

Welcome to Fiction, Fairy Tales, and Fun for Little Learners

Welcome! This Parent's Companion includes a simple checklist for all the stories, poems, and instruction. This checklist is organized by trimester (first, second, third) and roughly divided by difficulty level from easiest to most challenging materials. Feel free to work through the list according to your schedule.


Along with each story, we provide an optional activity. Frequently, the activities pertain to the story; sometimes the activity is too good to miss. None of these are required. If they enhance your day, or build the bond between you and your children, you've reached the goal. If they cause stress and discontent, please, please don't do them. You are in charge!

Before You Start

We have several goals in mind for you, the teacher, this year:

We want you to enjoy your time with your little ones. We've searched through hundreds of children's books and found these few that our children (and we) love.

We want you to take control of your schooling. Part of the reasoning behind offering a checklist is so that you have the freedom to read and re-read the stories without a strict schedule. You will not fall "behind" (you can't be behind yourself, right?). If you read *Go, Dog, Go* to your children every day in the month of May, that's great! Your children have developed a love for a classic book. You are doing great!

We want you to understand more fully the philosophy of using real books for schoolwork. To that end, we've included quotes and tips we've found helpful in our homeschooling experiences. You can find these scattered throughout the Companion. Just look for the handprint symbol!  We hope they encourage and challenge you, and that your homeschool journey will be richer as a result.

Our goals for your children are simple:

We want your children to fall in love with books and to have some books that they request again and again.

We want your children to enjoy being with you.

How much time will this course take? It's up to you. In my house, I've found that if I read to my children for perhaps 20–30 minutes early in the morning (say, right after breakfast), they are quite content to play on their own afterwards, sometimes until lunch. They've spent time with mother and are eager to pursue their own interests. Play is healthy and necessary for young children. We usually have a healthy mix of both new books and repeats to read.

As a homeschooling parent, you have the privilege of talking to your children all day long. So please do! Speak to them in a normal voice (not a "child" voice) and use normal words. Answer their questions as best you can. Include them in your life.

Finally, here's a little plug for afternoon rest time. Whether your children will sleep or not, I recommend a one to two hour rest time in the early afternoon. In our house, the boys can listen to CD's and look at books, but they are to stay on their beds. This gives them a break from each other, and allows us to come back together refreshed.

A Few Other Notes

I invite you to visit our forums at www.sonlight-forums.com. Here you can find encouragement and resources from other homeschoolers who have "been there." Come visit!

Sign up for our exciting and inspiring electronic newsletter "A Beam of Sonlight," which includes the most interesting and helpful discussions on our forums. Sign up at www.sonlight.com/beam.html

And, finally, if while going through this program you think of another book we should consider, or an activity that you've found enjoyable or anything that we could do to improve this program, please let me know. My e-mail address is alykosh@sonlight.com. I look forward to hearing from you! Enjoy! ■



Get a few really good books, and read them together aloud. Set aside a good regular chunk of time. This will be one of the most rewarding and stimulating relationships in your life.¹

¹ Macaulay, Susan S. *For the Children's Sake*, 1984. P. 19

Checklist for Books

First Trimester

- Read a story a day from *the Bible* and/or *101 Favorite Stories from the Bible*.
- Goodnight Moon* (*Harper Collins Treasury of Picture Book Classics*)
 - ✧ Cook and enjoy Cream of Mushroom Soup or Cream of Wheat.
- Baby Says* (*Harper Collins Treasury of Picture Book Classics*)
 - ✧ Build with blocks.
- Noah's Ark*
 - ✧ Ask questions about this book. Count the animals, name the animals, or make animal noises.
 - ✧ Put a blanket over a table and use the under part for an ark. Bring in toys that won't be left behind!
- If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (*Harper Collins Treasury of Picture Book Classics*)
 - ✧ Bake cookies and eat them with milk for a snack.
- George Shrinks* (*Harper Collins Treasury of Picture Book Classics*)
 - ✧ Try to put on your children's socks to see what something is like if it is too small. What would you be like if you shrunk? Could your children sit on your shoulders? How much would you eat? What would your clothes look like?
- From Head to Toe* (*Harper Collins Treasury of Picture Book Classics*)
 - ✧ Sing "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes."²
- Make Way For Ducklings* (*A Robert McCloskey Collection*)
 - ✧ Practice walking like a duck. Play follow the leader.
 - ✧ Draw your children's attention to the artist's illustrations. Each picture is linked to the previous page.
- Katy and the Big Snow* (*Mike Mulligan and More*)
 - ✧ Talk about snow. Ask your children what activities they could do when it snows.
- Busy Timmy* (*Eloise Wilkin Stories*)
 - ✧ Get ready for bed or bath time.
- Guess Who Lives Here* (*Eloise Wilkin Stories*)
 - ✧ Guess where something is (this could be a family pet, a sibling, even mom or dad!)



Susannah Wesley raised 19 children, including John and Charles Wesley. Through much adversity, she dedicated her life to instilling a sense of Christian Destiny into each of her children. Her children went on to change the world. Susannah's 16 house rules:

1. Eating between meals not allowed.
2. As children they are to be in bed by 8 p.m.
3. They are required to take medicine without complaining.
4. Subdue self-will in a child, and those working together with God to save the child's soul.
5. To teach a child to pray as soon as he can speak.
6. Require all to be still during Family Worship.
7. Give them nothing that they cry for, and only that when asked for politely.
8. To prevent lying, punish no fault which is first confessed and repented of.
9. Never allow a sinful act to go unpunished.
10. Never punish a child twice for a single offense.
11. Comment on and reward good behavior.
12. Any attempt to please, even if poorly performed, should be commended.
13. Preserve property rights, even in smallest matters.
14. Strictly observe all promises.
15. Require no daughter to work before she can read well.
16. Teach children to fear the rod.³



"If you really read the fairy tales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other—the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is the core of the nursery tales."⁴

³ Wesley, Susannah. "Rules," <http://pastorbrouwer.wordpress.com/2007/03/13/rules-susannah-wesley-had-for-her-home/> (accessed August 27, 2007.)

⁴ (Chesterton, G.K. "Fairy Tales," <http://www.online-literature.com/chesterton/all-things-considered/31> (accessed July 10, 2007.)

² You can find this song at: <http://www.mamalisa.com/blog/?cat=828>