

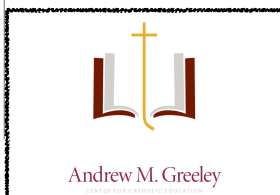
THE FAITHFUL READER

Getting to Know Your Students

Happy School Year! By now, your students have come to school at least five times, happy to see you and to learn! What do your students like to do outside of school? What do they like to read? What is a favorite animal or pet? These are questions that can be learned in three different ways, and your knowing the answers helps you to teach them better.

1. **Interest Inventories.** A quick survey of what students like and don't like can help you to help them choose books to read. I think the best interest inventories are one page, with a combination of open-ended questions ("My favorite books are...") and a place to tick boxes: "I like to read..." and then a list of genres. These answers help to know what books to put in your classroom library and what nonfiction topics to accompany your fiction using newsela.com or readworks.org. A quick [Google images search](#) of "interest inventory for students" will yield some possibilities that you can use with your students.
2. **Individual Conferences.** Meeting with students one-on-one is time consuming, but you learn so much about them. A quick one-minute conference with each student at the beginning of the year can ensure that you students know that you love and care about each of them. It can also be an opportunity for you to ask a few 'interview' questions like, what are you good at when it comes to reading? What do you find hard about reading? These are the kinds of questions that students may want to say only to you, knowing that you can be trusted to keep that information in confidence.
3. **Parent Surveys.** At Back to School Night, ask your students' parents to write a little something about their child: what do you love most about your child? what is your child really good at? What does your child struggle to do? What should I know about your child that you think is really important? These questions can give you lots of information, but more importantly it reminds you that this child is someone's son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter.
4. **Student Interviews.** Have students write interview questions or you write them, and then pick from the hat of names to interview a classmate. They can then introduce their classmate to the class. This is engaging and fun, shows you a little about a student's speaking and listening skills, oral reading, and whether the child is an introvert or extrovert.

In a classroom, relationships are everything. When a student knows that she/he can trust you, she/he will want to work hard and learn. You can build relationships by taking a little time to get to know students.



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How Do I Choose a Book for a Read Aloud?

Here are a few tips for choosing books for a read aloud for your class. Remember that you should be reading aloud to students every day, regardless of what grade you teach. 8th grade teachers may only read aloud for 5-10 minutes - a poem, the first paragraph of a short story or novel, etc., but it is still important to read aloud.

A Few Tips:

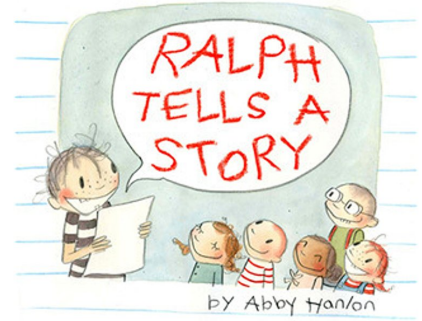
1. **Choose a book that you think the students will like.** Sounds obvious, but sometimes we choose a book because we like it. Make sure you also think students will like it. Choose two titles, do a book talk for each, and then have students vote.
2. **Choose an award winner.** The American Library Association (ala.org) grants awards to books in all kinds of categories. Adults who know children's books read a whole lot of books before deciding on the awards. The website also provides all of the award winners from the first year the award was given. You may not have money to buy a new book, but you probably have an award winner on your bookshelf!
3. **Consider the age of the protagonist.** Generally, the age of the protagonist should match the age of the students you work with. If the hero of the story is 8, then that book is appropriate for students ages 8 and up. This can help to make sure that there isn't any inappropriate material in the book (no guarantees, but a good guide).

Book Recommendations

Ralph Tells a Story

written and illustrated by Abby Hanlon

Ralph's enthusiastic teacher always says, "Stories are everywhere!" And everyone in Ralph's class writes stories, illustrates them, edits and revised them...but not Ralph. Ralph can't think of ANYTHING to write about. Ralph avoids writing by going to the water fountain and roaming the hallways. Then Ralph's friend Daisy shows Ralph all of the stories she has written - about Ralph! This inspires Ralph to look for a story, and through flexible seating, he is able to find one. And that was all last school year! This school year, Ralph is a prolific writer.



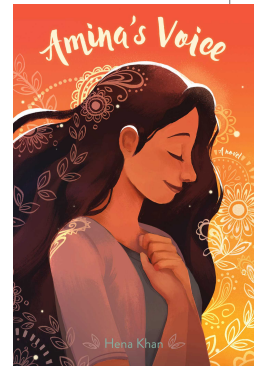
Read Aloud for ages Kinder and up

Independent Reading Level: grade 1-2

Genre realistic fiction

Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

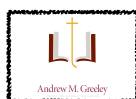
Amina lives in Milwaukee with her parents and brother Mustafa in Milwaukee. Just like any other family, Amina's dad does some silly things that embarrass her. Her best friend, Soojin, is Korean-American and is so excited to become a US citizen with her parents in two weeks. Meanwhile, Emily is trying to be friends with Soojin and Amina, which worries Amina because she thinks she will lose her best friend. Amina is an accomplished musician and singer, though she could never get up and sing in front of a crowd like on her favorite show, "The Voice." Life is pretty typical for this sixth grader's Pakistani-American family until they get a call from the Imam at their Mosque. It has been set fire, and terrible, hateful words have been spray painted inside. Everyone in their Muslim community comes together to rebuild and move forward. Amina learns that the whole community of Milwaukee is there, Muslim or not, to support them.



Reading Level grade 4

Appropriate for grades 4 and up

Genre realistic fiction



Greeley Center Mission

We are Catholic educators who challenge Catholic schools to be excellent because they are essential in preparing students for the future.