



## RAR 75 – Simple Reading Journals

**Sarah:** You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.

Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. I'm your host for the Read-Aloud Revival podcast and today you've got episode 75. So, did you catch all the excitement on Instagram and Facebook? OK, you're not too late if you haven't seen it. We are giving away over 50 books and you've still got time to enter for your chance to win, so pop over to Instagram or Facebook and enter for a chance to win. So, here's the thing: every month in Read-Aloud Revival premium membership, those kids get to meet today's best authors and illustrator in real time, live video streams. It's super cool. We call it Author Access and on Facebook and Instagram right now we're announcing our lineup of 2018 of authors and illustrators by giving away their books every single hour. We're not messing around either. We've got authors like Kate DiCamillo, she's the author of *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *The Tale of Despereaux*, *The Mercy Watson* books, and just a slew of others. Mary Pope Osborne, she is the writer of the *Magic Tree House* books. Trenton Lee Stewart, you will know him as the one behind *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, and a whole lot more. No kidding! We were swinging for the fences when we lined up our author guests for the coming year here at the Read-Aloud Revival. And I'm pretty excited about it. So, you don't want to miss – I don't want to tell you all the names because I want you to go see who it is – I'm so excited. And, I want you to enter for a chance to win some free books. So, join the fun, head to Facebook and Instagram to

enter. You can actually enter in both places, to enter for your chance to win some really awesome books from today's best authors for kids. Did you do it? No, really! Pause the podcast, go check out Facebook and Instagram because I don't want you to miss out on the fun. We're having so much fun with this. OK, so once you're done doing that, come on back.

## 2:18 A Simple System

It can be really hard to keep up with what we've read and if your kids are like mine you want to help them keep track of what they've read, too, but I don't know, do you feel really disorganized about that? I have, in the past, tried so many different things. I've tried Goodreads, I've tried keeping lists all over the place, lists on the computer, in journals, on spiral notebooks, on sticky notes – I've tried a lot of different things. But now, I use something else. We use very simple reading journals in my home. I use a reading journal and so do my kids and I love them because they keep both our logs of what we've read, our lists of what we want to read, and our favorite passages from books we're reading, all in one place. I feel like we're a family of readers, or at least that's what I'm trying to grow over here, so we should have a real system. But, I'm a mom of six and so I know things have to be super simple if I want to actually pull them off. I don't know about you, but when I make some really complex system or I have some pie-in-the-sky system for doing something it just doesn't happen. It's got to be simple, easy, doable, if I want to do it consistently. And I do want to log my reading and interact with the books I'm reading and help my kids to do that, too. I want to do that consistently. So, today we're doing a really mini episode of the podcast. It's a short



episode. I just want to give you a taste of our very simple reading journal system that I use, and I want to offer you something for free, because I'm so excited about the way that my kids have started interacting with their books by using simple reading journals, that I made in video Master Class. And, originally, this class was only offered to our premium members at Read-Aloud Revival premium membership, but it was so great, we got such great feedback, that we decided that we needed to share it with the whole world. So, that's what we're doing today. So, here's the deal. All you have to do to get access to the free video Master Class is go to [SimpleReadingJournals.com](http://SimpleReadingJournals.com) and then pop your email in there, I'll send you the video master class. So here's what this is. It's a video class that I did live with premium members where I showed them all the tools that I use and that my kids use for our simple reading journals, what you need—like the essentials and then also some tools that are fun to have if you just want to have a little extra fun with it. I show you inside our journals—I open up our journals and I show you the pages and what they look like and how they differ from each other and how we've all, kind of, personalized them a little bit to our own liking, how we record passages that we love from our reading, the way that we use book darts to mark passages as we're reading books, and then how we enter those into our journals. And basically, I give a whole bunch of ideas for how you can do reading journals with different age kids. I do them with my teens and tweens right now, but we talked in the class about lots of ideas for doing it with younger kids, and oh, my goodness—if you want to help your child have a treasured list of books that they've read when they were growing up or books that were read-aloud to them while they were growing up, if you want to help your

child save passages that resonate with them, be moved by language, this is the thing to do. It's simple reading journal and you can get the whole **[\*\*5:14\*\*]** on it in the free video Master Class. You don't want to miss it. Go to [SimpleReadingJournals.com](http://SimpleReadingJournals.com) to grab your access to the free Simple Reading Journals Master Class. Now, today on the podcast, I just want to talk briefly about what a reading journal is and why on earth we would want to keep track of one. Now, if your kids attend school or if you remember your own school days you may remember those (am I allowed to say 'horrid' on the podcast? ... OK, I'm going to do it) those horrid reading journals where you had to read for 20 minutes a night and you had to sign off on it and your parents had to sign off on it and then you turned it into your teacher and basically, keeping a reading journal equated reading with a chore. It was like cleaning the bathroom, right? Or eating your vegetables. Here's what we don't want. We don't want a reading journal, a way of tracking what we read to ever impede our delight in books. And so that's why it's really important that we consider how we use reading journals to log our reading and also to save the passages that move and resonate with us because a reading journal can deaden our child's love of reading and stories if we are not careful with how we do it. But a reading journal can be a beautiful collection. Just imagine – can you imagine having a collection, a list, a journal, full of titles of the books that you read when you were a child or a teenager or a young adult? I would have loved that. And I wish I had one. I actually wish I had started these simple reading journals with my kids when they were younger so that we had a bigger, a longer memory of the things that we read together, and the things that they read on their own. But we're doing it now and I'm so glad



we are, and I don't want you to wait another day before you start using simple reading journals because I think you'll be so glad that you did.

## 7:08 Paying Attention ...

A simple reading journal does two main things: it keeps track of what you've read and what you want to read, and then it's a place for you to save passages from your reading that has moved you or resonated with you. Mary Oliver said that instructions for living were to "Pay attention. Be astonished. And tell about it." Pay attention. Be astonished. And tell about it. That is what we want to do with our simple reading journals. OK, we want to pay attention to what we're reading, be astonished by the way the words and language move us, and then tell about it simply by marking it down and remembering that it was something that moved us. That's what we're doing with simple reading journals. We're paying attention, being astonished, and telling about it. Another thing that reading journals does for our kids is it helps a book become our child's. It helps our child form their own relationship with a book. Here's why. When a child marks passages that resonate with him, he's developing his own relationship with the book. No one's telling him what's important to notice, what the most important passages are, what key themes are, pivotal moments in the text he should be noting. A simple reading journal is just a place to note down the things that move you, for who knows why—it can be any reason. But developing those habits of noticing beautiful language and taking note when something resonates with you, it is a wonderful habit to cultivate for your own reading life and it's a wonderful habit to cultivate for our children's reading life. We help them develop the habits of noticing language that is beautiful and

then taking note when something resonates with us or moves us for any reason. So, if you want to help your child create a collection and log all of the books that they're reading on their own, reading aloud, reading for school, reading whatever, you want to start a simple reading journal. If you want to help your child develop their own relationship with the books that they read you want to start a simple reading journal. And when I say simple, I mean simple. You're going to get all the nitty-gritty of the tools that you can use and the very simple methods that you can use and a little bit of brainstorming on how to make this work for kids who are different ages, for kids who don't love writing, for kids who think, 'Oh my gosh, you're not going to make me write all this stuff down,' for kids who don't feel like writing much in their journals, and for the kids who want to write reams and reams, we're going to cover it in the Master Class. I want you to grab access to it. I am so excited for you to watch this Class and implement it. We have heard from lots and lots of families who have already started implementing this and tell us that their kids are super excited. So, reading journals don't have to be a slog, banish from your mind the horrid things you did in school where you had to mark 20 minutes a night or something, we're not talking about that, we're talking about something that your child will treasure, that will help your child cultivate their reading life, and live the life of a real reader. So, go to [SimpleReadingJournals.com](http://SimpleReadingJournals.com) to get that free video Master Class now.

## 10: 08 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 Creed and I am 5 years old and I live in Oklahoma and my favorite book is *Grandfather Buffalo* and it has beautiful pictures, and I love to read it, and he travels along and follows their tracks and **[\*\*inaudible\*\*]**.

**Child2:** [Mom: what's your name?] Cruise. [Mom: Cruise. How old are you, Cruise?] 3. [Mom: 3 years old. Where do you live?] Oklahoma. [Mom: yeah. What's your favorite book, Cruise?] *Clip clop*. [Mom: *Clip clop*. What is *Clip Clop* about?] About a horse. [Mom: about a horse? What other kinds of animals are in that book?] Duck and a pig and a dog and a cat. [Mom: what do cat and dog and pig and duck, what do they do?] They want to ride on Mr. Horse again. [Mom: they go for a ride on Mr. Horse? Do they want to go slow or fast?] Clippity clop, faster, faster. [Mom: and what happens when Mr. Horse goes too fast?] They fall in the hay. [Mom: they fall in the hay? Are they OK?] Yes. [Mom: yes? And then what do they want to do?] Ride on Mr. Horse again. Thanks for listening.

**Child3:** Hi, my name is Mono. I am 9 years old. I live in Longmont, Colorado. My favorite book is *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl. It is about a fox who needs to get food for his family and his neighbors, but there are farmers who are trying to hunt him down.

**Child4:** My name is Abdula. I am 7 years old. I live in Longmont, Colorado. My favorite book is *The Unicorn Chronicles* by Bruce Coville and it's about this girl who enters the land of the unicorns and has great adventures and there's these hunters that try to hunt her down.

**Child5:** Hi, I'm Maia. I'm from Michigan. I'm 14 years old. My book is *North and South* by

Elizabeth Gaskell. And I really like it because it gives an accurate depiction of the historical time period and also it's a romance, but I like that it doesn't get into a whole bunch of kissing but it's more about the deep relationships between the characters and how they work things out even though they disagree, and how they can like each other and disagree about things. And I really enjoyed hearing different points of view and appreciating them all throughout the story.

**Child6:** My name is Claire. I am 5 years old. I live in Tennessee. My favorite book is *Wind in the Willows* and my favorite part was when the toad helps the washer woman to escape the jail.

**Child7:** Hello, my name is Katelyn and I live in Colorado and my favorite book series are *The Magic Tree House*. I like it because I love how Jack likes to study and read, and I love how Annie likes animals, just like me.

**Child8:** Hello, my name is Gage and I live in Colorado. My favorite book is *The Bible* because I like to learn about Jesus.

**Child9:** [Mom: how old are you?] 3. [Mom: what's your name?] Garrett. [Mom: what's your favorite book?] Choo choo trains. [Mom: you like books about trains?] Yes. [Mom: yeah.] Bye. [Mom: ok, bye.]

**Child10:** My name is Tim and I live in Oregon and I am 13 years old and my favorite books are *The Wingfeather Saga*. My favorite part is in book three when Janner is dropped off in the woods to survive for several days on his own.

**Sarah:** Thank you so much, kids. Always love hearing from you. Hey, if you have not joined in the fun yet on Facebook and Instagram with our book giveaways, what are you waiting for? Go to [Facebook.com/readaloudrevival](https://www.facebook.com/readaloudrevival) or



Instagram.com/readaloudrevival or better yet, both, because you can enter to win in both places. And we're giving away a slew of awesome books. Also, don't forget, to grab you free access to the Simple Reading Journals Master Class – man, it's a good week, isn't it? And that is a class you just don't want to miss. Hey, next week I'll be back with episode 76. We're going to talk all about how to make reading aloud your very favorite part of the day. If it isn't your favorite part of the day yet it's going to be. We're going to dig into how to make that happen. I'll see you then, but until then, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.