



## RAR 54 – Sharing Experiences Through Stories, James Daniels

**Sarah:** You're listening to the Read Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that inspires you to build your family culture around books.

Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here for episode 54 of the Read Aloud Revival podcast. Thank you for tuning in to today's podcast episode, so glad you're here. We have some really exciting new things happening at Read Aloud Revival. Have you seen? I'm not going to tell you more about it on the show but if you haven't been to [ReadAloudRevival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com) lately, you should go look, so you can see what I'm so excited about. And while you're there make sure you're signed up for our free Read Aloud Booklist. You'll also get our VIP emails that go out every Tuesday morning and those let you in behind the scenes at Read Aloud Revival headquarters. I get notes all the time from readers who tell me that they squeal out loud or clap their hands or check their email first thing on Tuesday mornings because they know I'm sending them an email and it's their favorite email they get, so I love it when we hear that from readers. You can get it on it too, for free. Head to [ReadAloudRevival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com), see what it's all about, check out what we've got going on there now, and put your email in to get the booklist.

### 1:30 Introducing James Daniels

James Daniels is passionate about many things; his family, his church, good food, gardening, and education. More specifically, he's driven to make sense of educational philosophy and share his experience and knowledge with others. He does that as an education consultant and speaker, pulling from his previous work as the Head of the

upper school at a private school in Alabama. James has a Master's Degree in Education, has served as a consultant to more than 35 liberal arts schools and has spoken at national conferences, such as the Circe Institute National Conference earlier this year where I had the good pleasure of hearing him for the first time. I was blown away by what he had to say about education, the richness of what he shared, and I know you will be too, so I'm just thrilled to introduce you today to James Daniels. James, welcome to the Read Aloud Revival, thank you so much for coming on the show.

**James:** I appreciate you inviting me on the show. There's a lot of things that you do in your ministry that just make me very excited about what's going on in education, so thank you for that.

**Sarah:** Well, before we jump in do you want to tell us just a little bit about your family and what you do there in Alabama?

**James:** It's one of my favorite subjects to talk about. My daughter is going to turn 16 this week, my wife (like me) is from Arkansas, her name is Lorissa, my daughter's Alexandria, we did name her after the library of Alexandria in Egypt.

**Sarah:** Oh, you did?

**James:** You can thank my wife for that, I'm going to give her a lot of credit for a lot of things, in regard to what we're talking about today.

### 3:30 Memorable read-aloud

**Sarah:** OK, so what kind of books did you share with her as she was growing up that stand out to you as being particularly warm memories?

**James:** Yes, this is a deceptive question because my wife and I were reflecting on that just a few weeks ago. We were always readers, we all read



a lot of books to her, but none really stuck out. And I talked to my daughter and I said, “Man, I just remember doing a lot of reading, but I don’t remember one specific book or what were some books that maybe stand out to you?” so I think the litmus test of our reading is not how well put together our curriculum is or our lesson plans are, but maybe what our kids remember.

**Sarah:** Oh, that’s good.

**James:** And I was very impressed by the ones that made an impact on her because the list surprised me a little bit. The first thing she mentioned was Aesop’s Fables.

**Sarah:** Really?

**James:** Yeah. That, and Frog and Toad were right behind that.

**Sarah:** Oh, that’s so great.

**James:** Isn’t that rich? There’s definitely a connection between animals as characters and one of the things we were talking about, I guess the Chronicles of Narnia were a huge part of her upbringing. Again, there’s that same pattern of characters and animals that represent a higher reality, and one of the things that my daughter’s was talking about a lot was, she said, “I love the fact that I saw the Gospel story in that but it didn’t feel preachy” and so I love that. She actually wrote an essay this week in her writing class on C. S. Lewis and his use in The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe of allegory.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I remember when I was chatting with Caroline Liloglou about the genre of fantasy, one of the things she was talking about was how fantasy strips away a lot of the things that distract us when we’re reading about humans, or a story set in reality, and helps to see this truth almost crystallized.

**James:** A great conversation, because everything about what we’re encountering in a daily life if we’re Christians and we’re folks that want to reach for something more than the mundane, we’ve got to learn to enter into those things but immediately go to something that makes sense and gives us purpose in those experiences, so fantasy moves us immediately without distracting us from too many mundane details but at the same time, I see a lot of books now that are an escape from reality versus moving you from the mundane reality, because C. S. Lewis, he’s talking about woods and the trees and the water and all those things, even in his space trilogy, he’s not moving you to other worldliness where he’s causing you to escape from reality, but there’s something about it that’s asking you to look at reality in the mundane and the ordinary world around you and think a little harder, a little higher about those things, and I think a lot of the books that do that are the books that over time become classics.

**Sarah:** Are you familiar with the work of N. D. Wilson?

**James:** I’m not.

**Sarah:** OK, so N. D. Wilson has written a few books for adults, like Notes From The Tiltawhirl and Death by Living which are non-fiction, gorgeous books.

**James:** Yes, I’ve heard of those.

**Sarah:** And then he’s written some amazing fantasy books for kids, including The Hundred Covers, and in episode 44, I chatted with him about what it was like to write fantasy, especially creepy, scary fantasy, which is what he writes, from a Christian perspective, and one of the things that really struck me is how he talked about how truly good fantasy isn’t an escape



from this world, it helps you live in this world and see the magic around you in this world more clearly. I thought that was so beautiful.

**James:** And I think Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, they are really stoked about that idea. I think this is the importance why Harry Potter had to start in the real British world because nobody would believe it if it started at Hogwart's, and the same thing with, I think Tolkien does a masterful job. If he started with Gandolf, you wouldn't have a place to enter into the story. He enters into the story with hobbits, that's our entry point. People that are planting gardens, they're living in an ordinary world and I can't remember who it was, but someone said something about, in the past it would take ordinary people and they would put them in a divine reality, nowadays folks are starting with a divine reality and trying to move to the mundane world and they're disappointed with it.

**Sarah:** I had never thought of that, but that's true of N. D. Wilson's 100 Cupboard series, he starts with an ordinary boy living in a very rural ordinary town, I think it's called Henry, Kansas. He wakes up to the magic around him.

**James:** Yeah.

## 8:00 The power of metaphor

**Sarah:** So, I know that when you were speaking, one of the things you said, when I heard you at the conference, was that the more metaphors we bathe our kids in the better. So, why is that? Tell me about metaphor, because that feels like it ties in here to what we're talking about with the divine elements of story.

**James:** You are spot on there, Sarah, because what poets do, good poets what they do is take an ordinary experience of what you encounter

and move you up to something divine, they exalt those experiences and they ennoble those experiences, they move you to an ecstasy, and they tell you that these are heavenly type experiences, but at the same time they don't stop there, and they enter back into the world and this is incarnational. Metaphor is what they do is move us in the same way of saying that I'm taking an ordinary experience, I'm building an abstract connection to something else that you normally wouldn't put together but I'm saying it in such a way that I'm bringing you back down and I'm using something as an analogy of something that everyone recognizes and experiences that will communicate well and so, traditionally education has been about how can we teach kids to approach something to not only analyze it but synthesize it for meaning and purpose, being able to communicate that well in a very vivid and clarified way versus creating kids that have experiences that are frustrated and are angst because they can't communicate them well, because kids are seeing more than what their senses are accounting for because they're made in the image of God, and metaphor and surrounding with metaphor gives them the tools and the ability to express what's going on and cultivate that from an early age.

**Sarah:** Would you agree then, that a good story is a metaphor? So when we are bathing our kids in metaphors we're giving them lots of poetry and stories?

**James:** Absolutely, that's why I say literature and poetry have always been the hallmarks of just great education and just what is a homeschool setting or school setting because it cultivates something that is a deep need in the human psyche, if you want to call it that, or the human soul, to be able to make sense of the world



around me, to be able to communicate well, and then ultimately, be able to contribute to the conversation that's around me, as I'm communing with other human beings.

**Sarah:** Ah, so good. OK, so as we're thinking about stories and metaphors and poetry and ways to give this gift to our children, one of the things that I've noticed lately is kind of elitism in book choices. I think a lot of intentional parents, we have the good intentions of giving our kids the best stories that we can find because we have good intentions there, but sometimes we get caught up in choosing just exactly the right books instead of, sort of, spreading this wide feast instead of being elitist about "we read these kinds of books but not those kinds of books."

**James:** Oh yes.

**Sarah:** I read the Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction earlier this year and was just ...

**James:** Yeah, that's a good book.

**Sarah:** You've read it? OK.

**James:** Yes.

**Sarah:** I pulled out one of his quotes actually. He says "For heaven's sake don't turn reading into the intellectual equivalent of eating organic greens or, shifting the metaphor slightly, some fearfully disciplined appointment with an elliptical trainer of the mind, in which you count words or pages the way some people fix their attention on the calories burned read out, some insidious taxing exercise that allows you to look back on your conquest of Middlemarch with grim satisfaction. How depressing. This kind of thing is not reading at all but what C. S. Lewis once called 'social and ethical hygiene.'" And then he says, "Read what gives you delight, at least most of the time, and do so without shame. And even if

you are that rare sort of person who is delighted chiefly by what some people call great books don't make them your study intellectual diet anymore than you would eat at the most elegant of restaurants every day." How would you help a mom finding herself worried about her kids not reading primarily the classics, let's just say? Let's say they have some classics in school, whether they go to school or they're being homeschooled, but they're also reading a lot of lighter stuff on their own or together as a family. Can you speak to that a little bit?

## 12:00 Finding the best books

**James:** Absolutely. I mean, I love the analogy there because I think all the great analogies for education are found in food and eating. It's just like if we were going to put the pressure on our family to eat a grand feast every single night. It would be like if we're going to eat in the same way we would do for special celebrations, every single day. I mean, that would break our backs. Whether it's a school or at home, the most important element out of that is intentionality, is the book that you're selecting is really something you've thought through by way of being purposeful for your child and this setting, where they are, or did you grab it off a booklist of someone telling you if we all read the best books that we've ever been exposed to what would that look like, and so a lot of us, we kill ourselves by trying to be the most excellent. I like the word you used, in an elitist way. I mean, there's a lot of good lists out there. There's the Great Books List, there's a Good Book's List, written by a few people for early on. But when I talk to parents, when I talk to schools that are talking about curriculum type decisions, I tell them my biggest fear is not what books you read and don't read,



my biggest fear is that you're not taking the book's intentionally for what you're specifically wanting to train and what you're specifically wanting to use to nourish your child's soul at this point in time.

**Sarah:** I love that because it helps us remember that our kids aren't projects, so we're not just filling them with these certain books because we want it. They're not like a recipe, "poof" if we fill our children with these certain books and they're going to come out thinking just the right way, or just as exactly as we hoped they would. They're humans, and they're images of God, and so it's more like a feeding and a nurturing rather than a putting in the right ingredients and hoping that they come out just the way we hoped, right. One of the things you said at the conference is that education is a leaving out, and so I wrote this down word for word because I was so moved by it, you said that "our role as teachers (and I would extend this and say our role as parents then), is to create an atmosphere that says, "Do you trust me? Take my hand we're going to go somewhere cool." And I thought, 'Oh my goodness, that is what we do when we open a book with our kids' we say, "Do you trust me? C'mon, let's dive in together, we're going to go and see something really cool."

**James:** I love that and I think it's mutual respect, mutual trust because we're talking about people. As teachers, we're human beings that are trying to dignify other human beings but I'd take a step back from that and the way that people enter into a trusting relationship is by way of sharing experiences, and so for our children, our shared experiences are not intrinsically around the fact that I happen to be their dad or their parent and they're my child and that we have this natural bond. I think a lot of times that we need to go

back to something deeper or that we're all human beings, and so what are the shared experiences that we all have that we can draw off of and come to this together, and I don't want to say peer to peer, because it sounds like I'm striking at the authority of the parent or the teacher. I don't mean it that way. But I do know that when my daughter sees me in a real state of wonderment and I'm enraptured by what I'm about to talk to her about, or on the other hand if she comes in and she's just excited about what she's about to tell me, immediately, I'm engaged in that. That's the first step. The second step is what I'm about to share, what she's about to share, corresponds to reality. And I think that's where trust is born, not only that we've been someone that they can trust by way of a model of a virtue and the way we treat them, but also in regard to not losing that curiosity and that wonder, and as kids see that we're excited and we haven't been jaded and we're doing the hard work and we're anticipating it too, that's contagious.

**Sarah:** Yeah, it's more like being allies, I guess. I like how you said it doesn't really usurp your authority because we kind of have that natural, I think, as parents who go, "Wait! I can't be peer to peer with my child because I'm not my child's friend first and foremost, I'm their parent." That really resonated with me because what I feel like in my own home is that when I create this atmosphere when it's more like a book club and less like a teacher-student relationship when it comes to reading books together, we're kind of hooking arms to jump in and just dialogue about this book together. There's a whole different interaction. The richness of our conversations and our experience of reading that book together is so much richer than it is when I take on the role of 'I'm going to teach you all the good things you



should think about this book we're about to read.'

**James:** Right. We live out on several acres right outside of Birmingham and I think about the moments when I walk outside and we had this big loggerhead turtle walking across our pasture, the thing was huge, and I'm running in the house, "You've got to see this before he gets to where he's going and hides so we can't see it" but the same excitement, I think, is not a different excitement than when I'm entering into whatever I'm teaching, especially with books, it's the same experience, it's the same human approach to things of saying, "Listen, there's something in this that I'm excited about and we need to see together." And I tell parents and teachers all the time, if you can't bring that excitement about that book or about the reading that you're about to do, and of course, there are days we're tired, that's not what I'm saying, I'm saying in general, if you can't bring that to the table, then why are you reading it in the first place, because this is the difference between, I think, engaging teaching and teaching out of duty. And again, I don't want to present this paradigm like every day we read these things or we read these books and there's times that I've read or my wife has read to my daughter that we're just worn out at night, but the other side to it is that there has to be, at some level, that trust comes from the fact that 'If you really want me to love this, I need to know that you love it yourself.'

## 18:20 Reading for understanding vs. analysis

**Sarah:** That brings me right to the next thing I wanted to ask you about which is the difference between reading for understanding versus reading for analysis ...

**James:** Right.

**Sarah:** ... and you talked about this at Circe and I would love for you to share it with our listeners.

**James:** I can't take credit for that. There's a gentleman out of Regents that spoke to a friend of mine about that concept that he brought it to the table when I hired him in Memphis, and we talked about that a lot. It made sense to me of what happened after the 16th/17th century in history and that is that we began to stop asking what impact that things could have upon us and we started saying how can I use this for my own personal goals? And so C. S. Lewis says in, I think it's the Weight of War, he talks about the idea that in the past the mark of the wise man was to conform his soul to the divine total reality around him, and I'm paraphrasing here, but the mark of the wise man in the modern world has been that we try to take total reality and conform it to our own souls. We're saying, "I've got to take this book because I'm trying to create this great curriculum," or our children say, "I need to know what you want me to learn from this, content wise, so I can take the test and pass it."

**Sarah:** Right.

**James:** And so that would be overstanding where I'm entering to a book and say, "What can I do with it?" Understanding would be more along the lines of, I walk into a situation, I'm saying, "What is this trying to tell me?" whether it's a piece of art work or it's a book, what is the author saying? Aristotle said, "It's the mark of a wise man to entertain a thought without accepting it." Our children, even we walk into a situation, and we're immediately wanting to assert our opinion or own personal preferences about the book, and I've been there numerous times in the light of different children, including my own, to say,



“What do you think of the book?” “I didn’t like it.” “I didn’t ask you about you, I asked you about the book. What is the author trying to say? Is it noble? Is it valid?” So a lot of times it has to do with submitting to the fact that someone has created something here, whether it’s a piece of music or art or a book, they’ve created something trying to express something well, for a moment I’m going to suspend my agenda of whether I like it or not, what is it about this that made them create it, that gave them the passion to say these things, what are they saying? And so that can take a couple of forms. One is that I think we’re too quick to try to critique and teach our kids to try and find the information or in some philosophical way jump to that conclusion.

**Sarah:** Like break it apart, take it apart.

**James:** Yes, take it apart, what’s the plot, the theme? All the literary criticism, same thing with poetry we’re trying to get them to dissect it. What I’m talking about is something that may be a little different, and that is I pick up a book and look at the cover, Mortimer Adler talked about the idea of how to read a book and one of the first things he said was look at the cover, look at the back, what’s the blurb, what’s written on the outside? Look at the Table of Contents, skip to the back. Just approaching a book in that way on a complicated level but just for kids, one of my favorite books I wish I would have had is when my daughter was younger is Owl Moon and what I love about the book is it is so well done by way of illustrations and there’s just so much that’s just for writing a feast for a soul is laid before you before you even open the book. That’s the type of approach I’m talking about where we’re saying, “I’m not going to immediately try to jump to what I can get glean from this book as much as putting myself under like there’s something presented to

my senses that I want to set under the feet of this person, and saying, “What is it that you have to say?” because that is not only a reading skill, that’s a life skill.

## 22:45 Building empathy through reading

**Sarah:** Yes, so much. I was just thinking, ‘This is really teaching the art of listening and empathy’ because when we read a book thinking we’re going to analyze it, especially if we say you have to write a book report on this, and so the child immediately starts tearing apart the different parts of the plot or the theme or the character or whatever.

**James:** Right.

**Sarah:** They come at it from such a ‘I’m standing over you’ type mentality or thinking about what they’re going to say next, kind of like when we’re having an argument with our spouse and we’re forming our argument while the other person’s talking instead of actually listening to what they say...

**James:** Right, exactly.

**Sarah:** ... so when we open a book to say, “What do you have to tell me today?” and just what do you have to speak to me we’re practicing the art of listening and empathy getting ourselves into someone else’s shoes and looking at the world from their point of view.

**James:** And that’s a great way to put it. I love that analogy. There is a time and place and I don’t want to put it as if we’re trying to come up with this idea that you don’t have to talk about plot and characters and define dynamic character and flat character and all that, that’s not what I’m saying. It’s not an either or. Let’s not put the cart



before the horse. Let's start with the whole in the listening and the submission and the empathy and then we'll move to the analysis, we will get to those questions, but after that, let's come back around and say, "Looking back of your first encounter of just seeing overall an analysis, let's synthesize that for meaning and purpose, and if you really explain this book or the truths that you learned to someone else what would that look like?"

**Sarah:** So, a question that we often hear from our listeners is how to determine which books to assign our kids to read versus which books to read with them and how to choose what we're reading. Do you have some thoughts on that you could share with us?

**James:** Absolutely. I talk to so many people that ask that question about what books should I read to my child, and I say, "What specific goal do you have this year at this age for your child by way of the skills that you want them to learn, by way of the ideas you want to present to them, and then what specific knowledge are you wanting them, how does this tie into knowledge?" I think all three of those, especially at an early age in that sequence and so when people give me a list of books that I need to go through, the first question I'm asking is, "Why this order of books?" and "Why these books?" and I think we need to get better about being intentional, and that is, we have a paradigm with saying, "I have certain goals in relation to my child, these students, in terms of skills, ideas, and knowledge, that I want them to leave this year with, what are those?" and then "What books would be most conducive to cultivating those sensibilities, those habits and that understanding this year."

## 25:30 Curriculum as a path

**Sarah:** Oh, that's so good, because that takes the parent or teacher and has them look at the child first rather than the curriculum first. It's as if we putting our child through this 4th grade curriculum and this 4th grade set of books that we were going to read with our 4th graders but we kind of shuttled our kids through, we look at the child first as this image of God as this whole person and say, "What do you need to feed you?" and we use books as a tool to teach the child instead of the other way around, right?

**James:** Absolutely. And that's why curriculum has never been anything more than just a path to where you want them to go. I've had a lot of schools call me and say, "What would you use in 4th grade for a child?" And I say, "It really depends on where they've been, where they are, where they're going."

**Sarah:** Yes, so good.

**James:** That would be the same way if you said, "James, I'm trying to get home out here where I live, can you give me your path so I can get home in a more efficient way." And I would say, "Sarah, I live in Alabama, why are you asking me for my path? It doesn't make sense for where you are." And I think we've got to be a little more aware, a little more savvy about the way we assign. My daughter is 15, she's about to turn 16, and there's books that she reads because we know who she is by way of her conscience and things that make an impact on her, that I would not like other kids to read that may not be emotionally or intellectually mature or immature as she is at this point. We have to do that all the time. There's certain movies that my wife and I we have friends that go see that I would, for where we are at this



stage in our life, we just would probably not go see.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**James:** Because it wouldn't be edifying for us, it wouldn't be nourishing to our souls, and it's not a condemnation of what they're doing but it's the same for my family, these goals that we have, and these are the things that in the forefront of our minds right now, are one of the things that we can do intentionally, that would move us to be a better family, to be a better human being, to be a better person, and I think we need to prod that a little effectively and a little more intentionally to what we're doing in education.

**Sarah:** So good. It reminds me, this is a little bit of a pivot, but it reminds me of, I was at a homeschool conference a couple of months ago, are you familiar with Steve Demee from Math-U-See?

**James:** Yes. I use that curriculum with my daughter.

**Sarah:** Oh, you do? OK, so I went up to Steve to ask him a couple of questions I had about my son's math and so I told him, "My son's struggling a little bit with math" and his first question to me was not how old is, not what grade is he in, he didn't know any of that information, he just looked at me and said, "OK, so what can he do?" And so I started rattling off the different kinds of skills he could do now, where he was getting stuck, and so he walked me over to the right book and said, "OK, I would start about half way through here and just do these lessons until he knows them and move on here." As I walked away after we were done, I realized he never asked me how old my son was, or what grade he was in, because it was completely irrelevant. He wasn't asking me, like,

"This is the 4th grade thing you do" (or 6th grade is actually where he is) but he'd say ...

**James:** ... developmentally where is he?

**Sarah:** Yeah, exactly! Because the only important thing to know is where is your child at now and where is the next step? And it just started with the child and ended with the child, and I thought 'Whoa, that's a whole paradigm shift.'

**James:** The child-centered education has got a bad rap in some way because it means in some way that we're not trying to move them on from where they are.

**Sarah:** Right, right.

**James:** Their are child-center approach that would say, "Just let them be a child and let them play, don't push them, don't challenge them" but that's child centeredness in the best way, and that is developmentally as human beings we're in certain places in our life and so the teacher always, I think, is a psychologist in regard to our number one goal has to be developmentally 'Where is our child?' 'Where are our students?' in relation to where we want to take them, and we've bought into this modern myth that if they're at certain, number one, all children develop exactly the same at the same time, which is crazy when you think about it that way. When you think about, I'm in my 40's right now, and I'm looking at the wide spread place, when you think about other 40-somethings around my wife and I, we're all over the map as far as where we are in relation to our thoughts about religion, politics, all of that developmentally, where we are in our relationship, it's wide-spread, and to think that my wife and I are in the exact same place that everybody else is and vice-versa, it would be dehumanizing. I think the same thing with what you're saying there and that's what I've always loved about



what I said from the philosophy of Math-U-See is that they're working a little basic set of skills in their thinking developmentally and I begin to think more developmentally about our children.

**Sarah:** Yeah, that's so true. And with regard to the booklist, the idea of grade level book lists can be dangerous there because it's the same kind of thing, instead of taking the child where they are.

**James:** Exactly.

**Sarah:** Well, James, I have a feeling you and I could chat all day but I want to honor your time. I thank you so much for coming on the show. This has been wonderful.

**James:** I appreciate that, Sarah, and I'm glad I could be a part of it and appreciate your ministry and what you're about.

## 30:30 Let the kids speak

Now it's time for Let the Kids Speak. This is my favorite part of the podcast, where kids tell us about their favorite stories that have been read aloud to them.

**Child1:** Hi, my name is Josiah, and I'm seven. I live in Minnesota and I like The Boxcar Children because they learn to live in the wild.

**Child2:** My name is Ella and I live in Minnesota and I'm five years old and my favorite book is Thumbelina and she is as big as a thumb and she made friends with a swallow.

**Child3:** My name is **[\*\*inaudible\*\* 31:21]** and I'm four years old and my favorite book is Mighty Truck. I like it because he gets dirty and he has small wheels at first and then when he gets clean he has huge wheels.

**Child4:** [Mom: what is your name?] Ruby. [Mom: how old are you, Ruby?] Two. [Mom: where do

you live?] Minnesota [Mom: and what is your favorite book?] The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash [What is your favorite part?] I like when the pigs eat the kids lunches.

**Child5:** My name is Caleb and originally was from Minnesota but now I'm in South Korea, I'm six years old and my favorite book is Star Wars by George Lucas. My favorite one is A New Hope. I like it because Obi Wan dies but then Luke and Leia sort of, like, Luke finds out later in the story something about him and Leia that make them related to each other, and that's what I think is the best part of all Star Wars.

**Child6:** Hi, I'm Caroline age seven and my home state is Pennsylvania. My favorite read aloud is Mr. Popper's Penguins. I like Mr. Popper's Penguins because **[\*\*inaudible\*\* 33:04]**, and my favorite part of Mr. Popper's Penguin is when Mr. Popper couldn't figure out which penguin it was, so he got white paint and painted their names on their backs. They're names were Captain Cook and Greta. And it's funny. To me, it's really funny.

**Child7:** Hello, my name is Charlie. I live in Virginia. My favorite book is The Mysterious Benedict Society Series, and my favorite part is when Mr. Bennett and the rest of the gang come to rescue the four children. The reason I like it is it's like these four children, which are secret agents, in one book it's got secret information, another it's to rescue his friends, and in another they're trying to stop Mr. Curtain get captured, and I am 10 years old.

**Child8:** Hello, my name is JeanieMae I live in Virginia and I'm six years old, and my favorite book is Ramona and Her Father and my favorite part of it is when Ramona tries to save her father's life which is stopping him from smoking.

**Child9:** My name is Emily and I live in Virginia, and I'm three years old. [Mom: what's your favorite book?] Anna Hibiscus, Splash. [Mom: OK]. And my favorite part is the beach.

Fantastic! Thank you so much to all of you kids.

Hey, if your kids haven't left a message to be featured on the show, they can do that at [ReadAloudRevival.com](http://ReadAloudRevival.com), scroll down to the bottom of the page and you'll see how simple it is to leave a message. And hey, if you weren't following the Read Aloud Revival on Facebook and Instagram, make sure you find us there. We're there all the time sharing articles, new resources, and giving away lots of books and bookish goodies. So we're at Read Aloud Revival on both platforms, just follow us, say hello, we'd love to connect with you there. That's it for today. Until next time, go build your family culture around books.