

Using Children's Literature for Children's Spiritual Development

Working Annotated Bibliography

Ann M. Trousdale

Trade Books

Picture Books

Universal Themes

Agassi, Martine. 2000. *Hands Are Not for Hitting*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Hitting isn't friendly. Hitting hurts. How does it feel when someone hits you? When you hit someone else? Hands are not for hitting; hands are for saying hello, for making music, for helping, for building, for working together. The text and illustrations are inviting and instructive without being preachy. The author includes suggestions to adults for reinforcing the concepts portrayed.

Baylor, Byrd and Peter Parnall. 1978. *The Other Way to Listen*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

"I used to know an old man who could walk by any cornfield and hear the corn singing. 'Teach me,' I'd say when we'd passed on by. Just tell me how you learned to hear that corn.' And he'd say, 'It takes a lot of practice. You can't be in a hurry.'" The old man could also hear windflower seeds burst open and a rock murmur good things to a lizard. When, one sunrise, our young protagonist finally hears the hills singing, it seems like the oldest and most natural thing in the world. Told in spare poetic style, *The Other Way to Listen* makes intimacy with the earth indeed seem the most natural thing in the world.

Cherry, Lynne. 1990. *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers.

A man is assigned to cut down a Kapok tree in the Amazon rain forest. After a few blows the man grows tired and sits down to rest at the foot of the tree. He falls asleep, and the various animals whose lives depend on the tree come to speak in his ear, telling him of the consequences to their lives should the tree be cut down.

Demi. 1990. *The Empty Pot*. New York: Henry Holt.

A Chinese emperor is looking for a worthy successor. The young contestants think that the test he gives them is one of successful gardening, and when the seeds the Emperor provides do not sprout, they substitute growing plants. Only one lad returns with an empty pot--and learns that the real test was honesty.

Demi. 1998. *The Greatest Treasure*. New York: Scholastic.

A retelling of a Chinese folktale about the seductiveness of riches and the pricelessness of peace and happiness.

Dr. Seuss. 1961. “The Sneeches,” *The Sneeches and Other Stories*. New York: Random House.

The Star-Belly Sneeches lord it over Sneeches who have no stars “upon thars.” Sylvester McMonkey McBean arrives with a device to put stars upon the plain Sneeches for a price--which they gladly pay. Now the Star-Belly Sneeches have no markings of superiority and they pay McBean to remove their stars. Back and forth they go, “Off again! On again!” until all the Sneeches have paid McBean all their money. They finally learn that “Sneeches are Sneeches/And no kind of Sneech is the best on the beaches.”

Evans, Richard Paul. 2000. *The Spyglass*. Jonathan Linton, Illus.. New York: Simon & Schuster.

A once great and prosperous kingdom has become poor, joyless, without hope. One day an old man comes to the palace and gives the king a spyglass which reveals not the limitations of what is, but what might be. As the king and his people look through the spyglass, their faith is restored and they set to work to bring about the visions of what they have seen.

***The Hunter: a Chinese Folktale*. 2000. Retold by Mary Casanova. Ed Young, Illus.. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.**

A hunter saves a snake from death and is rewarded with the gift of understanding the language of animals. There is one interdiction: if the hunter reveals the secret of his gift, he will be turned to stone. From the animals the hunter learns of an impending disaster for his people. They refuse to believe him, and

the hunter must choose between saving his people or saving his own life. A powerful story of self-sacrifice--and the need to attend to the wisdom of others.

LeMieux, Michele. 1999. *Stormy Night*. Niagara Falls, New York: Kids Can Press Ltd.

A captivating book about a child’s night-time thoughts and questions: Where do we come from? Who decided what the first human would look like? Who am I? Is my whole life already worked out in advance? Or will I have to find my way all by myself? I’m afraid that nobody loves me! Are things better after death than in life? The book ends on a peaceful and hopeful note. Charmingly illustrated in pen and ink by the author. Not recommended for very young children, however.

LeTourd, Bijou. 1990. *The Deep Blue Sea*. New York: Orchard Books.

A creation story for a very young child told in a simple, appealing, and assuring way. Its only suggestion of sectarian roots is the statement that God “saw that it was all good,” echoing the first account of creation in Genesis.

Lucado, Max. 1997. *You Are Special*. Sergio Martinez, Illus.. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Punchinello was a Wemmick of very low esteem--in his own eyes and in the eyes of the other Wemmicks. One day he met Lucia, who was not like the other carved wooden people. Neither their praise nor their criticism made any impact on her at all. She explains her secret to Punchinello: every day she goes to see Eli, the woodcarver, and sits with him in his workshop. Eli welcomes Punchinello and assures him what others think doesn't matter; that he is special because Eli made him. He invites Punchinello to come to visit him every day to see how much he cares for him. As Punchinello accepts what Eli says, the stigma of others' criticism begins to fall away.

Ness, Evaline. 1966. *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Sam, left with only her cat Bangs for company when her father goes to work, lets her imagination run wild: She learns the difference between “real” and “moonshine” when young Thomas believes one of her more outrageous fantasies and as a consequence is very nearly drowned. A Caldecott Award winner.

***The Story of Jumping Mouse: A Native American Legend*. 1993. Retold and illustrated by John Steptoe. New York: Scholastic.**

Jumping Mouse has a dream: to see the far-off land. Helped on his way by Magic Frog, Jumping Mouse learns the value of friendship, of self-sacrifice, and of hope.

Williams, Margery. 1983. *The Velveteen Rabbit or, How Toys Become Real*. Michael Hague, Illus. New York: Henry Holt.

A toy rabbit learns what it means to become real. Slightly sentimental but a great favorite. This classic story has been published in many editions.

Wood, Douglas. 1992. *Old Turtle*. Cheng-Khee Chee, Illus. Duluth, MN: Pfeiffer-Hamilton Publishers.

The breeze sees God as a wind who is never still; the stone sees God as a great rock that never moves. The fish sees God as a swimmer; the antelope sees God as a runner. After the creatures have created God in--and limited God to--their own images, a violent argument breaks out. Finally Old Turtle speaks, extending the understanding of God to and beyond all the animals' projections. Then God creates

humankind, and the pattern is repeated. This time the other beings speak out of their new understandings of God's universality, and the people listen. A theological work for children and adults, the book speaks powerfully for mutual respect and tolerance, and for care of the earth.

Specific Spiritual or Religions Traditions

Armstrong, Carole. 1998. *Women of the Bible with Paintings from the Great Art Museums of the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Given the preponderance of male protagonists in children's books about spirituality and religion, this book featuring women of the Bible welcome is particularly welcome. The stories of 19 women from the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha, are briefly told and, as the title indicates, are illustrated with paintings from museums across the world.

***Be Not Far From Me, The Oldest Love Story: Legends from the Bible*. 1998. Retold by Eric Kimmel, David Diaz, Illus.. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.**

Stories of heroes and heroines in the Hebrew Bible from Abraham to Daniel, engagingly retold and beautifully illustrated.

Berenstain, Stan and Jan. 1999. *The Berenstain Bears and the Big Question*. New York: Random House.

One of many books the Berenstains have written on spiritual/ethical issues. In this one the young bears ask "Big Questions," questions that are not always easy to answer--and it turns out that these hard-to-answer questions themselves come from God. Clearly but not heavy-handedly from a Christian tradition.

Bruchac, Joseph. 1996. *Between Earth and Sky: Legends of Native American Sacred Places*. Thomas Locker, Illus. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Little Turtle receives teachings from his uncle Old Bear about the many places in North America that are sacred to Native American peoples. Deriving from 10 Native tribes, some of the sacred places are related to creation stories; some to sacred ceremonies; some contain universal lessons about human nature. All speak of respect for the earth and the importance of sacred places above, below, about, and within us.

Demi. 2003. *Muhammad*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.

Called "the first, long-awaited biography of Prophet Muhammad for children in a Western language," Demi's work is based on traditional Islamic sources and is illustrated in the style of the Persian miniature. Following Muhammad's life from birth to death, the text treats his spiritual experiences and religious teachings with delicacy and respect. Demi has also written biographies of Buddha and the Dalai Lama.

DePaola, Tomie. 1978. *The Clown of God*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

A retelling of the legend about the juggler who, at the end of his life, juggles for the Christ Child and brings a smile to his face.

De Roin, Nancy. 1974. *Jataka Tales: Fables from the Buddha*. Nancy Lanyon, Illus. New York: Houghton.

A retelling of tales told by Buddha. Many resonate with folktales otherwise familiar to young audiences; the morals of the stories are made explicit.

Goldin, Barbara Diamond. 1999. *Journeys with Elijah: Eight Tales of the Prophet*. Jerry Pinkney, Illus. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Ten legendary stories about Elijah's reappearance on earth and the blessings and miracles he wrought. The settings of the stories range in date from the third to the twentieth century C.E., and in locale from Africa to Argentina to China to the Caribbean. The stories come from Jewish tradition, but as Goldin points out, Elijah is also a familiar figure in Christianity and Islam.

Khan, Rukhsana. 1999. *Muslim Child*. Patty Gallinger, Illus. New York: Scholastic.

A child-centered introduction to Islam. Fictional stories illustrate a child experiencing the five pillars of Islam: belief, prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Other stories deal with other central aspects of Islam, while sidebars explain Arabic words and religious terminology. Also included are poems, sayings of Muhammad, and a chart of the major events in Muhammad's life.

Landaw, Jonathan and Janet Brooke. 1984. *Prince Siddhartha: The Story of Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom.

A romanticized and slightly fictionalized but very readable biography of the Buddha, written for a child audience. The watercolor illustrations are very peaceful and appealing.

Lee, Jeanne M. 1999. *I Was Once a Monkey: Stories Buddha Told*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Five animals--a monkey, a lion, a jackal, a turtle, and a dove--seek refuge in a cave during a monsoon. To stop their bickering, a statue of Buddha comes to live and tells them six jataka tales about animals during one of Buddha's earlier incarnations--as a forest sprite, a willow tree, a monkey, a lion, a dove, and an antelope. Each story expresses a central tenet of Buddha's philosophy; several are similar to folktales familiar to Western audiences.

Menotti, Gian Carlo. 1986. *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. Michele Lemieux, Illus. New York: William Morrow.

The opera retold in picture book format. Amahl, who is crippled, lives in poverty with his mother. One night they three Kings come to their home; they are the Magi their way to the Manger in Bethlehem. When Amahl offers his greatest gift for the Christ Child, a miracle occurs.

Miller, Ceci. 1998. *The Mantra is a Prayer to God*. Laura Trayser, Illus. South Fallsburg, N. Y.: SYDA Foundation.

A gentle, poetic introduction to the Siddha Yoga mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya*. A book for very young children.

Miller, Ceci. 1998. *Walking the Path with Neela: An Alphabet of Siddha Yoga Meditation*. Obadinah Heavner, Illus. South Fallsburg, N.Y.: SYDA Foundation.

Just what it says, set in the context of a visit to a Siddha Yoga meditation center. Like Miller's other book, the characters, for some reason, are animals.

Polacco, Patricia. 2002. *Christmas Tapestry*. New York: Philomel Books.

Jonathan Jefferson Weeks wonders why his father was sent from Memphis, Tennessee, where life was perfect, to Detroit, Michigan, to pastor a small, struggling church. The summer and fall are spent repairing the church building, but just before Christmas a blizzard hits, damaging a wall in the church. Jonathan and his father happen upon a tapestry that will cover the hole in the wall for Christmas. The discovery leads to a joyful reconciliation between an elderly Jewish woman, who had sewn the tapestry, and her husband, separated from her during the Holocaust.

Shriver, Maria. 1999. *What's Heaven?* New York: St. Martin's Press.

Her grandmother's death provokes a little girl to ask questions her mother all kinds of questions about Heaven.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. 1974. *Why Noah Chose the Dove*. Eric Carle, Illus. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

When the animals hear that only the best of the living creatures are to be taken on the ark with Noah, they begin to vie with one another, boasting of their own merits and belittling others. Only the dove does not brag or argue, for it believes that each creature has some quality others don't have, all given by God.

***The Tale of Three Trees*. 1989. Retold by Antela Elwell Hunt. Illus., Tim Jonke. Colorado Springs, CO: Lion Publishing.**

Three young trees grow on a hillside, dreaming of what they would someday like to be. When they are cut down, their hopes are dashed--or so they think. Each one is used in ways

that fulfill its dreams in ways far greater than it has imagined, at significant moments in Jesus Christ's life.

Novels

Universal Themes

Lowry, Lois. 1993. *The Giver*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell.

The world in which Jonas lives denies a spiritual dimension in life. It is also devoid of color, of emotion, of imagination, of sexuality, of choice. When Jonas is chosen as the Receiver of Memories and begins to experience these dimensions of life he reaches a spiritual crisis and must make a radical, life-changing decision. A Newbery Award winner.

Paulsen, Gary. 1988. *The Island*. New York: Orchard.

Wil Neuton discovers an island in a lake near his home and is drawn to return to the island again and again. There for the first time he observes the natural world closely, discovering hidden truths about nature, about life, about his connection to other living things. He begins to draw what he sees, to write about it, to dance with it, to meditate. Wil is not immune to violence on the island however, nor is his experience immune to media exploitation.

Specific Religious or Spiritual Traditions

Hamilton, Virginia. 1982. *Sweet Whispers, Brother Rush*. New York: Avon Books.

Theresa who lives with her mother and her retarded older brother, encounters the ghost of her uncle. Brother Rush leads her to important secrets from the family's past which allow her to understand Dab's illness and to appreciate her mother's strength. A Newbery Honor Book.

Harrison, Emma. 2003. *Charmed: Something Wicked This Way Comes*. New York: Simon Pulse.

One of a series of novels based on the TV series "Charmed." Sisters Paige, Piper, and Phoebe Halliwell are "three good witches destined to protect the innocent from the forces of evil." In this episode, they confront and overcome such evil at a Gathering of Covens in Las Vegas. As in the TV series, the three display the sort of supernatural powers that lend themselves to glitzy special effects.

Hesse, Karen. 1995. *A Time of Angels*. New York: Hyperion.

Hannah, a young Jewish girl in 1918 Boston, has visions of angels soaring in the sky, sweeping over the city's rooftops and alleys and spires. She is visited by a girl with violet eyes, who guides and protects her and then disappears. Fleeing a deadly flu epidemic, Hannah finds

herself in a place utterly different from Boston, where she encounters a stranger who nurses her back to health and who helps her gain new perspectives on life.

Holder, Nancy and Debbie Viguie. 2002. *Wicked Witch*. New York: Simon Pulse.

When Holly Cather's parents are killed in a rafting accident, she goes to live with her aunt and cousins in Seattle. There she is plunged into a sinister web of supernatural events, magic spells, and the realization that she is the reincarnation of a 16th-century French ancestor.

Lasky, Kathryn. 1994. *Beyond the Burning Time*. New York: Blue Sky Press.

The events of the Salem witch trials in America are told from the point of view of Mary Chase, who is the same age as the girls who were involved. The effects of mass hysteria, fed by self-aggrandizement and fear of those who are "different," are chillingly portrayed.

Lasky, Kathryn. 1994. *Memoirs of a Book Bat*. San Diego, Harcourt Brace.

Harper Jessup is an avid reader, and when her parents come under the influence of a fundamentalist preacher who has a strong mistrust of the imagination, she is obliged to hide the books she loves. As the household becomes increasingly oppressive and close-minded, Harper goes more and more underground with her activities, but eventually must choose whether to stay in that environment or to escape it.

Levitin, Sonya. 2000. *The Singing Mountain*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.

Mitch, a Jewish teen-ager, has gone to Israel with a group of school friends the summer before he is to enter college. He becomes enthralled with the Jewish faith and wants to stay to study in a yeshiva. His parents, who are in no way orthodox, fear that he has become involved in a cult. His mother and cousin go to Israel to bring him home but realize that Mitch is on an important journey and that he must stay.

Lewis, C. S. 1950. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. New York: Macmillan.

The first in the classic Chronicles of Narnia series, in which young British children are transported to Narnia, where they engage in the Narnians' struggles against the powers of evil. Aslan, the golden lion, is their champion and savior. Aslan is strongly reminiscent of Christ, but the stories are not laden with a specifically "Christian" agenda.

Paterson, Katherine. 1980. *Jacob Have I Loved*. New York: HarperCollins.

Louise, is the elder of twin girls, is eclipsed by the talented and beautiful Caroline who almost dies at birth and is pampered by her parents into adolescence and young womanhood. Louise's quest for self-identity necessitates her leaving the island home of her childhood as well as the strict and dogmatic religion of her family. A Newbery Award winner.

Paterson, Katherine. 1999. *Preacher's Boy*. New York: Clarion.

Robert Burns Hewitt is the ten-year-old son of a Congregationalist minister at the turn of the twentieth century in America. Robbie, a rough-and-tumble boy, has a hard time dealing with the town's expectations of him as a "preacher's boy," as well as with his father's ideas of what living the Gospel mean; they are a far cry from the town's desire for an intolerant "hellfire and brimstone" preacher. Robbie reaches a spiritual crisis and decides to become an "apeist," but following a miracle of sorts he decides to "sign on as a true believer for all eternity."

Peck, Richard. 1995. *The Last Safe Place on Earth*. New York: Delacorte.

Todd's family has moved to the ideal neighborhood, yet even here his family is threatened when Todd's little sister Marni is terrorized by Laurel, an ultra-conservative Christian babysitter. The fact that Todd has fallen for Laurel might have added depth and complication to the conflict that arises, but Peck's treatment of Laurel and her parents' beliefs and behavior are disappointingly shallow and one-dimensional.

Rylant, Cynthia. 1986. *A Fine White Dust*. New York: Bradbury Press.

Thirteen-year-old Pete has a strong religious impulse, and when the Preacher Man comes to town to lead a revival Pete falls under his spell. Pete agrees to run away to join the Preacher Man in his itinerant life, but Pete is in for a big disappointment. Pete survives his crisis of faith and in the end is able to come to terms with his experience.

Rylant, Cynthia. 1992. *Missing May*. New York: Orchard.

Living with May and Ob has given Summer the only experience of love she has known, and when May dies both Summer and Ob are devastated. Guided by Summer's eccentric friend Cletus they set out to find a spiritualist who is able to communicate with the dead. That quest proves unfruitful, but both Summer and Cletus are comforted by the sense of May's continued presence with them in spirit. A Newbery Award winner.

Soto, Gary (2003) *The Afterlife*. (New York, Harcourt, Inc.).

Seventeen-year-old Chuy is stabbed in the men's room of a club in Fresno, California. His ghost rises from his body, and he discovers that he can move about, invisible, and still make his presence felt. Chuy reflects on his former life from this new perspective. He visits his family and friends, comforting them and apologizing for past actions, feeling a compassion and sense of responsibility he had not known before. He intercedes in acts of violence, acting with courage fed by a new sense of justice. He meets the ghost of Crystal, and as their ghostly bodies begin to disappear, they fly off into the afterlife together. Told in Hispanic teenage vernacular, the book has no sentimental or moralistic overtones but rather reads like contemporary realistic fiction.

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. 2000. *Shiva's Fire*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

Parvati is born with extraordinary gifts. She is able to see her wooden statue of Shiva dance in fire and to dance in Shiva's fire herself. She is taken to live in the gurukulam of the great master of Indian sacred dance. When she meets the gentle Rama, son her region's Raja, she is tempted to abandon her calling.

Taylor, Mildred. 1976. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. New York: Bantam Books.

Young Cassie Logan encounters racially-motivated violence in Depression Era Mississippi. Her family's religious faith is a powerful but understated force underlying their courage and resistance to oppression. Particularly moving and profound is her father David's explanation of the need to forgive. A Newbery Award winner.

Williams-Garcia, Rita. 1995. *Like Sisters on the Homefront*. New York: Lodestar Books.

An uncompromisingly realistic view of a 14-year-old African-American girl's struggles with family tradition, religious relief, and responsibility. Gayle has grown up in New York City, hip and street-wise, a single mother now expecting another child by a different father. Her mother sends her to live with the mother's family in the deep south: her brother, a minister; his wife, a pillar of the church; and their daughter, a proper church-going young lady. A delightful and believable portrait of a brash, astute-but-confused, insightful-but-short-sighted young woman.

Yolen, Jane and Bruce Coville. 1998. *Armageddon Summer*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Marina and Jed have been brought by their parents to the top of a mountain to wait for Armageddon with a group of religious fanatics who have fallen under the influence of Rev. Beelson. From Marina's and Jed's perspectives the reader sees the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of this fundamentalist sect, yet Yolen and Coville do not treat these issues in a simplistic way.

Other Genres

***All God's Children: A Book of Prayers*. 1998. Selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins; Amanda Schaffer, Illus. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace & Company.**

Despite its Judeo-Christian cultural roots, the prayers included are remarkably non-sectarian with the exception of the closing Lord's Prayer. Included are prayers expressing gratitude for the creation, prayers for friendship, for remembering those in need, table graces, and bedtime prayers.

Johnson, James Weldon. 1927. *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*. Aaron Douglas, Illus.. New York: Penguin Books.

A classic. Vivid in style and imagery, sermons on such Biblical stories as the Creation, the Flood, the Exodus, the Prodigal Son, and the Crucifixion are told in the powerful rhythmic poetry of old-time Black preachers.

Professional Resources

***The Book of Virtues for Young People: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories.* 1997. Ed., William J. Bennett. 1997. New York: Simon and Schuster.**

Surprisingly undidactic. An excellent collection of stories that on the whole illustrate rather than preach the living out of desirable virtues.

***The Child in Christian Thought.* 2001. Marcia J. Bunge, Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.**

Essays on perceptions of children in such Christian writers/theologians as John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schliermacher, Karl Barth, and Karl Rahner.

***The Children's Book of Faith.* 2000. Ed., William J. Bennett, Illus., Michael Hague. New York: Doubleday.**

A collection of poems, prayers, legends, retellings of Bible stories, biographical accounts of historical people of faith, and fictional stories by such authors as Tolstoy and Wilde. Strictly from the Judeo-Christian tradition, but to my mind the stories have universal appeal, or use.

Gellman, Rabbi Marc and Monsignor Thomas Hartman. 1995. *How Do You Spell God? Answers to the Big Questions from Around the World.* New York: Morrow Junior Books.

The authors raise questions from "What's Religion? How Are Religions the Same? How Are Religions Different?" to "Can We Talk to God?" and "Why Does Bad Stuff Happen to Good Folks?" Unfortunately some of their answers are marred by oversimplification to the point of being offensive to some believers of the religions discussed. The authors have apparently attempted to write on what they consider about a fourth- or fifth-grade level.

Hall, Susan. 2000. *Using Picture Storybooks to Teach Character Education.* Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

Hall provides a background understanding of what character is, what character education is, its history, and ways of implementing character education. She organizes her extensive annotated bibliography under such headings as Cooperation, Courage, Empathy, Generosity, Honest, Kindness, Loyalty, Perseverance, Responsibility, and Tolerance. In her appendix she offers curriculum tie-ins by subject, including the arts, health and safety, history, literature, music, and social science.

Linda Leonard Lamme and Suzanne Lowell Krogh with Kathy A. Yachmetz. 1992. *Literature-Based Moral Education: Children's books and Activities for Teaching Values, Responsibility & Good Judgment in the Elementary School*. 1992. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

Exactly what it says. The book is not geared toward spirituality or religion; it is utterly secular and non-sectarian, but it touches on issues tangential to spirituality and religion. Included is an annotated bibliography of books for grades K-5, with suggested activities for their classroom use. Some of the suggestions are a bit didactic and agenda-laden, an approach which often ruins the pleasure of books for children.

Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry. 1999. *The Moral of the Story: Folktales for Character Development*. Little Rock, AK: August House.

The Norfolks develop a strong rationale for using story for character development in children, emphasizing the importance of oral storytelling in passing values down to children. They provide helpful suggestions for oral storytelling and include actual texts of 13 appropriate stories. Also included are a list of further professional resources for character education and storytelling.

Walter, Barbara J. 1997. *Developing Christian Fiction Collections for Children and Adults; Selection Criteria and a Core Collection*. Neal-Schuman.

For an audience primarily of librarians. Part I includes selection criteria, guidance for collection development and techniques for promoting circulation of books with specifically Christian themes. In Part 2 is an extensive annotated bibliography of books and videotapes. Part 3 includes information about prize-winning books, major Christian fiction authors, and Christian publishing houses.

Ward, Hiley H. 1988. *My Friends' Beliefs: A Young Reader's Guide to World Religions*. New York: Walker and Company.

Young people are introduced to world religions through discussions of each religion's history and fundamental beliefs, stories of young people who practice those religions, glossaries of terms and symbols, and a description of the festivals and holy days of the religion. Clear and unmarred by oversimplification.

Wolf, Aline D. 1996. *Nurturing the Spirit in Non-Sectarian Classrooms*. Hollidaysburg, PA: Parent Child Press.

A wise, balanced, sensitive guide, which includes such topics as the spiritual nature of children, cultivating stillness and wonder, care of the earth, cosmic education, the spiritual roots of peace education, spirituality and the arts, and discussions of God. Written by a Montessori teacher and based on Maria Montessori's beliefs, the book is still universal. It is written for teachers of young children, but is useful in working with older children as well. (A small publishing house; the address is P.O. Box 675, Hollidaysburg, PA, 16648, USA.)