Frank Asch	Bear and his dad discover creative ways to make and eat sand cake on the beach. Light.
Creativity, imagination	F <i>Emma's Rug</i>	Allen Say	Emma has an amazing artistic talent for a small child. But she despairs when her talent evaporates after her mother washes the little rug within which Emma had been able to "see" her subjects. In time, though, she discovers a new window on the world.
Crying, emotion	<i>Sometimes I Like to Cry</i>	Elizabeth Stanton	A child talks about the times he feels like crying.
Curiosity, memory	<i>Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge</i>	Mem Fox	A little boy brings his curiosity to the residents of the nursing home next door, and helps one to find her memory.
Cycles of nature, loss and renewal, remarriage?	<i>The Silver Swan</i>	Michael Morpurgo	A boy observes with awe the birthing and growth of a swan family. He is also aware, however, of the hungry realities of the nearby fox family. Eventually he encounters the painful reality of the cycles of nature...but also then witnesses its magical restorative qualities. Longish but could be shortened.
Days of the Dead	<i>A Gift for Abuelita</i>	Nancy Luenn	Rosita hopes to be reunited with her grandmother as she prepares a gift to give her when her family celebrates the Days of the Dead.
Days of the Dead, Halloween	<i>Maria Molina and the Days of the Dead</i>	Kathleen Krull	Maria celebrates the Days of the Dead for both her little brother and her grandmother—a festive rather than morbid way of remembering loved ones. When her family move north, they find a way to keep in touch with that tradition.
Death, change, memory, generations	<i>The Grandad Tree</i>	Trish Cooke	Two children share memories of Grandad, who planted an apple tree for them. Though Grandad is now gone, they know that he will always be with them as the tree grows through the seasons.
Death, grandparents	V <i>Grandma's Gone to Live in the Stars</i>	Max Haynes	The spirit of Grandma rises from her deathbed and says goodbye to each person and creature in the house before moving on to the stars. Brief, mostly pictures.
Death, grandparents	F <i>Where is Grandpa?</i>	T. A. Barron	A family who has lost a beloved grandfather share stories and re-discover that he is still with them – everywhere they look.

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Death, grief	<i>Anna's Corn</i>	Barbara Santucci	As they walk together, Anna's grandfather teaches her to hear the singing of the cornfields. He asks her to plant a few kernels for him the next spring. In his absence, she does, and when the seasons change, she again hears the singing.
Death, grief, gratitude	F <i>Thank You, Grandpa</i>	Lynn Plourde	Grandpa and little girl say "thank you" each time they find something in the woods which has died. Thus she learns the words to say when he dies.
Death, grief, memory, friendship	<i>If Nathan Were Here</i>	Mary Bahr	A young boy grieves the loss of his best friend and thinks about how things would be if he were still alive.
Death, grief, possibility	F <i>Grandma's Shoes</i>	Libby Hathorn	A little girl grieving her grandmother's death finds an image which helps her to carry on – growing up to fill her Grandma's shoes. Touching.
Death, life cycle, change, nature	<i>The Great Change</i>	White Deer of Autumn	An Indian girl learns from her grandmother about the Circle of Life...how her grandfather, in his dying, poured himself back into the Great Mystery that gives life to all things. Long.
Death, loss, cancer, parents, mothers	<i>Mama</i>	Eleanor Schick	A little girl loses her mother to cancer, and speaks of her life since then. Gripping to anyone who has lost a mother at any age – or even imagined losing any loved-one.
Death, loss, grief, friendship, gifts, teaching	<i>Badger's Parting Gifts</i>	Susan Varley	Badger knows he is going to die, and when he does all of his forest friends are sad. In time they come to recognize that his parting gift to each of them was something he taught them to do – that they can now teach to others.
Death, pets, friendship, love	V <i>Mending Peter's Heart</i>	Maureen Wittbold	A white child is counseled by a black neighbor. The child has lost his dog, the neighbor knows what it is like to lose a friend too. As they talk about friendship, images of the dog appear for the boy. Images of his wife appear for the man. Poignant, sweet.
Demanding child/ industrious granny	<i>What! Cried Granny</i>	Kate Lum	Granny will do whatever it takes to satisfy her grandson on his first sleep-over. Silly. She actually MAKES a bed for him, etc.
Denial, avoidance, fear, pain	F <i>There's No Such Thing as a Dragon</i>	Jack Kent	A small dragon, whose existence is denied, grows rapidly until it is large enough to pick up the house and run down the street.
Developing talents	<i>Incredible Ned</i>	Bill Maynard	Ned gets into trouble at school when everything he imagines becomes real. So an art teacher helps him to let his imagination flow in ways that don't interfere with his class.
Differences, acceptance	<i>Loudmouth George and the New Neighbors</i>	Nancy Carlson	George (a rabbit) doesn't want to play with the new neighbors who are PIGS!
Discovering and sharing our unique gifts	<i>Badger's Bring Something Party</i>	Hiawyn Oram	Mole shows up at Badger's 'Bring Something Party' without anything but himself. The other guests shun him, but Badger helps Mole to bring forth his most interesting self.
Divorce, fathers, ambiguous loss	<i>One More Time</i>	Louis Baum	A father and small child travel back toward the child's mother's home, where he will be dropped off. They do all they can to make the time last. Light, but touching.
Divorce, visitation, fathers, adversity	<i>Rainy Day</i>	Emma Haughton	The day Nick visits his Dad, it pours, and they cannot go to the carnival. The bitterness and pain of their new status is palpable as they go out into the rain anyway... exploring and waiting for the sun.
Dreams unfulfilled, Imperfect relationships, disappointment	<i>Fanny's Dream</i>	Caralyn Buehner	Fanny expects fairy godmother to cast her into a magical world, but fairy godmother doesn't show. So Fanny accepts another offer – one which actually suits her abilities and inclinations....and finds much later that her dreams <i>have</i> come true.
Dreams, imagination, color	V <i>Applemando's Dream</i>	Patricia Polacco	Applemando's friends discover a way to enliven their drab world with his highly-visible dreams.
Dreams, reality, perception,	<i>It's Going to be Perfect</i>	Nancy Carlson	A mother envisions all the joys of parenting. Things don't turn out at all as she envisions. But she finds the experience "just perfect" anyway.

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parenting			
Dreams, wishes, the unexpected	<i>Jubal's Wish</i>	Audrey Wood	A well-intentioned frog tries to share his dreams and cheer – with no luck. But when a storm comes, he and his friends are thrown into an unexpected adventure together.
Dying, hospice	<i>Som See and the Magic Elephant</i>	Jamie Oliviero	A southeast Asian child helps her great-aunt prepare for death by finding her a good-luck charm from the past.
Dying, illness	<i>Beautiful</i>	Susi Gregg Fowler	A boy learns flower gardening from an uncle whose serious illness is progressing. The boy has a beautiful final gift to share when the flowers bloom.
Earth, environment	V <i>Dear Children of the Earth</i>	Schim Schimmel	Long but editable – an appeal to care for the earth. Fantastic visuals that might be useable even without the text.
Emotional learning, sensitivity	<i>Be Gentle!</i>	Virginia Miller	Little bear is learning to play with a new kitten, but is too rough. Yelled at by big bear, he slinks under the bed where he and kitten gently console one another.
Emotions, anger, frustration	<i>Mean Soup</i>	Betsy Everitt	Horace has a bad day so his mom makes mean soup...a boiling pot into which they can scream and release their frustrations. Short but cute.
Environment, resilience, Earth Day, nature	<i>When the Monkeys Came Back</i>	Kristine L. Franklin	A girl, who saw her jungle cut down, works her whole life to grow it back again, waiting for the monkeys to return.
Expectations, gender roles	<i>Reckless Ruby</i>	Hiawyn Oram	Disturbed by her parents' doting admiration, and their prediction that she'll be married by a prince, wrapped in cotton, and only be allowed to come out for glittering banquets, Ruby behaves as recklessly as possible.
Extended human family	<i>One Hundred is a Family</i>	Pam Munoz Ryan	Groups of all sizes can be family when they love and work together. Short. Might be used to initiate conversation about the meaning of family or extended family.
Fall, love, parenting	F <i>Say It!</i> V	Charlotte Zolotow	As the mother and child walk through the falling leaves, the mother describes the rich beauty all around them. When the child continues to plead, "say it," the mother responds, "I love you!" Great for creative musical accompaniment (sounds of autumn).
Fathers	F <i>What Dads Can't Do</i>	Douglas Wood	Dads can't cross the street without holding hands...they can push but they can't swing...Dads really need to be kissed goodnight at bedtime. It's a wonder they make it through life at all!
Fathers, daughters, grief, death, memory	F <i>The Dance</i>	Richard Paul Evans	A father watches as his daughter dances through her life passages. When he dies, she dances for him again. Touching.
Fathers, mothers, family togetherness	<i>The Biggest Bed in the World</i>	Lindsay Camp	The family bed keeps growing and growing as new children are added. And Dad finds that whether they are all together or in separate rooms...he still can't get to sleep.
Fear, assumptions, friendship	<i>Nobody Likes Me!</i>	Raoul Krischanitz	The new dog in town has trouble making friends because he fears or misinterprets everyone he encounters. A friendly fox encourages him to be courageous and persevere.
Fear, courage, firsts	<i>Very Last First Time</i>	Jan Andrews	The Inuit villagers walked on the seabed beneath the ice to gather mussels. Today for the first time, Eva is taking this trek alone.
Fear, dogs	<i>Dog Magic</i>	Carla Golembe	Molly overcomes her fear of dogs by wearing some "magic" shoes.
Fear, end of the world	T <i>One Last Picnic</i> F (in <i>Once the Hodja</i> )	Alice Geer Kelsey	The Hodja is tricked into thinking that tomorrow will be the end of the world; but he turns the tables on his tormentors!
Fear, perspective	<i>No Such Thing</i>	Jackie French Koller	A boy is afraid there is a monster under his bed, until he meets a monster who is afraid there is a boy above <i>his</i> bed. Great twist at the end.
Fears, anxiety, starting new	<i>First Day Jitters</i>	Julie Danneberg	Sarah needs to be prodded every step of the way on the morning of her first day of school. Surprise -- Sarah is the teacher!
Flood, hope, Native	<i>Turkey's Gift to the</i>	Ani Rucki	As the animals flee a great flood, turkey saves the seeds that will be needed to replant the

Themes		Title	Author	Synopsis/Comments
American		<i>People</i>		world.
Flower Communion		<i>The Color of Home</i>	Mary Hoffman	Hassan, a refugee from Somalia, tells about his perilous journey, and finds his way to bring the colors of his old home into his new American home.
Flower communion, color, diversity	S T V	<i>The Great Blueness</i>	Arnold Lobel	A wizard and his town find life difficult with only one color at a time.
Flower Communion, renewal, nature, collaboration		<i>Wanda's Roses</i>	Pat Brisson	A scrubby bush is growing in a vacant lot. Wanda is determined to make it grow roses. She talks so much about it that on the day she predicts they will bloom, neighbors arrive with real rose bushes to make sure her plan comes to life.
Flower or water communion		<i>Earth Dance</i>	Joanne Ryder	A poetic reminder of the energy of all things and our connections to them.
Flowers, water, Native American		<i>The Star Maiden</i>	Barbara Juster Esbensen	Native American story about a star who wished to become a part of the earth. What form would she choose? Eventually she and many of her sisters became the star-shaped flowers that rest on the water – water lillies.
Forgiveness, apology	T	What if Nobody Forgave? (in Colleen McDonald, ed., <i>What if Nobody Forgave?</i> )	Barbara Marshman	The town of Grudgeville is transformed when a stranger teaches the magic words: "I'm sorry," and "I forgive you."
Forgiveness, friendship		<i>Let's Be Enemies</i>	Janice May Udry	Two best friends get mad at each other but quickly make up.
Freedom, respect	S	<i>The Kingdom of Singing Birds</i>	Miriam Aroner	The king's collection of exotic birds won't sing, so rabbi Zusya advises him to set them free. Some fly away. Some stay. But they sing.
Friendship		<i>I Love Saturday</i>	Patricia Reilly Giff	Katie is upset when the new neighbor girl does all of <i>her</i> favorite things. But when the new girl reveals a bit of vulnerability, instead of competing, they start enjoying their shared interests.
Friendship	D	<i>Rosie and Michael</i>	Judith Viorst	A dialogue (should probably be told by two) of a boy and girl talking about what it means to be one another's friends.
Friendship, differences		<i>Friends</i>	Helme Heine	Pig, mouse, and Rooster always stick together. But eventually they discover some things that they <i>can't</i> all do together. How will they remain good friends?
Friendship, differences, sharing responsibilities		<i>Pumpkin Soup</i>	Helen Cooper	Cat, Squirrel, and Duck learn to work together.
Friendship, expectations		<i>Wanted: Warm, Furry Friend</i>	Stephanie Calmenson	Neighboring rabbits who are disgusted with one another in person find a mutual affection when introduced to one another via the personal ads.
Friendship, gifts, individuality	S	<i>The Birthday Presents</i>	Paul Stewart	Rabbit and Hedgehog make incorrect assumptions about what the other would want for a present...but their gifts turn out to be surprisingly useful.
Friendship, growth, change, seasons	S	<i>Farfallina &amp; Marcel</i>	Holly Keller	A caterpillar and goose become friends. They lose one another as they change and grow, then later find one another again, and head south together for the winter.
Friendship, lower-middle class, transition		<i>Home Lovely</i>	Lynne Rae Perkins	Tiffany and her mom move into a drab, isolated trailer. Over time they find a way to beautify their home, and find a generous friend who helps too. I appreciate this book for its warmth and subtlety. Would work well in late summer or early fall.
Friendship, pride, individuality		<i>Moonbear's Pet</i>	Frank Asch	Moonbear and Little Bird almost sever their friendship over whether this odd new creature they've found is more like a bear or a bird. When it grows into a frog they are humbled and

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			glad to have a new friend.
Friendship, seeing	<i>Peach and Blue</i>	Sarah S. Kilborne	Peach is at her peak on the tree and won't live to see the world. But when Blue Frog takes her down to the pond, Blue too begins to see things he's never before seen.
Friendship, trust	T <i>Enemies (in A Bucketful of Dreams)</i>	Chris Buice	The queen gets rid of her enemies by making them into friends.
Gays, families	<i>Daddy's Roommate</i>	Michael Willhoite	A child reflects on the relationship of his father and his father's new gay partner.
Gays, families, reconciliation	<i>My Two Uncles</i>	Judith Vigna	Grandpa won't allow his son's partner to come to his 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary party, but a glimmer of understanding shows through their struggle.
Gays, lesbians, families	<i>Two Moms, the Zark and Me</i>	Johnny Valentine	When a child gets lost at the zoo, a couple rescue him and assure him that he couldn't possibly be looking for two moms. Lighthearted.
Gender roles, doing the unexpected	F T <i>Jane and the Dragon</i>	Martin Baynton	Jane is laughed at when she says she wants to be a knight. But she practices in secret, and eventually comes to save the prince and make friends with the dragon who, it turns out, was terrorizing the neighborhood only because that's what everyone expected of him.
God, perspective	S T <i>God's Hat (in A Bucketful of Dreams)</i>	Chris Buice	A village is divided when god walks through wearing a hat which is blue on one side and red on the other.
God's many attributes	S <i>Old Turtle</i>	Douglas Wood	All of creation is arguing about what god is like. Old Turtle clarifies for them: god is all of these things.
Good and Evil	F <i>Dora's Box</i>	Ann-Jeanette Campbell	Dora's parents are given 3 wishes: a child; that the child would be protected from sadness; and that she would be loved by all. But they are warned that all three cannot come true at the same time.
Goodbye, loneliness	<i>Pig and Crow</i>	Kay Choraio	Crow offers a lonely Pig magic seeds and eggs. Pig fails to recognize the magic in the pumpkins or the butterfly that temporarily "befriend" him. But the final magic egg contains a goose, who becomes a (more) permanent companion.
Gossip, reliability	<i>The Gossipy Wife</i>	Amanda Hall	When a peasant discovers a hidden treasure, he must ensure that his gossipy wife does not tell the whole town. I don't like how he does it (he makes her seem so foolish that no one will believe her) but it does make a good point about reliable speech.
Gossip, truth, lying	<i>Yettele's Feathers</i>	Joan Rothenberg	The town gossip learns from the Rabbi how hard it is to repair the reputation of someone who has been hurt by her lies. (He asks her to dump the feathers out of a pillow and then put them back in.)
Grace	F <i>Moonbear's Dream</i>	Frank Asch	Moonbear thinks <i>he must be dreaming</i> when an escaped kangaroo bounds through his yard. What a great opportunity! He can enjoy all the honey he has saved up, break the jar, and make a big mess in the house, because—he's just dreaming. Aren't we surprised when the zoo keeper discovers the kangaroo and the mess, and makes it all right again, just in time for Moonbear to wake up again.
Graduation	<i>Livingstone Mouse</i>	Pamela Duncan Edwards	Livingstone Mouse needs to move out on his own, and thinks that China would be a nice place to go. After several false starts, he ends up happily in a cracked china pot.
Graduation, friendship, growth, excellence, potential, destiny	<i>Bubba and Trixie</i>	Lisa Campbell Ernst	A clumsy caterpillar and disabled ladybug become friends, staying low to the ground. When the time comes for the caterpillar to transform into a butterfly, he doesn't want to. But the ladybug assures him that he can reach his potential without losing the friendship.
Grandparents, immigrants, love, silent	F <i>Halmoni's Day</i>	Edna Coe Bercaw	Jennifer feels awkward because her Korean grandma, Halmoni, is so different from the others; and they can't communicate with words. But when Halmoni's story is translated to Jennifer's class at Grandparent's Day, Jennifer discovers a bond that transcends

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communication			words, and generations.
Grandparents, loneliness, solitude, home	<i>Grandpa's Town</i>	Takaaki Nomura	A boy wishes his grandfather, who lives alone, would move to be with his family. But experiencing Grandpa's town, he comes to see that Grandpa is at home where he is now.
Grandparents, missing someone	<i>Dear Juno</i>	Soyung Pak	Juno can't read his Korean grandmother's writing, but they find a way to communicate by mail through picture and the symbolism in leaves and flowers.
Gratitude, prayer, earth	<i>Giving Thanks</i>	Chief Jake Swamp	A Native American thank you for all things.
Greed, simplicity	S <i>The Full Belly Bowl</i>	Jim Aylesworth	An old man receives a magic bowl for an act of generosity, but loses it when he tries to use it to obtain extravagant wealth.
Grief, death	<i>Daddy's Chair</i>	Sandy Lanton	Michael's dad has died, and the family is observing Shiva. As the days go by and friends and family visit, Michael begins to come to terms with his father's death.
Grief, death, memorial	<i>You Hold Me and I'll Hold You</i>	Jo Carson	A girl experiences the funeral of a distant relative aunt. Gentle, not threatening.
Grief, memorial, grandparents	<i>Two of Them</i>	Aliki	Grandfather and granddaughter grow up and grow old together. Could be used around the time of a memorial service for someone in the congregation.
Grief, sibling death	F <i>A Little Bit of Rob</i>	Barbara J. Turner	A family tries to go about daily life after the death of one of their children. Serious, emotional, but not overly heavy. Ends on a warm but realistic note – that they can begin to face the changes together, and find some comfort in their memories of Rob.
Grief, war, peace, hope, death of a child	<i>Sadako</i>	Eleanor Coerr	Sadako was an infant when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Ten years later, she is just starting to feel her young body getting strong when she learns that she has leukemia. She hopes to ward off the disease by folding 1000 paper cranes, but cannot finish them herself. After her death, classmates complete her project and build a monument in her name to the cause of peace.
Growing up, change	<i>Someone New</i>	Charlotte Zolotow	As I look around my world I find all my old things...but I have reached a new place in life: I am someone new. For younger kids, but could be used in the same service with a teen coming of age ceremony.
Growing up, obsession, letting go	<i>Rosata</i>	Holly Keller	Camilla finds an old hat with a pretty bird. She wears it everywhere and swears she will never leave it behind. But gradually it becomes one of her past loves.
Growth, possibility	<i>The Tiny Seed</i>	Eric Carle	A tiny seed grows.
Hanukah, Holocaust, courage, tradition	<i>Nine Spoons</i>	Marci Stillerman	Jews in a concentration camp conspire to gather nine spoons to create a Hanukah menorah.
Helping	<i>The Ant and the Elephant</i>	Bill Peet	The animals are unwilling to assist one another in even simple ways. Nor are they grateful when the elephant helps them all...except for the ant, who finds an opportunity to return the favor. Long, but could be shortened.
Helping (not)	D "Further Adventures of Supergrover," (in <i>Sesame Street Unpaved</i> )	David Borgenicht	Short skit in which Supergrover attempts to help and fails hilariously, while the one who needs help solves her own problem. On page 52.
Holocaust, fear, kindness, courage	<i>A Knock at the Door</i>	Eric Sonderling	A German family on an isolated farm takes in a stray girl who will tell them nothing about where she's from. They are eventually confronted by a Nazi soldier, but the girl hides safely.
Homelessness, fear	<i>Fly Away Home</i>	Eve Bunting	Father and son who live in an airport. Heavy, shouldn't be used without time to debrief.

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Honesty, friendship	<i>Jamaica's Find</i>	Juanita Havill	Jamaica finds a toy she likes in the park. Then, by letting it go to lost-and-found, she finds a friend.
Honesty, integrity, cheating, perfection	<i>Jamaica and the Substitute Teacher</i>	Juanita Havill	Jamaica wants to impress the substitute teacher, but reconsiders when her gut tells her that cheating on the spelling test wasn't worth it.
Hope, biracial people, race	F <i>Hope</i>	Isabell Monk	Hope is spurned by a Black acquaintance because she is "mixed." But then she learns that her name rose out of the ideals and hopes of several generations of her ancestors on both sides.
Hope, commitment	<i>Something Beautiful</i>	Sharon Dennis Wyeth	A little girl determines to make something beautiful out of her distressed surroundings.
Humanity, universalism	S <i>Whoever You Are</i>	Mem Fox	Children all around the world look different but have the same fears and hopes.
Humility, self-expression (too much), community	<i>Yudonsi</i>	Robert J. Blake	Yusi, a child from a village nestled among the cliffs, expressed himself by spray painting his name everywhere in the valley. Ignored, he decides to do an enormous graffiti on the side of a cliff. When a storm threatens to knock him off the cliff, he escapes into a cave where other villagers have come for shelter, and he discovers a more productive way to be noticed and appreciated by the community.
Hype, materialism, riches	<i>Percy and the Five Houses</i>	Else Holmelund Minarik	Percy stumbles into riches and membership of the house-of-the-month club. But he finds that all these flimsy houses were not so much to look forward to.
Identity, authenticity	<i>The Mixed-Up Chameleon</i>	Eric Carle	The chameleon wishes to be like other animals and ends up as a little of this and a little of that and unable to catch his lunch.
Identity, friendship	<i>A Color of His Own</i>	Leo Lionni	A chameleon is disappointed to find that he can do nothing but reflect the colors around him...till he finds that he can do that with a friend.
Identity, journey, overcoming fear	<i>Beaky</i>	Jez Alborough	A creature is born in the forest but doesn't know who or what he is. He checks out various animals to determine he's not one of them. He has to climb alone to the top of a tree – and fall – to learn that he's a bird.
Identity, music of the heart, Black history	<i>A Band of Angels</i>	Deborah Hopkinson	The story of the Jubilee Singers--ex-slaves whose touring company saved Fisk School from bankruptcy. Unsuccessful singing the popular music of their day, they found international acclaim singing "the old slave songs."
Identity, self-awareness, autonomy, friendship	L <i>The Sea-Thing Child</i>	Russel Hoban	The Sea-Thing Child is terrified of the sea – out of which he was tossed, in a violent storm, as a baby. But over time he discovers that he cannot remain on land. Very long. Consider for use as a full service for baccalaureate or when congregation is facing major change or decision-making.
Identity, self-awareness, immigrants	<i>My Name is Yoon</i>	Helen Recorvits	Yoon has just moved from Korea to North America. She is resisting the change and ambivalent about learning English. Her teacher watches her struggle supportively.
Identity, self-esteem, life-purpose	<i>Only a Toad</i>	Cher Thao/Brian Marchant	A toad wishes to be something greater, but each thing he wishes to be, he finds, is subject to greater and greater powers leading ultimately to...a toad.
Immigration, Hmong, war	<i>Dia's Story Cloth</i>	Dia Cha	Describes the Hmong people's journey from SE Asia through war and refugee camps to the United States. Told through the vivid and explicit stitched images of the traditional story cloth.
Individuality	<i>The Wrong Overcoat</i>	Hiawyn Oram	Everyone tells Chimp that his new coat is so perfect. He struggles to convey why it's perfect for everyone else, but wrong for him.
Inheritance, grandparents	<i>The Hickory Chair</i>	Lisa Rowe	A blind boy tells of his warm relationship with his Gran, the gift she left him after her death, and a special process of discovery.

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Inspiration	T	Give the Ball to Peetie (in Colleen McDonald, ed., <i>What if Nobody Forgave?</i> )	Gary Smith	The basketball team and the fans found their greatest inspiration from the kid who had never been allowed to play before.
Integrity, diversity gone awry		<i>Veggie Soup</i>	Dorothy Donohue	Rabbit's friends keep throwing their own ingredients into her veggie soup, making it, they all agree, disgusting.
Integrity, self-expression, variety	V	<i>The Big Orange Splot</i>	Daniel Manus Pinkwater	A cookie-cutter neighborhood blooms into a world of individual expression.
Interdependence, mothers, leading by serving		<i>All By Myself</i>	Ivan Bates	Little elephant wants to get the succulent leaves down from the tall tree "all by himself." Although he thinks of some creative solutions, mother elephant finally solves the problem by lifting him high, so he can grab the leaves "all by himself."
Inter-racial adoption	F	<i>Allison</i>	Allen Say	Allison is angry when she finally notices that she looks more like her Japanese doll than her Caucasian parents.
Introversion, shyness, personality type, friendship		<i>Snuffles Makes a Friend</i>	Mary Lee Donovan	Snuffles repeatedly organizes parties so that the new neighbor will feel welcome, but he gets no response. Eventually he figures out that the new neighbor needs to meet people one at a time.
Isolation, self-discovery		<i>The Girl Who Wanted A Song</i>	Steve Sanfield	A girl struggles with isolation and finding her own song. A goose shows the way. A little heavy.
Jealousy, babies, families		<i>Darcy and Gran Don't Like Babies</i>	Jane Cutler	Darcy is unhappy that a new baby has invaded the household. Gran assures her that she doesn't like babies either...and gently nudges Darcy toward acceptance.
Kindness, communication		<i>The Magic Kerchief</i>	Kirby Larson	A grumpy old woman discovers that once she's uttered some kind words, the results escalate and there's no going back.
Kwanzaa, cooperation		<i>Seven Spools of Thread</i>	Angela Shelf Medearis	In an African village, seven brothers make family life miserable with their constant fighting. Their father's will explains that unless they succeed in an unusual cooperative project, they will be left with no inheritance.
Kwanzaa, music, self-expression		<i>Wood-Hoopoe Willie</i>	Virginia Kroll	Willie never stops drumming and tapping. It is an annoyance to some, but others recognize the spirit of the music of his African ancestors aching to be expressed.
Labor, love, reciprocity, family		<i>Night Shift Daddy</i>	Eileen Spinelli	Daddy puts me to bed before going to work...then I do the same thing for him before going to school.
Letting go, journey, personal transformation, fear, risk, independence, growing up	F	<i>In America</i>	Moss, Marissa	While Grandfather tells of his journey of transformation -- leaving the old country -- he finds that grandson is about to take a risk of his own toward independence and maturity. Both find the courage to let go of their fears....
Letting go, Native Americans, history		<i>Dreamplace</i>	George Ella Lyon	Modern visitors to an ancient pueblo recollect what life may have been like, and how, when the time came, the Anasazi let their village go.
Life cycles, seasons		<i>The Fall of Freddie the Leaf</i>	Leo Buscaglia	Freddie the Leaf learns about the cycle of life and death.
Life, journey		<i>The Child's Story</i>	Charles Dickens	A "traveler" encounters a child, adolescent, young man, etc...and as he goes along with each of them he observes the trials and hopes of each stage of life.
Listening		<i>Quiet, Wyatt!</i>	Bill Maynard	Nobody listens to Wyatt, nor do they let him try to help. So he just decides to clam-up. But when a puppy's life is at stake, he lets it all out. Now they start to recognize how much he can

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			do.
Listening, opportunity, communication	D "The Anything-in-the-World-Prize Game," (in <i>Sesame Street Unpaved</i> )	David Borgenicht	Short, funny skit in which Oscar the Grouch blows an opportunity to win "anything in the world" by not listening. On page 98.
Love – unconditional, feelings	<i>Mama, Do You Love Me?</i>	Barbara M. Joosse	An Inuit girl pesters her mother, asking, even if she were to do some terrible things, would Mama still love her. The mother replies that she may be angry, sad, or scared, etc., but that she would always love her child.
Love relationships, letting go	<i>Phoebe and the River Flute</i>	M.C. Helldorfer	Phoebe and the prince learn that loving means setting the loved-one free.
Love, parenting, security	<i>The Kissing Hand</i>	Audrey Penn	Raccoon's mother prepares him to go away to school by teaching him the secret of the kissing hand – which will preserve her love for him wherever he goes.
Luck, love, grandparents, gratitude, self-awareness	F <i>The Luckiest Kid on the Planet</i>	Lisa Campbell Ernst	When Lucky learns that his real name is 'Harold,' his whole self-image changes. It takes a frightening illness of his grandfather to help Lucky discover his own role in making his life lucky again.
Materialism, affection	<i>Prince Peter and the Teddy Bear</i>	David McKee	The prince rebuffs his parents royal suggestions for his birthday gift in favor of a teddy bear. Upon receiving a solid gold one, he learns that by giving it affection it will turn cuddly. He decides to try the same thing with his parents.
Mental retardation, Special Olympics, differences	<i>Way to Go, Alex!</i>	Robin Pulver	Explains how it may feel to have a sibling with mental retardation, inspires love and understanding.
Miscarriage, dashed hopes	<i>Molly's Rosebush</i>	Janice Cohn	When her mother has a miscarriage, Molly and her grandmother cope by planting a rosebush and talking about their feelings.
Missing a parent, poverty	<i>The Tangerine Tree</i>	Regina Hanson	A Caribbean child is sad to see her father leave home to find work. He leaves her a book with a promise that when she has learned to read it, he will return.
Misunderstanding, miscommunication	<i>Bert and the Missing Mop Mix-Up</i>	Sarah Roberts	Ernie's search for a mop turns up some surprising items as his misunderstanding friends try to help. Silly.
Moods, emotion, funk	F <i>Mrs. Biddlebox</i> V	Linda Smith	Mrs. Biddlebox wakes up in a bad mood, but attacks that mood relentlessly until she's got it under control. Don't miss the note on the flap re the author's struggle with cancer. The story appears to be as personal as it is universal.
Mothers	<i>Elizabethi's Doll</i>	Stephanie Stuve Bodeen	Living in an African village, Elizabethi has only a rock for a doll, but she learns to care for the rock as her own child.
Mothers	<i>My Mama Had a Dancing Heart</i>	Libba Moore Gray	A simple ode to mother, whose spirit of living the dance has passed to her daughter.
Mothers, parents	<i>Am I Beautiful?</i>	Else Holmelund Minarik	Little Hippo seeks affirmation of his beauty from other animal parents, who encourage him to ask his mother. Light.
Mothers, working mothers, parents	<i>Oh My Baby, Little One</i>	Kathi Appelt	A mother tells her child about the care and love she has even when she is away. Very touching.
Moving on, Japanese internment	<i>So far from the Sea</i>	Eve Bunting	A Japanese family make their last trip to an internment camp where the parents had been as children. They lay flowers on a grandparent's grave and prepare to move on.
Moving, loss, life cycle	<i>Mary Ann</i>	Betsy James	Amy tries to overcome the sadness when her best friend moves away by naming a new praying mantis after her. Then the mantis dies...only to leave hundreds of Mary Anns behind

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			in an egg sack.
Moving, openness, discovery	<i>The Crooked Apple Tree</i>	Eric Houghton	Children discover a life of adventure and beauty in what they initially think is a barren new yard.
Music, hope, peace, prayer, sanctuary	<i>Mole Music</i>	David McPhail	Mole digs by day and plays violin by night, enriching his own private life and never knowing how broadly the music touches the world outside.
Mystery, adventure, death, loss, mystic	<i>Grandmother's Pigeon</i>	Louise Erdrich	Adventurous Grandmother "disappears" on a family vacation, but re-engages with her family in some fanciful, mysterious ways.
Native American dance, families	<i>Jingle Dancer</i>	Cynthia Leitich Smith	Jenna, eager to begin in her family's tradition of the jingle dance, borrows jingles from other dancers who are now supporting the community in other ways.
Native American, environment	<i>Brother Eagle, Sister Sky</i>	Susan Jeffers	Words of Chief Seattle regarding care for the Earth.
Nature beyond human knowing, serendipity	F <i>Hunting the White Cow</i>	Tres Seymour	A cow evades all would-be adult captors, but almost allows a young girl to bring her home. Almost.
Nature, community, decentralization	T <i>Maya and the Town that Loved a Tree</i>	Kiki & Kathryn Shaw	Maya interrupts an urban pattern of decay and isolation. Her ultimate solution involves dispersion of green life into every corner of the city.
Nature, humanist, naturalistic theism	F <i>Happy Birthday Moon</i>	Frank Asch	Bear misinterprets an echo as the moon speaking to him. He and the moon then have a rich conversation which leads to giving one another birthday gifts. Then they even forgive one another for losing the gifts! A whimsical explanation of how we attribute supernatural powers to natural forces.
Nature, patterns, birth	<i>My Baby</i>	Jeanette Winter	An African girl learns the traditional craft of painting cloth with mud. Re-creating patterns observed in nature, she designs a cloth in which to hold her own child.
Nature, perspective, lifecycle	L <i>There's a Hair in my Dirt</i>	Gary Larson	The creator of <i>The Far Side</i> offers a parable on human ignorance in our relationship to the environment...told from a worm's point of view. Very Long.
Nature, sky, Native Americans	<i>Sky Sisters</i>	Jan Bourdeau Waboose	Sisters journey in the quiet night to view the Sky Spirits or northern lights, remembering that wisdom comes on silent wings.
Nature, vastness, environmental protection	<i>Out of the Ocean</i>	Debra Frasier	A child living near the ocean learns that it can give someone all they really need. Some things are so big that we don't even see them, and take them for granted.
Neighborhood, local small business, community support	<i>Grandpa's Corner Store</i>	DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan	Grandfather's corner grocery is threatened by a new supermarket, but his granddaughter organizes the neighbors to convince him to stay.
Non-reactiveness, gratitude	T The Gift That Came Back (in <i>Once the Hodja</i> )	Alice Geer Kelsey	The King is upset and pelts the Hodja with his gift of mushy figs. Still, the Hodja is very thankful to his friend Hassan, who had talked him out of bringing the King hard beets.
Parenting, generations	<i>Love You Forever</i>	Robert Munsch	The mother watches and takes care of the little boy...and tears her hair out...as he grows up, each night rocking him to sleep with a song of love. When she is old, the son does the same for her. A major tear-jerker.
Partnership, friendship, teaching, safety	V <i>Officer Buckle and Gloria</i>	Peggy Rathman	Everyone ignores Police Officer Buckle's school presentations until he gets a dog who acts out all the safety tips behind his back. Now everyone pays attention and even begins to follow his advice. Funny.
Perseverance, goals	<i>Uncle Jed's Barbershop</i>	Margaree King Mitchell	Uncle Jed's dream of opening his own barbershop is delayed by the depression and family emergencies, but he perseveres.
Perseverance,	<i>Wilma Unlimited</i>	Kathleen Krull	The story of Wilma Rudolph, who went from leg braces to Olympic medals. Powerful. Long.

Themes	Title	Author	Synopsis/Comments
overcoming adversity, disability, athletics			
Persistence, parenting, expressing feelings	<i>Clara Ann Cookie</i>	Harriet Ziefert	Clara's mother tricks her into getting dressed by indulging Clara the opportunity to express her obstinacy. Simple, light.
Perspective, absence	<i>All Those Secrets of the World</i>	Jane Yolen	When the children watch their father go off on a ship to WWII, they learn a visual trick to understand his absence.
Perspective, fear	<i>The Lonely Scarecrow</i>	Tim Preston	All the animals are afraid of scarecrow, so he is lonely. But covered with snow, scarecrow is less frightening, and the creatures find they can safely befriend him.
Perspective, realities within realities	<i>Nurse Lugton's Curtain</i>	Virginia Woolf	The scenes within a needlepoint design come alive each time the sewer goes to sleep. The animals consider it a time of "liberation" from the monster...their creator.
Pet loss	<i>Murphy and Kate</i>	Ellen Howard	Fourteen year-old Kate has grown up with her dog Murphy, who is now in his last days.
Pet loss	<i>The Accident</i>	Carol Carrick	When a young boy's dog is hit by a car, he struggles to understand his feelings of shock, guilt, sadness, and anger.
Pet loss	<i>Toby</i>	Margaret Wild	Sara does not deal well with the aging of her dog Toby, but finds the courage to be with him as he dies. Very touching.
Pet loss, death, life	S <i>The Tenth Good Thing About Barney</i>	Judith Viorst	A child remembers the good things about his cat who has just died, concluding with the way Barney will now help the flowers grow.
Pets, death, grief, life-cycle, funerals	<i>The Bug Cemetery</i>	Frances Hill	At first the kids find it fun to "play funeral" with dead bugs. When their cat dies the importance of honoring death becomes more clear. And new life arises.
Possibility, getting un-stuck	F V <i>The Old Woman and the Wave</i>	Shelley Jackson	The cranky old woman finally finds that the wave which has always hung over her home has a gift to offer -- and she rides it off into the wide world.
Poverty, education, UUSC, Incas	<i>Chaska and the Golden Doll</i>	Ellen Alexander	Chaska lives in a poor village in the Andes. Guided by the sun god, she finds an historic artifact, which she decides to sell to the museum so that the local school can be enlarged. I used this story during Guest at your Table season.
Power, autonomy, democracy	S <i>Yertle the Turtle</i>	Dr. Seuss	King Yertle makes hundreds of turtles stack themselves beneath him so that he can be king of 'all that he sees.' But from the bottom of the stack a small burp puts Yertle in his place.
Presence, Hanukkah	<i>The Borrowed Hannukkah Latkes</i>	Linda Glaser	A neighbor is willing to contribute anything but her presence to a holiday gathering. But Rachel shows her why she is needed.
Pride, fashion	S <i>Gertrude McFuzz (in Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories)</i>	Dr. Seuss	A plain-looking bird hopes to outdo a prettier bird, but ends up with such a glorious array of tail-feathers that she cannot fly.
Pride, isolation	<i>Osa's Pride</i>	Ann Grifalconi	Thinking she is better than everyone else, Osa holds herself aloof. But her grandmother gently shows her how foolish she appears. Set in an African village.
Pride, purpose, class, fathers	<i>Peppe the Lamplighter</i>	Elisa Bartone	His father is embarrassed that Peppe has taken a job as a lamplighter to help support their immigrant family.
Priorities, time, simplicity, Thoreau	<i>Henry Hikes to Fitchburg</i>	D. B. Johnson	Inspired by <i>Walden</i> , in this story Henry bets his friend he can get to Fitchburg faster by hiking – and enjoying the hike – than his friend can by working for the money needed to take a train.
Privacy, friendship, personal space	<i>Too Close Friends</i>	Shen Roddie	Pig and Hippo are best friends. Then the hedge between their homes is cut down and they find themselves grossed out and embarrassed by one another's private habits.
Problems	<i>Alistair's Elephant</i>	Marilyn Sadler	Alistair is very organized and doesn't want or need distractions – but an elephant

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			comes into his life unbidden. Light.
Problems	V <i>Dogzilla</i>	Dav Pilkey	An outrageously silly story in which a dog terrorizes a town of mice. There is a message here though: the same problems will always return to us, but we can learn to deal with them.
Problems	S <i>Henry's Awful Mistake</i>	Robert Quackenbush	Henry destroys his whole house trying to swat an ant. Hilarious!
Problems	S <i>Jenna and the Troublemaker</i>	Hiawyn Oram	Jenna complains about her problems until The Troublemaker allows her to choose randomly from all of the other troubles in the world.
Problems, hope	T <i>Two Frogs (in A Bucketful of Dreams)</i>	Chris Buice	Two frogs are afraid they will die when they cannot escape from the pool of milk. But they keep swimming until it turns to butter.
Promises, power of mythology	<i>Eyes of the Dragon</i>	Margaret Leaf	A painter is commissioned to paint a dragon on the wall of a Chinese village. The magistrate tries to get out of paying for the work...and ignores the painter's warning that the eyes of the dragon should be left off. Long.
Prophecy, perspective, beauty, suffering	L <i>The Boy Who Could Sing Pictures</i>	Seymour Leichman	A boy traveling with his father, the royal jester, discovers his ability to speak the truth to power with compelling vivid images of both pain and hope. Very Long.
Propriety, image, being oneself, defying expectations	<i>Tacky and the Emperor</i>	Helen Lester	A hopelessly tacky penguin ruins what was to be a very formal reception for the Emperor – who is thrilled to escape the usual stuffiness.
Prosperity, enough	<i>The Farmer and the Poor God</i>	Ruth Wells	A Japanese couple try to sneak away from the “poor God” who inhabits their home. But forced to stay, they discover in him something that they won't give up for wealth.
Questions, curiosity, reason	<i>Why?</i>	Lindsay Camp	Lily persistently asks, “Why?” and drives her father mad. But her non-stop questioning of the space aliens throws them for a loop and saves humanity.
Race, color, diversity	<i>All the Colors we Are</i>	Katie Kissinger	Explains, simply, biologically, how people have acquired different colors of skin.
Race, Japanese interment	F <i>Flags</i>	Maxine Trottier	When the Japanese neighbor is sent to an interment camp, a girl tries to keep up his garden.
Race, slavery, courage, commitment	<i>The Legend of Freedom Hill</i>	Linda Jacobs Altman	In a California gold-rush town, two girls – a free Black and a Jew – sacrifice their fortune to thwart the efforts of a runaway slave catcher.
Reading, TV (anti)	<i>Aunt Chip and the Great Triple Creek Dam Affair</i>	Patricia Polacco	Children help a town re-discover books after everyone has been glued to the tube for years.
Reconciliation	<i>Yoshi's Feast</i>	Kimiko Kajikawa	Japanese neighbors exchange unpleasanties until they discover a way to combine their resources for their mutual benefit.
Reconciliation, cooperation, family	F <i>Zinnia and Dot</i>	Lisa Campbell Ernst	Two hens are so busy arguing whose eggs are better that they fail to protect the eggs from weasel...who steals all but one. Now they argue about whose egg it is...and must reconcile in order to raise their lovely chick.
Redemption, grace, laziness	<i>Coyote and the Laughing Butterflies</i>	Harriet Peck Taylor	Coyote, sent to the lake to get salt, takes a nap when he gets there. The butterflies decide to carry him back home while he sleeps, and when he wakes his wife is mad that he has been so lazy. The next time he redeems himself, and the butterflies help too.
Refugees, stories, identity, Hmong	<i>The Whispering Cloth</i>	Pegi Deitz Shea	A young girl in a SE Asian refugee camp discovers her own story and a way to tell it by stitching it into a tapestry. Sad and serious. I used it when I preached from the (excellent) book on the Hmong in the U.S.: <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> .
Relativity, growing	<i>Am I Big or Little?</i>	Margaret Park Bridges	A light dialogue between parent and child about being big/small enough to do various things.

Themes	Title	Author	Synopsis/Comments
			To be told in dialogue with a young storyteller. Use with Jim Scott's wonderful song, <i>Big and Little Stuff</i> .
Resourcefulness, neighborliness	<i>Miss Penny an Mr. Grubbs</i>	Lisa Campbell Ernst	Miss Penny has always had prize winning vegetables, with more than enough to share. Her jealous neighbor destroys her garden with rabbits. So now she has prizewinning rabbits...which she shares with her neighbor, of course!
Resourcefulness, stories, heirlooms	<i>Something from Nothing</i>	Phoebe Gilman	Joseph's grandfather turns his ragged blanket into a coat...a vest...and ever smaller items till all is lost – then Joseph turns 'nothing' into a story.
Resourcefulness, surprise	<i>Yard Sale!</i>	Mitra Modarressi	The neighbors are initially angry when their yard sale purchases over-produce (spaghetti by the roomful and monstrous tomatoes...). But they soon learn to make the most of it.
Respect, ethnic diversity	<i>Yoko</i>	Rosemary Wells	Knowing that Yoko feels left out at school, her teacher suggests an international foods day. Most of her classmates avoid her mother's sushi, but she makes a new friend.
Responsibility	<i>Gorilla Did It</i>	Barbara Shook Hazen	When a child's "gorilla" makes a big mess, he figures out how to take responsibility and clean it up.
Responsibility, community, respect	<i>The Summer My Father Was Ten</i>	Pat Brisson	After a boy carelessly despoils a neighbor's garden, he finds the courage to offer to help re-create it.
Ridiculous, stupid, zany	V <i>The Dumb Bunnies Go To The Zoo</i>	Dav Pilkey	Choose this or the other Dumb Bunnies books -- they are all equally stupid -- if you are looking for pure nonsense.
Rites of passage, beginnings	F <i>Crossing the New Bridge</i>	Emily McCully	Ancient tradition requires that no one may cross a new bridge until the happiest people have first done so. The townsfolk are distressed—who will it be?—until they learn how happy the bridge-building family are when they complete their best bridge yet.
Rites of passage, tradition, heirlooms	<i>Keeping Quilt</i>	Patricia Polacco	A quilt is passed down through many generations as new children come into the family.
Sabbath, Judaism	<i>The Story of Shabbat</i>	Molly Cone	History, symbolism, and spiritual purpose of the Jewish Sabbath/Shabbat tradition. A little long but can be shortened.
Sacrifice, growth, adversity	<i>The Promise Quilt</i>	Candice Ransom	The daughter of a Southern family devastated by the Civil War begins to rebuild her life by making a sacrifice so that she can go to school.
Seasons, Greek myth	<i>Persephone</i>	Warwick Hutton	Tells the troubling tale of Hades' capture of Persephone as his bride. He takes her against her will to the underworld but releases her for 6 months of each year (during which the flowers again can grow). May best be followed with a short commentary about misogyny in folklore.
Secret inner life	<i>Slow Loris</i>	Alexis Deacon	Everyone thinks Loris is slow and boring – till they discover he's a wild party animal at night.
Seeing the other's perspective	<i>The Sweetest Fig</i>	Chris Van Allsburg	An uncaring dog-owner finds himself to have reversed roles with his dog.
Self Confidence, Assertiveness	<i>The Worm Family</i>	Tony Johnston	The Worms get run out of town for being different...but then come to stand up for themselves.
Self-awareness	<i>Fish is Fish</i>	Leo Lionni	Tadpole and minnow are fast friends until tadpole grows legs and wants to see the world. Minnow is jealous of the sights he is missing, but learns to appreciate the colors in his own world.
Self-fulfilling prophecy, grumpiness	<i>Sweet Strawberries</i>	Phyllis Reynolds Naylor	As a man drives to market people behave negatively just as he predicts. His wife becomes angry with his cynical petulance. On the way home he treats people more respectfully and they return the favor...and so does his wife.
Sharing	S <i>Jamaica's Blue Marker</i>	Juanita Havill	Jamaica learns a touching lesson about sharing.
Sharing resources, home	<i>Blue Rabbit and Friends</i>	Christopher Wormell	Blue Rabbit isn't content where he finds himself. As he seeks a new home he encounters other malcontents who end up trading homes and being happier. Rabbit,

Themes	Title	Author	Synopsis/Comments
			however, continues on to adventure.
Siblings, family, generations	<i>All the Places to Love</i>	Patricia MacLachlan	A child grows up to appreciate so much.... When his little sister comes along he is eager to share these things, places and experiences with her.
Simplicity, industriousness, Amish	<i>Just Plain Fancy</i>	Patricia Polacco	When a showy peacock appears in the midst of an Amish community, its owner, a little girl, is terrified that she or it will be banished.
Soul, quiet, silence	<i>Owl Moon</i>	Jane Yolen	A child and father stalk through nighttime silence, through snow and woods, open to the rare experience of encountering an owl.
South Africa, voting, M democracy, persistence	<i>The Day Gogo went to Vote</i>	Elinor Batezat Sisulu	An old woman shows her granddaughter that she will make any effort to vote for the first time. Refers to <i>Nkosi sikelel I Africa</i> (hymn #171).
Spring, rebirth	T <i>Grandmother's Gift (in What if Nobody Forgave?)</i>	Colleen McDonald	In the time where no one ever died, Grandmother's gift is that she offered herself so that new life could appear.
Spring, seasons, friendship	<i>A Little Bit of Winter</i>	Paul Stewart	Rabbit worries about winter without his friend hedgehog, who will be hibernating. Hedgehog wishes he could know what winter is like, so he asks rabbit to save some for him. Light.
Spring, sharing	<i>Henrietta's First Winter</i>	Rob Lewis	A furry creature facing her first winter repeatedly loses her cache of winter food. She falls asleep afraid of how she will survive, and wakes up to spring!
Stealing, honesty, forgiveness, communication	<i>That's Mine, Horace</i>	Holly Keller	Horace finds and keeps a really neat toy truck. When his friend asks for it back, Horace pretends that it was his all along. Horace is ashamed, but unable to do the right thing. But his friend finds a solution which is both graceful and direct.
Stepparents, grief, memory, mothers, daughters	<i>The Memory String</i>	Eve Bunting	Laura remembers her deceased mother through a string of buttons which represent her family history. Laura's new stepmother tries to console her when a button is lost and, ultimately, finds a way to connect.
Stories	F <i>Tell Me a Story, Mama</i>	Angela Johnson	A child re-tells the family stories by herself as she begs Mama to do so. Poignant.
Stories, Imagination	<i>Unicorn Dreams</i>	Dyan Sheldon	His teacher and classmates laugh at Dan, who sees unicorns. But the unicorn becomes real to them too when he begins to tell them the unicorn's stories.
Stories, poverty, fabric of community	<i>The Rag Coat</i>	Lauren Mills	Minna is unable to attend school because she has no coat. When the neighbors piece together for her a rag coat, the kids make fun of her...until she points out to each of them their own life stories that are sewn into the various rag pieces.
Strength vs. Respect	<i>The Warrior and the Wise Man</i>	David Wisniewski	Brothers vying for the throne learn that he who <i>receives</i> the gifts of nature ends up in a better position than he who takes them by force. Long, somewhat complex.
Teachers, potential	S <i>Thank You, Mr. Falker</i>	Patricia Polacco	The author thanks a grade school teacher who saw promise in her. Poignant. Long.
Teamwork, fairness	<i>Farmer Duck</i>	Martin Waddell	The Duck does all the farm work while the lazy farmer eats bon-bons...till the other animals conspire to oust the farmer.
Teamwork, fairness, organizing	<i>Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type</i>	Doreen Cronin	The cows conspire to get more for their milk, and demand heating blankets. Soon the chickens strike too. Unionization even spreads to the ducks. Funny.
Therapy animals, pets, holistic care	F <i>Dr. White</i>	Jane Goodall	Dr. White is a dog who cuddles with children in the hospital. Very touching.
Three Kings' Day, Epiphany, winter holidays, search	<i>Hurray for Three Kings' Day</i>	Lori Marie Carlson	A story of an Hispanic family and how they celebrate the "Twelfth Night" after Christmas by reenacting the 3 kings search for the child.

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Tolerance, isolation	D T Spite Fences (in Colleen McDonald, ed., <i>What if Nobody Forgave?</i> )	Paul Beckel	The Neighborhood was a happy potlucking BBQ-ing unit. But when the new neighbor started cooking liver, the others built tall fences to keep her out.
Tradition, families, change	<i>A Visit To Grandma's</i>	Nancy Carlson	Now that Grandma has moved from the farm to retire in Florida, there is no predicting what will remain of the cherished holiday traditions.
Tradition, integrity, compromise, creativity	<i>Luka's Quilt</i>	Georgia Guback	Luka is unhappy with the traditional Hawaiian quilt her grandmother makes for her, and both are hurt. In time they find a compromise and rebuild their relationship.
Tradition, ritual, wishes, care	T <i>A Thanksgiving Wish</i>	Michael J. Rosen	A child enjoys the ritual of care that is her grandma's family Thanksgiving feast. But after grandma dies, she learns how deeply she was cared for and how to carry on the caring tradition with the help of new neighbors. Probably best shortened and told without the book.
Trailblazing, pushing limits	<i>On Beyond Zebra</i>	Dr. Seuss	A fanciful journey into a world one might discover if your imagination is not restricted to only 26 letters. Long but easily shortened.
Truth, lying, kindness	<i>The Honest-to-Goodness Truth</i>	Patricia McKissack	By going too far in "telling the truth," Libby learns to tell the truth, with love.
Truth, ying yang, revelation not sealed	F <i>Old Turtle and the Broken Truth</i>	Douglas Wood	A truth falls from the sky, splintering, beautiful. Part is found and admired...and eventually becomes an idol. Eventually another part of truth is found to put things in perspective. Long.
Truths, aphorisms, proverbs	<i>Mac Side Up</i>	Bob Elsdale	Cats always land on their feet. Toast always lands butter-side-down. An intrepid cat devises a way to determine which of these eternal truths is stronger.
Tyranny, abuse of power, democracy, absurd laws, family, gays, (poor) reason	T <i>The Duke Who Outlawed Jellybeans</i>	Johnny Valentine	A kingdom is oppressed by a frivolous ruler who asserts his authority without listening to the people. Eventually the absurdity of the situation turns the people's fear to mirth, and they depose him with laughter.
Unconditional love	F D <i>Bread and Honey</i>	Frank Asch	Little bear paints a picture of his mother. But then he changes it to accommodate the views of long-eared and long-necked (etc.) friends. But his mother likes it just the way it is. Great for <i>telling and drawing</i> as the story unfolds (or have the kids take turns drawing over mother's face) via newsprint & easel.
Understanding and working with Nature	<i>Bear Shadow</i>	Frank Asch	Bear gets angry at his shadow for scaring away the fish he's trying to catch. He tries many ways to shake his shadow, to no avail. Later he and shadow discover a way to cooperate.
Vegetarianism, healthy eating	<i>Broccoli-Flavored Bubble Gum</i>	Justin McGivern	A child changes the world by popularizing vegetable-based treats.
Vegetarianism, thanksgiving	<i>'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving</i>	Dav Pilkey	Schoolchildren find a way to rescue turkeys from their thanksgiving doom. Light.
Vietnam, generations, work	<i>My Father's Boat</i>	Sherry Garland	A boy learns of his father's work shrimping, and of how his father misses his own father who taught him to fish, but remained in Vietnam.
Vision, art, teaching	<i>All I See</i>	Cynthia Rylant	A boy learns to paint from an artist – though they each see things differently.
Voting, Women, Leadership	<i>When Esther Morris Headed West</i>	Connie Nordhielm Wooldrige	On the courage demonstrated by Esther Morris, who advocated for woman suffrage in Wyoming, won over her detractors, and became the first woman to hold public office in the U.S.
War, escalation	<i>The Butter Battle Book</i>	Dr. Seuss	Two nations escalate their military strength to outrageous proportions.
War, hope,	<i>The Cello of Mr. O</i>	Jane Cutler	In a war-torn city, the kids find their neighbor, the musician, impatient with their noisy play.

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perseverance			But when a bomb hits the market, he shows the ultimate courage and restores some hope to the neighborhood by defiantly sitting in the street, playing his cello.
War, landmines,	<i>Not Mines, But Flowers</i>	Fusako Yanase	Sunny the Bunny pleads for us to support work to remove landmines for the sake of children around the world. With an opportunity to buy shares in a mine-removal program. Very very heavy. Do not use without follow up.
Water Communion	<i>Water Dance</i>	Thomas Locker	I am the stream, the storm and the rainbow...I am water dancing through the world.
Water communion	<i>We Got Here Together</i>	Kim Stafford	As a father puts his child to bed he tells her about a raindrop that falls to become a part of the ocean.
Web of existence, unity of all things	<i>All I See Is a Part of Me</i>	Charam Curtis	I am in everything, everything is in me.
What goes around comes around	<i>Prince Bertram the Bad</i>	Arnold Lobel	A prince with a bad attitude suffers gets his due and learns to be more sensitive.
Women, athletics	<i>America's Champion Swimmer</i>	David A. Adler	The story of Trudy Ederle, the first woman to swim the English Channel, (also breaking the men's record) in 1926.
Women, gender roles	<i>Steamboat!</i>	Judith Heide Gilliland	The story of Blanche Leathers, who becomes a steamboat pilot in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century.
World religions	V <i>Sacred Places</i>	Jane Yolen	Delphi, Stonehenge, Uluru, Ganga, The Wailing Wall, and 7 other sacred places are featured with captivating illustrations. The texts are too extensive for reading in their entirety, but adapted this could be an excellent source...or even a series.
Worry	<i>The Worrywarts</i>	Pamela Duncan Edwards	3 rodent friends successfully negotiate an adventure in the wide world, but don't entirely overcome their tendencies to worry.
Worry	<i>Wemberly Worried</i>	Kevin Henkes	Little Wemberly worries about everything, but life becomes easier when she finds a friend at school who worries as well.
Xenophobia, reconciliation	<i>Feathers and Fools</i>	Mem Fox	The Swans and Peacocks, fearing one another's differences, destroy one another. Their offspring, not knowing of the stories of fear, discover their similarities.