

Summer Book Corners

One of the great pleasures of summer is reading. Books are eminently portable and there is something for every generation and curiosity.

A Book Corner welcomes people and invites them to linger. It offers people a connection between their visit to the church building and the rest of the week. Creating a special Summer Book Corner is easy. You only need a bookcase, a chair or two, a lamp, and, perhaps, a couple of floor cushions.

Stock your bookshelves with books that are fun. Consider having some audio books and music too. Here are just a few suggestions to get you started. They are in no particular order and are a mixture of titles, authors, and topics.

For young children look for books like *Old Turtle*, titles by Brian Wildsmith, Mark Bozzuti-Jones, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Walter Wangerin, Jr., and other authors who tell stories well and leave space for children to imagine, *Does God Have A Big Toe* by Marc Gellman (for all ages). Look for engaging illustrations. A great children's book will be something an adult looks forward to reading aloud and children look forward to reading to themselves.

For older children and youth look for books that help them dream. Madeleine L'Engle, some of the "Choose Your Own Adventure" books, books about people their age in different cultures, Harry Potter, J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Message" for a new way to hear Bible stories, biographies of historic figures that are about who the people were rather than a list of dates and events.

For adults look for liturgical mysteries, the Mitford series, Marcus Borg, any of the Cowley Cloister Books, C.S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle, biographies of genuinely interesting people, J. C. Polkinghorne. collections of short stories and essays, poetry, "inquirers" resources.

Many of the best books will be found on home bookshelves. If you invite people to donate favorites to the Corner, please give them some criteria to use in picking books to share and ask them to include an index card with something about the book that really caught their attention – not a full review, but a "this book is great/I really enjoyed this book because it made me smile/it was a comfort book/it challenged me/it surprised me/etc. Also check publishers like Paraclete Press, Episcopal Media Center, Church Publishing, Eerdmans, and Forward Movement for new titles and special offers. There is probably a stack of catalogues in the church office that you can look through for ideas.

Make sure your Book Corner is highly visible and has a big poster with guidelines for borrowing things – how many things at a time and for how long, how to fill out the item's index card. Make sure every book or CD has a brightly colored label with the church's name and address and an index card with the title of the book or recording on which the borrower can put their name and telephone or email.

Above all have fun. It is summer.