

THE FAITHFUL READER

Websites and Apps for Families

Welcome to The Faithful Reader! This newsletter shares tips and ideas for reading instruction in the Catholic classroom.

Parents are the first educators of their children, but they don't always know how to help. Apps and web sites are often easy solutions to help with this. Here are a few websites that can be helpful to parents - and you! - and fit the budget.

- thisreadingmama.com - Becky Spence is a homeschooling parent with excellent free resources for elementary students.
- readingrockets.org - run by WETA, public television in Washington state, this site provides information for parents and teachers
- Get Epic - getepic.com. This site has unlimited texts for students age 12 and under. Unlimited reading on a smart device for \$4.95 per month, first month free.
- Teachers' Notebook - teachersnotebook.com. This site is for teachers and has many free resources for students through 12th grade.
- ABC Mouse - this app has won awards from both parent and teaching organizations. The first 30 days are free, and then it is \$7.95 each month. (ages 2-7)
- Read Me Stories: :Learn to Read is a great app that is free.

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FAQs

I have students with a variety of reading levels. I want to meet all of their needs. What do I do?

Each classroom is full of students with different needs so you are not alone. Start by reviewing recent assessments to see what students need. Students might need extra practice with sight words or more tools for decoding unknown words. Then try to group students with somewhat similar needs. Now you will need to train students to work independently so you can meet with these students in small groups. Try to limit your groups to no more than six students in each group, and no more than four groups. Your class structure might look like this:

- mini lesson
- meet with small group #1 (15 minutes)
- meet with small group #2 (15 minutes)
- closure

While you are meeting with the small groups, students are reading a free-choice book, writing a response to reading, or practicing their spelling or vocabulary words. No need to print a bunch of worksheets. Keep it authentic.



My students do great on the Friday spelling test, but forget the words by Monday morning. What should I do?

This is a common problem. Students only have one week to practice words that may (or may not) have a common pattern. First, I would use Words Their Way and assess what spelling patterns students know. Then I would group students based on the results, and create 3-4 lists of 15 words. Students practice all of the words all week, including completing word sorts, quizzing a partner while you work with small groups. Then on Friday, you choose 10-12 words from each list and that is the spelling test. This way, students learn the pattern, not just one word with that pattern. They own the patterns then, which are applicable beyond one word.

Also, if you notice students who struggle with a long list of words (longer than 15) cut the list down to 12 or 10 until they see success, then gradually bring the list back up to 15.



Andrew M. Greeley

Books!

In this section, book recommendations we think your students will love!

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña

This lovely book tells the story of CJ and his grandma. Every Sunday after church, the two of them take a bus across town. During this ride, CJ grumbles about the bus and the things they don't have - like a car so they don't have to ride the bus. The end of the story will make you smile, and it connects very well with the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Read Aloud for Kindergarten - 5th graders

Independent Reading Level 2nd **Lexile** 610

Genre realistic fiction

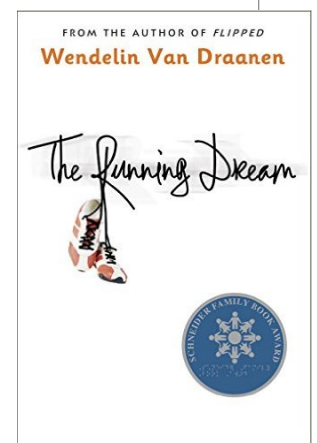
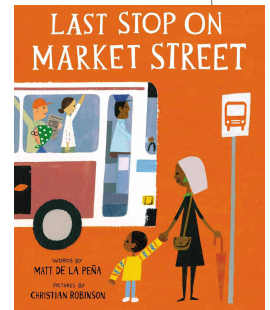
The Running Dream by Wendell Van Draanen

Jessica is a track phenom. On the way home from a meet, her team's van is struck by another car. A teammate is killed, and Jessica must have her leg amputated below the knee. Jessica struggles with losing her identity as a runner while she watches her parents struggle to pay her medical bills. Jessica befriends Rosa, who is also in a wheelchair with cerebral palsy. The end provides another example of a Corporal Work of Mercy. Winner of the American Library Association's Schneider Family Award.

Content appropriate for 7th and up

Lexile 650; **Reading Level** 4th

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.