

Books for Burgeoning Boys

If you had asked me at the age of six to go read a book, my response then would have been drastically different than it would be today. What changed? *The books I read*. For me, it wasn't that I didn't like reading; it was that I didn't like *what* I was reading. Finding the niche for each child is difficult at times, especially for squirrely boys with overactive imaginations.

By trial and error I found my way, with the help of persistent parents. I found I loved reading about fantastical realms, filled with the impossible. Those fantastical realms normally occupied my mind, so naturally I enjoyed reading about them in books. Finding the right books to read can be trying at times which is why I have compiled a list of books to recommend. The books I've listed below are ones I've enjoyed throughout the years. The list includes titles for quite young readers, as well as others more mature in content and difficulty.

From time to time I am asked to recommend a list of books to some one. I am always excited to do so, but also carry out the task with trepidation. I do so because each parent and child brings specific needs and wants to the table. Is a book too mature in content for my child? Is it too worldly? Does it contain things that our family doesn't want our child to read? I can't answer these questions for you. What I can do is give you this list of books I enjoyed and then leave the keys in your hands. I have included links to several websites where content reviews of many books can be found. This is helpful even when reading "Christian" books. Please peruse as you feel necessary.

<http://www.compassbookratings.com>

<http://www.factsonfiction.org>

<http://novelbookratings.com>

Also I have included general age indicators in my recommendations, but these aren't law; many children are well beyond the average reading level and able to handle more mature material. You know your child's needs best.

I still find pleasure in some of the earliest books I read, but continually search for new material. I am not a fast or prolific reader, rather I seek for what is engaging. Where there is interest there is industry. May God bless you in your search for enjoyable, challenging and encouraging literature!

Happy reading!
Mark Hughes

Alcorn, Randy - *Deadline, Dominion and Deception*

A series of three loosely related stories. The books deal with serious adult themes, but with a Christian perspective. They revolve around murder mysteries. The first in the series was my favorite. High school on up.

Safely Home

An extremely moving and influential book, it is a fictionalized account of the persecuted church in China. The book deals with serious themes, but is an excellent read. High school on up.

Alexander, Lloyd - *The Chronicles of Prydain: The Book of Three, The Black Cauldron, The Castle of Llyr, Taran Wanderer, The High King*

An entertaining series that doesn't have a high difficulty level. I enjoyed these I think in late elementary or junior high.

Card, Orson Scott - *Ender's Game*

A very well written coming of age sci-fi, packed with weighty themes. It does have quite a lot of profanity, but a riveting read. High school on up.

Christie, Agatha - *Miss Marple Mysteries*

Fun English mysteries, that are easy to digest. Centered around the spinster Miss Marple, they are good every time. Junior high on up. A great place to start is *The Thirteen Problems*, a collection of short mysteries, or *4:50 From Paddington*.

Doyle, Arthur Conan - *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*

Need I say more? It is, to my memory, a clean, engaging set of stories, comprising several short novels along with many short mysteries. Late junior high or high school.

Dumas, Alexandre - *The Count of Monte Cristo*

One of my first forays into less fantastical fiction during high school, a wonderful long read, entertaining and with a very satisfying ending. Make sure to get the unabridged version! High school on up.

Graham, L. B. - The Binding of the Blade Series: *Beyond the Summerland, Bringer of Storms, Shadow in the Deep, Father of Dragons, All My Holy Mountain*

A great series, full of complexity following in Tolkien's tradition. The author is a Christian so there isn't any questionable content. There are great theological themes in play throughout the series. The first book is slow but the series becomes enthralling later, persevere! Junior high or high school.

Lewis, C. S. - The Chronicles of Narnia: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Prince Caspian: The Return to Narnia, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, The Silver Chair, The Horse and His Boy, The Magician's Nephew, The Last Battle*

Classics that really everyone should read. Elementary on up.

Osbourne, Mary Pope - *Favorite Greek Classics*

Excellent retelling of many of the Greek myths. I loved this book in elementary school and junior high.

Magic Tree House Series

A great series for early elementary school kids, one of the series that got me reading!

Paolini, Christopher - The Inheritance Cycle: *Eragon, Eldest, Brisingr, Inheritance*

One of my favorite series growing up, Paolini follows Tolkien in complexity, yet his books are more accessible to the younger reader. The prologue of Eragon was a one of a kind experience for me in literature; I never before had felt such excitement and fear from a book! Junior high or high school age.

Paul, Donita K. - The DragonKeeper Chronicles: *DragonSpell, DragonQuest, DragonKnight, DragonFire, DragonLight*

This entertaining series is a fun read, written by a Christian author. It follows the growth of a young wizard, Kale and her many adventures. All fairly easy reads, late elementary on up.

Platt, Richard - *Castle Diary: The Journal of Tobias Burgess, Page*

Growing up, few books caused me more delight in reading than this, I bought an edition for pure enjoyment years later. It chronicles, with pictures, the life of a young boy training as a page. Filled with hilarious moments and witty drawings. I recommend you buy the full color 1999 edition if possible; later editions come in black and white. There are a few things which may be of questionable character. Elementary on up.

Rowling, J. K. - Harry Potter: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

An extremely well written series, that follows Harry Potter throughout his teenage years. Books one to three are more light hearted, starting with book four the series grows darker and more serious as the stakes are raised. Over all a highly entertaining series. There are some more adult themes that emerge in around book three or four. Elementary on up.

Scott, Michael - The Secrets of the Immortal Nicholas Flamel: *The Alchemyst, The Magician, The Sorceress, The Necromancer, The Warlock, The Enchantress*

A great fast paced book series that centers around a brother and sister, Josh and Sophie. They are cast into a dramatic world where all mythological figures are fair game. A great read, maybe for junior high or high school age.

Stewart, Sean - *Yoda: Dark Rendezvous*

I had not read a Star Wars extended universe book before, but thoroughly enjoyed this book, as Master Yoda, one of my favorite characters, played a central part. It is a well-written, fast paced adventure. Junior high or high school age.

Tolkien, J. R. R. - *The Silmarillion, The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, The Return of the King*

All classics of literature, the Hobbit is the most accessible of all the books, so I would recommend that first. The Lord of the Rings, is more literary, but still well worth reading through. The Silmarillion was published after Tolkien's death, but contains the mythology of Middle-Earth. If all these books have been consumed, there are quite a few other posthumous publications about Middle-Earth as well. Late elementary on up.