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# ParentLife

ParentLife equips parents to build strong, godly families by focusing on the needs of the whole child from prenatal to preteen.

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## Parenting Matters

### The Good Book

Recently my first grader made some big strides in reading. We suddenly went from sounding out every single letter of every word to reading chapter books. While the process seemed to happen overnight, really it has taken a couple of years of learning those beginner reading skills to get to this point. But now she seems to really have a love for reading and I am going to encourage it!

Every night she picks a book before bed and reads it outloud to me. And last Christmas she asked for a "big girl" Bible. I can't even express what it means to hear her reading Scripture. Just this past Sunday we got in the car after church and she started reading her Bible story to us. She made some very interesting points that, while child-like, were also very thoughtful. If your family is looking to encourage reading, make sure to check out "The Love of a Good Book" (p.34) for some tips! And connect with us at [facebook.com/parentlife](https://facebook.com/parentlife) to let us know which ones work for you!



Nancy Cornwell









# THE LOVE OF A GOOD BOOK

## EIGHT INSPIRATIONAL IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE A LOVE OF READING

By Lois Rodriguez

**M**y father was an avid reader and as a child I remember our living room always had neat stacks of books piled high on the side table, all at different stages of being read. In the early morning hours dad would walk down the hallway, gently closing each of our bedroom doors before switching on the lamp for his morning quiet time. My brothers and I took such comfort from that small act, knowing all was well in the home as our loving father took his place in his special chair to spend time reading his Bible. Now as a parent myself, I want to encourage a love of reading in my own children, not just as a precursor to a healthy time in the Word, but also as a way to provide my boys with hours of creative enjoyment as they get lost in a world of people, places, and things that inspire them. Yet in a generation of fast-paced screen gaming and instant gratification, how is a book to compete? Here are eight strategies for raising readers and inspiring both new and fizzling readers to catch the spark.

### 1. Don't Finish What You've Started

Snuggle in with your child and read aloud the first few pages or chapters of a book to set the hook. Once engrossed in the story, find reasons to step away that mean you have to hand off the book, then let curiosity take over. You might just find that wanting to know what happens next will get the best of your budding reader who just can't resist picking up where you left off.

### 2. Friday Fun Night – Fact or Fiction?

Choose short reads for everyone in the family and turn Friday nights into fact or fiction night. Have each child present their story to the family, but have them make up an alternate ending to accompany the one they read. The family has to guess which ending is the correct one. It's a great way to encourage both reading and imagination, as well as honing presentation skills.

### 3. Read to Rover

Family pets make great listeners and kids who struggle with pronunciation or dyslexia may find it easier to read to the





stuffed animal and you may find your reader getting lost not only in the blankets, but in the story, too.

• **The outdoor tree fort** stocked with reads about bugs and animal tracking, complete with night lamps, a sleeping bag and a plate of freshly made s'mores brownies is a perfect snuggle spot. Be prepared to sneak into the fort to tuck in your snoozing readers after dark.

## 6. Start a Book Club

Book clubs aren't just for grown-ups, so encourage the kids in your neighborhood

guinea pig on their lap, the dog at their feet or a group of stuffed animals. They will have their own captive audience who never interrupt or correct them, giving your reader the opportunity to get comfortable in their reading without the frustration of a parent trying to make it perfect.

## 4. Bring the Story to Life

Choose a well-read book and have each member of the family pick a personality. Act out the story complete with spatula swords and bedsheet capes. Change the endings and imagine how the characters would interact with each other if the story had more chapters!

## 5. Create a Book Nook

Sometimes a cozy spot will fuel inspiration to sit and read. Set up a little themed area to inspire some book reading time. Let the kids create their own cozy nook, or do it yourself as a surprise for them to discover when they get home from school. Some ideas to inspire your own:

- **A table** draped with lace creates underneath it a cozy tea party setup with little cups, snacks, and favorite stuffed animals. Stack some books about friendly critters and let the tea party begin!
- **A tent** stocked with flashlights and stuffed bears with some scary tomes can get the adrenaline pumping for your fearless readers. Sneak in with hot chocolate and marshmallows to get in on the reading fun.
- **An indoor maze** where sheets, throws, and blankets get pulled off the beds and draped over every high surface is a fun way to set up a hiding spot. Throw in a bunch of pillows and a favorite

to start their own! Combine the book club idea with a book nook and get the parents on board. Each month the club could meet in a different home, in a different nook. Make it a themed club with snacks that match the nook and the child whose home is hosting the club can be in charge of coming up with a few questions to talk about. You're not only setting the stage for reading enjoyment, you may even find your child has some great leadership skills!

## 7. Connect with the Author

Encourage your reader to connect with the author of a book they just finished. Sending a letter to the author, either via their online fan page or the publisher, will more often than not result in a response from the writer, especially if the letter is penned by your child. This brings a special connection to the story and encourages your reader to pick up another book by that same author who is now their 'friend'.

## 8. Think Outside the Book

Kids now raised on computers may be more drawn to a tablet or eReader as a way to develop a passion for reading. A Nook® or Kindle® can speak to the need for a screen or an audio book can help restless kids enjoy the story while still being able to play or draw while listening. Mix up the media and start an audio book in the car when there's only a short drive time, then have the book available at home to encourage a hooked listener to pick up the read and finish the story.

Lois Rodriguez fills her blog with practical and intentional parenting tips. Head over to [blessedmamabear.com](http://blessedmamabear.com) where you'll find a host of other ideas for continuing to inspire new and veteran readers!