

Parent Guide to Summer Reading 2017

Parent information is from Common Sense Media unless otherwise noted
www.common sense media.org

Ruby Holler-- There are 2 instances of “Lord” as an exclamation. Florida uses words like “putrid” and “stupid” throughout the book. Several foster families mistreat Dallas and Florida. Mr. Trepid, who runs the orphanage they live in, smacks them when they misbehave. Dallas and Florida’s mother abandons them as babies. They genuinely want a family to call their own, but their behavior always lands them back in the orphanage. Because of their experiences they have a general distrust of adults. A young boy dies while living in the orphanage and Dallas thinks it is his fault. Mr. Trepid is dishonest. (from <http://www.theliteratemother.org>)

Bud, Not Buddy--Parents need to know that this well-crafted and funny tale of an orphan's poignant search for a home will keep readers turning the page. Parents should know that Bud runs away from his abusive foster family. There are frank descriptions of the horrors of the Depression. Written in a strong, compelling voice, it beautifully evokes life for African Americans, especially musicians, in Michigan during the Depression.

The Giver--Parents need to know that Lois Lowry earned the Newbery Medal for *The Giver*, the first of a four-part series that examines a flawed utopian society. The novel has a disturbing scene in which Jonas witnesses his father euthanizing a baby by injecting it with a needle in the head. There are also mild sexual references. But the overall story is riveting -- and the book is one of the most thought-provoking novels for children ever written.

Grade 6

The Cay--Parents need to know that an enthralling story and perfectly tuned language has made this a classic. Beautiful language conveys Philip's journey overcoming his family's racism. The book also gives details of survival and World War II.

City of Ember--Parents need to know that *City of Ember* is an engrossing sci-fi fantasy that features appealing main characters and an intriguing mystery.

No Talking--Parents need to know that there is nothing to be concerned about here, and lots to cheer.

A Wrinkle in Time--Parents need to know that *A Wrinkle in Time* is one of the great works of literature for kids. Besides being an exciting story, its messages of individuality, nonconformity, friendship and courage have inspired generations of readers. This is a great

book for kids who have ever felt "different" or lonely or who have wrestled with loss. It celebrates the power of individuality, bravery, and love.

Out of My Mind--Parents need to know that Coretta Scott King Award-winning author Sharon M. Draper's *Out of My Mind* is narrated by a girl with cerebral palsy who's very intelligent but unable to express herself verbally or physically. When Melody is integrated into some general classes at school, many kids are purposely mean; others, including teachers, are cruel through their assumptions that Melody is incapable of understanding them. With the help of her parents and some supportive friends and teachers, Melody acquires a machine that allows her to communicate better than she ever has before. This gains her a measure of peer acceptance -- but also opens her up to hurt when she realizes she can never really be like everyone else. Ultimately, Melody's self-acceptance, sense of humor, and loving nature are inspiring.

A Crooked Kind of Perfect--There's plenty to love about **A Crooked Kind of Perfect**. Author Urban has a knack for delivering quirky character details with a 10-year-old's spin and creating a storyline that's fresh, a little wacky, yet still plausible. The first-person narration not only keeps the reader engaged in the action but also reveals a vulnerable side to Zoe.

Urban has crafted an atypical framework for a common situation the child who feels like an outsider. In many children's books, the characters experience grueling and sometimes tragic circumstances, with lessons that can be sad or painful. Urban delivers her perfect life lessons with joy, originality and fun.

(<https://bookpage.com/reviews/5397-linda-urban-crooked-kind-perfect#.WU2R6GjyvIV>)

The Jumbies--Corinne La Mer isn't afraid of anything. Not scorpions, not the boys who tease her, and certainly not jumbies. They're just tricksters parents make up to frighten their children. Then one night Corinne chases an agouti all the way into the forbidden forest. Those shining yellow eyes that followed her to the edge of the trees, they couldn't belong to a jumbie. Or could they?

When Corinne spots a beautiful stranger speaking to the town witch at the market the next day, she knows something unexpected is about to happen. And when this same beauty, called Severine, turns up at Corinne's house, cooking dinner for Corinne's father, Corinne is sure that danger is in the air. She soon finds out that bewitching her father, Pierre, is only the first step in Severine's plan to claim the entire island for the jumbies. Corinne must call on her courage and her friends and learn to use ancient magic she didn't know she possessed to stop Severine and save her island home.

With its able and gutsy heroine, lyrical narration, and inventive twist on the classic Haitian folktale "The Magic Orange Tree," *The Jumbies* will be a favorite of fans of *Breadcrumbs*, *A Tale Dark and Grimm*, and *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. - See more at:

<http://algonquinyoungreaders.com/book/jumbies/#sthash.eimnMArM.dpuf>

Soar by Joan Bauer--Jeremiah is the world's biggest baseball fan. He *really* loves baseball and he knows just about everything there is to know about his favorite sport. So when he's told he can't play baseball following an operation on his heart, Jeremiah decides he'll do the next best thing and become a coach.

Hillcrest, where Jeremiah and his father Walt have just moved, is a town known for its championship baseball team. But Jeremiah finds the town caught up in a scandal and about ready to give up on baseball. It's up to Jeremiah and his can-do spirit to get the town – and the team – back in the game. Full of humor, heart, and baseball lore, *Soar* is Joan Bauer at her best. (from <http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25809985-soar>)

El Deafo by CeceBell--Parents need to know that 2015 [Newbery Honor Book](#) *El Deafo* by [Cece Bell](#) is a sweet, funny, and affecting graphic memoir of growing up with a hearing impairment. From kindergarten onward, Cece wants a best friend to call her own, but her deafness and feelings of insecurity sometimes get in her way. She has an unrequited crush on a neighbor boy, and the only strong language is a character saying someone's making her life "hell." In two scenes, adults drink wine and smoke cigarettes.

All Rise for Honorable Perry T Cook--Parents need to know that *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook*, by [Leslie Connor](#) ([Waiting for Normal](#)), is a sympathetic portrayal of life inside a minimum-security prison. There's none of the prison drama typical in popular media -- no violence, no bitter rivalries, no sense of menace. It's an unconventional family of residents reconciling with their troubled pasts and striving for a better future, trying to rise up together. Several residents talk about why they're in prison, including for manslaughter, and most accept responsibility for what they've done. Perry, age 11, who was born and raised in the prison, is wonderfully resilient, doing his best to maintain his integrity and honor with his prison family without disrespecting his new foster family, headed by a man with a dubious claim to the moral high ground.

Year in Life of Complete and Total Genius Stacey Matson--Arthur Bean, soon-to-be a rich and famous author, has set two goals for himself: to win the school writing contest and to win the heart of his secret crush, Kennedy. But his life has had some major twists and turns lately, and the recent loss of his mother definitely complicates things.

Arthur is in turns outrageous, defiant, and unintentionally hilarious as we peek over his shoulder at his reading journals, notes from his long-suffering teachers, his offbeat articles for the school newspaper — even the emails he sends to writing partner Kennedy. *A Year in the Life of a Total and Complete Genius* is a fresh and funny story about a boy whose bad luck can't dampen his spirit — or his love of writing. (from GoodReads.com)

Hidden Oracle--Parents need to know that *The Hidden Oracle* is the first book in a series

that's a spin-off of a Percy Jackson spin-off series. Did you follow that? The [Percy Jackson and the Olympians](#) series came first, then the [Heroes of Olympus](#). It helps to read them both before digging into this first book in the Trials of Apollo series. The storyline picks up after the war at the end of the Heroes of Olympus, and many old favorite characters make cameos or are mentioned. And, for extra credit, reading the Apollo chapter in [Percy Jackson's Greek Gods](#) helps when our "suddenly mortal and very unhappy about it" narrator Apollo recounts key moments of his godly life. There's a lot to learn about mythology here and, on a deeper level, about how a god like Apollo can get corrupted by power throughout his long, immortal life -- the humbling experience of being mortal makes him so much more likable by the end of the book. Expect much of the same kinds of fantasy violence in this story as in past series. Giant ants and a massive automaton statue do the most damage. Teen campers are kidnapped and almost set on fire. Healers in the Apollo cabin take care of injuries, even reattaching one leg, and some tree spirits sacrifice themselves to stop a fire. Apollo mourns lost loves, male and female, including the discus thrower Hyacinthus, who was killed by a discus thanks to a vengeful wind spirit.

The Secret Coders--Parents need to know that *Secret Coders* by [Gene Yang](#) ([Boxers & Saints](#), [American Born Chinese](#)) is a fantasy graphic novel that teaches coding skills to elementary and middle schoolers. The main character, 12-year-old Hopper, feels out of place on her first day at a new school, but in trying to solve various puzzles, she gains confidence and makes new friends. The only violence is an attack by robot birds. This is a fine choice for families looking for books with diverse characters, as Hopper is Asian-American and her new best friend, Eni, appears to be African-American.

Grade 7

I Lived on Butterfly Hill--Parents need to know that *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* is the story of a sixth-grade girl who's sent from her home in Chile to the United States to escape the dangers of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship and then returns two years later to discover her parents are missing. The story's drawn from the experience of author Marjorie Agosin, who was raised in Chile by Jewish parents and moved to the United States when Pinochet took over the country. Agosin won the American Library Association's 2015 Pura Bulpred Award for authors whose work best portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience. *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* features accounts of people "disappearing," Celeste's parents fleeing death threats, her father being imprisoned, and Celeste being homesick in a brand-new country. Over the course of the novel, Celeste the dreamer is transformed into a compassionate teen who wants to help rebuild her country.

Penderwicks in Spring--Parents need to know that [Jeanne Birdsall's](#) *The Penderwicks in Spring* is the fourth in a planned five-part [series](#). There's a lot of strong emotion as main character Batty, who's almost 11, deals with the loss of her mother and of a beloved pet.

The large cast of characters all are great role models, but Batty does try to take the bus by herself into the big city, and she and her younger brother tear up a five-dollar bill and flush it down the toilet.

Phantom Tollbooth --Parents need to know that this is an enduring classic that has charmed readers for more than 50 years. For some younger kids, the academic subject matter may be a little too advanced, and hence boring. Different aspects will appeal to different kids -- some will find the puns hysterical, others will gravitate more to the math or Jules Feiffer's whimsical illustrations. If you're looking for robust, swashbuckling adventure with three-dimensional characters and a fast-moving plot, this is not your book. But if you want a vivid illustration of the perils of jumping to conclusions, *The Phantom Tollbooth* is for you.

The Crossover--Parents need to know that author and poet Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover* is a poignant novel in verse that mixes basketball, family, and coming-of-age themes and includes serious issues regarding adult health and a parent's life-threatening condition. It won the 2015 Newbery Medal and a Coretta Scott King Book Honor, and may inspire a discussion about healthy lifestyle choices and the impact of those choices on people and their loved ones. There's mild name-calling when characters are in the throes of sports-related trash-talking, and sexual content is limited to middle-school crushes and a kiss. The novel offers a positive example of a loving, intact family with active, involved parents and uses adult characters to provide a guiding influence.

Wonder--Parents need to know that *Wonder* is about young boy, August Pullman, who has a congenital facial abnormality. After being homeschooled, he enters school for the first time in fifth grade and has to cope with a range of reactions to his unusual appearance, as well as a lot of typical middle school drama. Some kids use hateful language, and some people suggest that Auggie is mentally deficient. These situations are upsetting, as are other hardships that Auggie's family endures, including loss of a beloved family pet. However, goodness wins out, and readers should find it inspiring and uplifting. A high school couple kisses a few times, and Auggie observes some seventh-grade kids smoking, but it's not clear whether they're smoking cigarettes or pot. Read by Nick Podehl, Kate Rudd, and Diana Steele in the audiobook version, which the American Library Association named a 2013 Notable Children's Recording.

Million Dollar Throw--Parents need to know that although this book will mostly satisfy sports lovers and football fanatics, it has a strong plot about Nate helping his best friend Abby deal with the onset of blindness. It also deals with how kids and parents both learn to deal with stress and the unavoidable problems that arise in life. For kids whose parents have faced job loss and for everyone else who knows someone that has been impacted by the economy, this book may help them accept the changes that come.

Hope Was Here--Hope's mother abandoned her to Aunt Addie when Hope was just a baby and makes only a couple of brief appearances in Hope's life. Hope's father is unknown – even her mother claims not to know who he is. G.T. has leukemia and faces an uncertain future. At the end of the story, Hope must come to terms with G.T.'s passing. Braverman is assaulted by thugs working for the corrupt mayor's political campaign. He is beaten up pretty badly, but none of the violence is described. (from <https://ageappropriate.wordpress.com>)

Absolutley Almost--Parents need to know that *Absolutely Almost* follows in popular author Lisa Graff's tradition of interconnected plot threads and light, upbeat stories resting atop deeper issues. In this case, 10-year-old Albie struggles with living up to his parents' expectations, coping with mean kids at school, dealing with change, and figuring out what he's more than *almost* good at. Along the way he has quite a few adventures -- usually with his babysitter, Calista -- that broaden his horizons, teach him new skills, and get him into trouble -- such as the time he doesn't want to face the mean kids at school, so he and Calista go to the zoo instead. Many kids will relate to his difficulties, appreciate his triumphs, and laugh at the gentle humor. (If they've missed the *Captain Underpants* series, Albie's enthusiasm for it may steer them in that direction.)

Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library-- Parents need to know that even readers as reluctant as protagonist Kyle will see libraries in a new light as they follow his adventures in *Escape From Mr. Lemoncello's Library* by Chris Grabenstein, co-author with James Patterson of *I Funny: A Middle School Story*. Solving riddles, working out puzzles, and navigating the Dewey Decimal System all play a role in this fun tale, not to mention homages to everything from *The Phantom Tollbooth* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to reality TV, and dozens of book references designed to delight kids who already know them and entice those who don't. Mean kids get their comeuppance; friendship, ingenuity, and teamwork are big here, as are Kyle's gaming skills. Occasional brief mentions of a video game involving crashes as well as flying -- and sometimes flaming -- squirrels that bite their victims on the butt.

Eragon--Parents need to know that the idea that a teen wrote this will be fascinating to many children, and it may inspire some to try their own hand at writing. The story does include some rather gory violence, however, including beheadings, torture, and piles of dead bodies.

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry--Parents need to know that Mildred D. Taylor's Newbery Award-winning *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is a lyrical, compelling story of 9-year-old narrator, Cassie Logan, and her family in Depression-era Mississippi. The 2016, 40th anniversary edition (pictured here) features cover art by Caldecott Honor-winner Kadir Nelson and an introduction by Jacqueline Woodson. The story builds to a fiery climax and

features violence motivated by racial prejudice. A family is threatened by a white neighbor and by fire; a mob threatens people; three men are set on fire; children are whipped by teacher and parents; a teen boy is beaten by some older men; one man is shot; and there are vague references to rape. It's a meaningful tale of one family's struggle to keep their small piece of land and maintain their dignity under extremely challenging circumstances.

Dead End in Norvelt--Parents need to know that this book is filled with comic violence and unlikely scenarios, but it also includes an overriding theme of the importance of social justice. Current or former Girl Scouts may be bothered by the fact that a friend of Jack's sells Girl Scout cookies in order to earn money for herself.

Grade 8

Roller Girl--Parents need to know that Victoria Jamieson's 2016 Newbery Honor book, *Roller Girl*, is a graphic novel about how things change for Astrid during the summer between fifth and sixth grades. Against the backdrop of a roller-derby day camp, the book explores themes of friendship, working hard for something you really want, being a team player, and being ready for how much more complicated life becomes as you grow up. Violence is all on the rink, with elbow and hip checks shown. Sportsmanship, fair play, and being a contributing part of a team are all emphasized. Boy-girl dynamics are briefly touched on when Astrid wonders if a boy and girl she sees are on a date and whether they'll kiss. Astrid's a great model for sticking with something when it's hard and for learning how to be a better friend. All adults are great role models. There's some name-calling; the strongest language is a few mentions of Astrid's nickname at school, "Ass-turd."

I am Mala--Parents need to know that *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up For Education and Changed the World* is a memoir by Malala Yousafzai, co-written with Patricia McCormick. Malala was born in Pakistan in 1997 and became a household word in 2012, when she was shot at point-blank range by a member of the Taliban on her way home from school for advocating education for girls. She later was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and now lives in England with her family because it's not safe for them to return to Pakistan. Malala tells of being inspired at a young age to stand up for what was right, encouraged by her schoolteacher father; of the scary realities of life under the Taliban; and of squabbles with her brothers and tiffs with her friends as she becomes a symbol for the right of girls (and all kids) to get an education. She doesn't remember anything about being shot, and there's little gory detail. The underlying violence of life in Pakistan, particularly against people the Taliban don't approve of, looms throughout and may be too much for sensitive kids. It's an inspiring first-person story of what one teen can accomplish -- and what it costs her and her loved ones.

Zeus King of the Gods--Parents need to know that *Zeus: King of the Gods* is the first in a 12-book graphic-novel series that highlights one Greek god at a time. Zeus' rise to power

was a violent power struggle with crashing mountains and gargantuan Titans trying to take out the Olympians. Who wouldn't want to oust the father that ate your other siblings whole? Zeus travels to Tartaros and fights some creepy mythical creatures too. Sexual content is heavy on the innuendo when Zeus flirts with Metis. Plus giant Titans aren't clothed (really, how could they be?); private areas are well obscured with shading, how ever. A generous appendix provides profiles of the gods, a discussion guide, extra storytelling behind specific panels, and a bibliography.

Sisters Raina--Parents need to know that *Sisters*, the follow-up to author-illustrator Raina Telgemeir's previous graphic novel memoir, *Smile*, is a funny, affectionate examination of family dynamics and sibling rivalry. Raina, Amara, and their younger brother, Will, are presented as a believable set of siblings with competing interests and different foibles. Their expressions and reactions are sometimes overstated, but that's all in tune with the comics format. There's no objectionable content.

They Changed the World: Bell Edison Telsa--Three lives, one epic story. Find out how Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison and Nicola Tesla changed the world we live in forever. Three men, three great minds and three completely different approaches to science. Find out how these men tamed the forces of science in order to share its power with the world. As their paths cross, a rivalry grows. The men who revolutionized the fields of light, sound and vision compete with each other to become the leading genius of the age. (from GoodReads.com)

Explorer: The Hidden Door--A bullied boy discovers a door guarded by a sly monster . . . A painting of a door opens in a forgotten Egyptian tomb . . . A portal in the park promises to turn you into a much cooler version 2.0—if you can just get the bugs out . . . Edited by *New York Times* bestselling comics creator Kazu Kibuishi, who is also a contributor, the third volume in this highly praised series gathers some of the foremost and fastest-rising talents in comics for kids: Jen Wang (*Koko Be Good*), Johane Matte (*Explorer: The Mystery Boxes*), Steve Hamaker (colorist of Jeff Smith's *Bone* series), Faith Erin Hicks (*Friends with Boys*), Doug Holgate (*Zack Proton* series), and Jason Caffoe (*Explorer: The Lost Islands and Flight*). Readers may never walk into a room the same way again. (from GoodReads.com)

Sounder--Parents need to know that this Newbery Award winner is not a heartwarming dog story, as the title and cover may indicate. Rather, it is the story of a boy's struggle to find his father, his dog, and his own identity in a racist world that is harsh, lonely, and violent at times. Written in the late '60s, some of the characterizations seem stereotypical, but the language is simple and strong -- almost poetic -- and the story is good. Several editions of the book have been reprinted, and it was made into a well-received 1972 movie starring Cicely Tyson and an updated 2003 Disney movie starring Paul Winfield.

Wednesday War by Gary Schmidt--Parents need to know that Newbery Honor Book *The Wednesday Wars*, by Gary D. Schmidt, is a poignant coming-of-age story involving the funny misadventures of Long Island, New York seventh-grader Holling Hoodhood and his unlikely discovery of Shakespeare in the turbulent academic year of 1967-68. There are two references to middle school students smoking, and a scene of two rats run over by a bus.

Counting by 7's--Parents need to know that *Counting by 7s* is an exceptional novel that deals with a death and grief. The 12-year-old protagonist, Willow Chance, is a genius outsider whose parents are killed in a car crash as the book begins, but the accident's not described in graphic detail. The only blood in the book appears when Willow faints and cuts her head on a table. Positive role models abound in this heartwarming story that shows how grief feels but is ultimately a celebration of the indomitable human spirit. And though it's marketed to kids as young as 10, it could appeal to teens, as well, as it tackles complex feelings and issues of fitting in and features two compelling teen characters.

Stargirl--Parents need to know that Stargirl is a sort of supernatural character who is difficult to encapsulate, despite her classmates' repeated attempts to pigeonhole her. Few parents will have objections to the content, but there is one scene in particular where Stargirl's peers verbally attack her on a television show. A romantic relationship also develops between the two main characters, but it's completely innocent. Every middle schooler should read and discuss this -- and, fortunately, many of them do.

All Middle School

A Single Bead by Stephanie Engleman--On the anniversary of the plane crash that took the life of her beloved grandmother and threw her own mother into a deep depression, 16-year-old Katelyn Marie Roberts discovers a single bead from her grandmothers rosary-a rosary lost in the crash. A chance encounter with a stranger, who tells Katelyn that a similar bead saved her friends life, launches Katelyn and her family on a mysterious journey filled with glimmers of hope, mystical events and unexplained graces. (by Pauline Media and Books)

7 Riddles to Nowhere by AJ Cattapan ***

<http://catholicmom.com/2016/09/06/book-notes-goes-middle-school-7-riddles-nowhere/>

The Perfect Blindside by Leslea Wahl***--He's an egotistical snowboarder with a silver medal.She's a judgmental honors student with a flair for photography.Slashed tires.... False accusations.... A coded message.... When all they can see is each other's flaws, how can Jake and Sophie work together to figure out what's really been happening at the abandoned silver

mine? Follow Sophie and Jake into secret tunnels as they unravel the mystery and challenge each other to become who God wants them to be. (from Goodreads)

8 Notes to a Nobody--Cynthia Toney***--Anonymous sticky-notes, a scheming bully, and a ruined summer send fourteen-year-old Wendy down a trail of secrets and self-discovery. Wendy Robichaud doesn't care one bit about being popular like her good-looking classmates Tookie and the Sticks—until Brainiac bully John-Monster schemes against her, and someone leaves anonymous sticky-note messages all over school. Even the best friend she always counted on, Jennifer, is hiding something and pulling away. But the Spring Program, abandoned puppies, and high school track team tryouts don't leave much time to play detective. When secrets and failed dreams kick off the summer after eighth grade, will Jennifer still be around to support her as high school starts in the fall? Using humor and offering hope, this story for tweens and young teens delicately addresses issues of bullying, eating disorders, imperfect families, and teen suicide. (Goodreads.com)

Sunflowers in Hurricane by Anne Faye***--

"Sunflowers in a Hurricane is a wholesome and inspiring novel, one that I highly recommend for teens and adults alike." - Laura Pearl, author of "Finding Grace" and "Erin's Ring" "Unlike other books that might be described as 'wholesome,' 'Sunflowers' is not cloyingly sweet. Bad things happen to good people, and faith doesn't automatically make life daisies and roses."- Amazon Reviewer George Ferguson, an elderly gentleman, still misses his beloved wife who died in childbirth many years before. Cheryl Callahan is an angry single mother who left her home and her faith after high school and never looked back. Her teenage daughter Ruth chafes under her mother's rules and resents having to travel from Ohio to Massachusetts to bury a grandmother she didn't even know. When Cheryl and Ruth move next door to George, the older man and young girl form an unlikely friendship as all three are forced to face the past in order to create a new future. (From GoodReads.com)

Genius Under Construction by Marilee Haines--Gabe Carpenter - St. Jude Academy's resident genius - is back for his final year of middle school. Some things have certainly changed from last year: his "locker-won't-open" days seem to be over, his rolling backpack has been replaced by his grandpa's briefcase, he's now the basketball team's official analyst, and he, along with all of the other eighth graders, are allowed to sit on "The Rock." Other things have stayed exactly the same: Gabe has yet to figure out girls (especially his second best friend and crush, Maya), he's still in that class for gifted students, and his embarrassing bodily functions continue to well, embarrass him.

On the cusp of graduation, this eighth grade status brings some inescapable realities. Gabe, along with all of the other graduating students, must complete fifteen hours of community service. Thinking his talents would be best used in service to others academically, he picks tutoring. But when he finds out he will be working with a student who has a learning disability, things become a bit more complicated than expected.

At home, an envelope with an unfilled application to Carolina Science and Math High School is shoved in the bottom of his closet. With the deadline quickly approaching, Gabe is being pressured by his parents, grandma, and the memory of his dead grandpa to make a decision of whether or not to apply. He loves science, but is he willing to leave his friends behind to go there next year? Leave Maya? At least Gabe can still turn to St. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, to help him along the way...(from Pauline Books and Media)

The Locket's Secrets by K Kellye Hene--Readers of realistic fiction and individuals who enjoy fairytale and adventure stories or are dealing with life-altering events will connect with Carrie, the main character.

Incorporating Catholic faith and values, parents and teachers will find that this novel offers middle-graders wholesome and engaging reading.

Opening with Carrie, her two brothers, and her parents driving away from their former lives in Washington, Carrie cannot help but enter into a world of daydreams. Escaping from the reality of moving to Wisconsin--away from her best friend, Meg, and memories of someone else dear to her heart--Carrie becomes Princess Caritas, a spirited heroine who battles armed forces to protect her family. Filled with courageous escapes, bonds of loyalty, blossoming friendships, and a devoted bodyguard, the world of Princess Caritas is the ideal getaway from real life. But this imaginary distraction is only a temporary fix to a secret loss that both Caritas and Carrie must face.

Back in real life, homeschooled Carrie hides herself in the fiction of Tolkien and the poetry of Chesterton. She questions God about why he took so much away from her. Attempts to befriend her are largely unsuccessful. It seems that the only real comfort Carrie can get is from a mysterious heart-shaped locket.

What does this locket mean to Carrie? Who gave it to her? Whose picture is inside it? Enter into both stories and discover the locket's secret (from Pauline Books and Media)

Believe: The Victorious Story of Eric LeGrand (not My Faith and Tackle--that is adult version)--*Believe* is the profoundly moving story of Eric LeGrand, the former defensive tackle for the Rutgers University Scarlet Knights football team, who suffered a severe spinal cord injury and was left paralyzed by a crushing on-field tackle during a heated game with Army. A remarkable true account of a courageous young athlete whose unshakable faith, spirit, positive outlook, and rousing motto, "BELIEVE!" would serve as inspiration to legions of fans—and as motivation in his own quest to walk again—Eric's story has received national attention, heavily covered by ESPN and *Sports Illustrated*. It will lift the hearts of every reader, not least of all those who were affected by quarterback Tim Tebow's bestselling memoir, *Through My Eyes*. (GoodReads.com)