

Bedtime Stories - That Special Time of Day

Say the words "bedtime stories" and immediately images of sleepy children come to mind and time spent snuggled close. The best bedtime stories are the ones that allow us as parents the opportunities to connect with our children in a way that will create lifetime memories. The truly classic ones fire the imagination of both parents and children, bridging the gap of age and experience to remind us of all we have in common and all we have yet to share.

Bedtime is that special time of day when we are most likely to have our child's complete attention. When you take away the distractions of television, school work, or places to go and things to do, you are left with an opportunity to spend quality time together. Whether that takes the form of a picture book, a chapter book that you are reading a bit each night, or if you are making up your own tales of far flung adventures in faraway lands, the library is here to help with materials or inspiration.

When I first picked up Maurice Sendak's **Where the Wild Things Are** to read to my children, I found that I could recite it from memory, a leftover from 30 years ago when it was my favorite book on many a night. When you consider books like Sendak's, and Margaret Wise Brown's **Goodnight Moon**, it's easy to see how these stories stand the test of time and are still around to send new generations off to dreamland. Bedtime is still a popular topic for children's authors, so I wanted to point out a few of my new favorites, and while they won't be ones that you remember, they might be ones that will capture the imaginations of future generations in your family.

Tell Me The Day Backwards is by Albert Lamb and beautifully illustrated by David McPhail . This book tells the story of a small bear who reviews his day at bedtime. This is a wonderful way to teach your child about the power of story and to encourage them to remember their day as they tell their own tale. A family tradition in the making, this gets my award for best bedtime story of the year.

Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site by Sherri Duskey Rinker is perfect for any little construction fan. Its muted hues and wonderful read-aloud flow as you say good night to each of the machines at the construction site mark it as a sure winner and one that kids will request again and again.

The Woods by Paul Hoppe introduces us to a brave little boy who must go into the woods to rescue his beloved bunny. He encounters many scary things and manages to conquer all with kindness and generosity.

Who's There by Carole Lexa Schaefer is perfect for any young one who keeps hearing noises at night. The repeated questions of "Who's there?" and the feel-good ending as our bunny realizes that those noises were just his brother, give parents a great opportunity to ease night-time fears.

Good Night, World by Caroline Fisher brings the entire world right into your child's bedroom. With its large illustrations and beautiful rhyming, it is a love letter to our planet that reminds me of Goodnight Moon done on a large and spectacular scale. Whether you use the soothing rhymes as a way to ease your little one off to dreamland or if you use this book as a starting point to discuss the diverse environments on our planet, this is always a good choice.

Of course we can't forget the older kids. If your child is ready to make that big leap into chapter books, try reading a chapter each night. There are many classic stories of adventure that make perfect read alouds and are guaranteed to leave your child eager for the next chapter. If you're looking for one to get started, try **The Adventures of Nanny Piggins** by R.A. Spratt. It's a whimsical story packed full of humor for both parents and children, told in episodes that make it perfect for night-time reading.

I'm a big fan of reading in bed. No matter how old they are, I think every kid's room should come complete with a flashlight for reading under the covers and a huge pile of books to choose from. We can certainly help with that! Come search our stacks for your own future bedtime classics. I'll be glad to help point the way.

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