

The best homeschooling memories I have are of reading living books to my children.

One of my favorites is the original, unedited version of *Robinson Crusoe*. It's a story of a prodigal child, a father who trusts God to do what he cannot do, repentance, restoration, and God's faithfulness to bring salvation even to the uttermost parts of the earth. I read it to my children for enjoyment, but it also became a springboard to tell them of my own journey from atheism to salvation.

Another living book that influenced our homeschool was *Thomas Edison, Young Inventor* by Sue Guthridge (Childhood of Famous Americans series). Reading about the success of a famous American who was considered by the schools to be "addled" not only encouraged me but also my son who was a delayed learner. I attribute part of his success today to reading that book.

■ Online books sorted by theme: Carol Hurst's Literature Guide. (www.carol-hurst.com/subjects/subjects.html)

■ The library catalog. Learn how to use a Boolean search to pinpoint exactly what you are looking for. Ask your librarian to show you how. Search for your favorite authors as most authors have written more than one book.

■ Search for a topic of interest on Amazon.com, the largest catalog of books available.

■ Check college and trade school bookstores. You'll find ideas here that you may not think of otherwise.

■ Most people forget to look for living books related to math. Check this website for ideas: (www.oklahomahomeschool.com/mathreading.html)



with a library of over 3,000 books, I can tell you where I found them. Here goes:

■ Used bookstores. Check frequently to find the best books. The northeast United States is a treasure trove of used bookstores. I found an 1858 copy of *Peter Parley's History of the World* by Samuel Goodrich in Connecticut. I'd love to see this one reprinted. Go to Half Price Books, located all over the U.S. (www.halfprice-books.com/neighborhood_locations.html).

■ Some of the best and least expensive books are found at flea markets, garage sales, auction, library sales, Salvation Army, and Goodwill.

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on the Internet (www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/christian-books.html)
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• Reading A-Z.com (www.readinga-z.com/newfiles/preview.html)

Finally, keep a database of your library collection. Keep one on your computer and one in your palm pilot. Nothing is worse than buying a book you already have! Make this a computer database project for your teen to earn high school credit!

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Finding Living Books

by Cindy Downes

How do you discover which living books to read?

Try these resources:

■ *Best Books for Children, Preschool Through Grade 6*, *Best Books for Junior High Readers*, or *Best Books for Senior High Readers* by John T. Gillespie. These reference books are found at most libraries. Each book contains a list of books that is sorted by age level, topics, and author. What is really helpful is the list by topics. If you are looking for a book to read your child about the Civil War, simply turn to the section on Civil War. You'll find a variety of books listed, including title, author, number of pages, recommended grade level, and a brief description.

■ A printable list of classics and recommended literature for all ages. (www.oklahomahomeschool.com/literature.html)

■ Purchase *Reading Through the Ages* by TRISMS for a list of recommended reading by historical time period. (www.trisms.com/Catalogue/Supplements.htm)

■ Find out what a book is about before reading. Check out *Novel Guide* (www.novelguide.com) or purchase *The Book of Great Books* by W. John Campbell.

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