

2017 – 2012 Spiritual Growth

Selections can be from the 2012-2017 reading lists if not included in previous reports, children and youth titles can be read for credit in all plans of the Reading Program. Brenda Thompson Reading Program Specialist UMW Communications.

2017 Spiritual Growth

Femmevangelical The Modern Girl's Guide to the Good News. Jennifer D. Crumpton

Chalice Press (2015) 163 pages

This book is for all women who have searched for themselves in the Bible and taken on an ill-fitting, soul-killing role to be included; it is for anyone who seeks a devotional companion not written to prove a theological statement or uphold a religious institution, but to prove and uphold your individual experience, potential and worth. *Femmevangelical* is meant to support the risk, hope and faith it takes to follow your instincts and fulfill the real gospel—using our lives to create the world in which we were truly made to live.

2017 Spiritual Growth

Fully Awake and Truly Alive Spiritual Practices to Nurture Your Soul. Rev. Jane E. Vennard

Skylight Paths Publishing (2013) 178 pages

Spiritual seeker, retreat leader and teacher The Rev. Vennard offers insights from various religious traditions as she illustrates the joys and frustrations of spiritual practice. Offering guidance for the journey with step-by-step exercises and meditations to practice caring for the body, rest, silence, solitude and community, she invites you to experience being alive and awake.

2017 Spiritual Growth

If Eve Only Knew Freeing Yourself from Biblical Womanhood and Becoming All God Means for You to Be. Kendra Weddle Irons and Melanie Springer Mock

Chalice Press (2015) 216 pages

If Eve Only Knew analyzes some of the most potent messages in evangelical popular culture about a woman's role in marriage, child-bearing, homemaking and vocation, arguing that God—and God's revelation through scripture, tradition and experience—creates all of us to celebrate our abilities rather than confine ourselves to ill-defined gender roles.

2017 Spiritual Growth

Soul Repair Recovering from Moral Injury After War. Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini

Beacon Press (2013) 144 pages

Research by Veterans Administration health professionals suggests that moral injury, an ancient but unaddressed wound of war, may be a factor in the alarming rate of suicide among veterans. *Soul Repair* tells the stories of four war veterans from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan who reveal their experiences of moral injury and how they have learned to live with it. This book will help veterans and their families, communities and clergy understand the impact of war on the consciences of healthy people, support the recovery of moral conscience in society, and restore veterans to civilian life.

2017 Spiritual Growth

Wild In the Hollow: On Chasing Desire and Finding the Broken Way Home. Amber C. Haines
Baker Publishing Group (2015) 205 pages

Amber Haines takes you along on a windswept journey down the path of brokenness to healing, satisfaction and true intimacy with God. She calls us to dispense with the pretty bows we use to dress up our stories and instead trust God to take our untidy, unfinished lives and make them free, authentic and whole.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Large Print

Extraordinary Grace: How the Unlikely Lineage of Jesus Reveals God's Amazing Love.

Gary Chapman and Chris Fabry

Gale/Cengage Learning (2013) 314 pages

Gary Chapman and Chris Fabry search Scripture for examples of God's grace in the lives of those named in Jesus' lineage, but what they find are people with faults just like the rest of us. In *Extraordinary Grace*, you will hear the call of grace, laugh and be overtaken by grace, and know the extraordinary grace that comes from loving Jesus.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Large Print

Living Into Hope: A Call to Spiritual Action for Such a Time as This. Joan Brown Campbell

SkyLight Paths Publishing (2012) 208 pages

Drawing on her amazing life experiences, The Rev. Dr. Campbell speaks out on the pressing issues that face us today: love, justice, reconciliation, forgiveness and community. Proposing that "Who is my neighbor?" may be the most crucial question in a world where so many are hurting, she calls us to live life fully—not carefully or cautiously, but wholly engaged with the world and with the messiness of humanity.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Recommended Reading

The Blessings and Bling: How Faith and Fashion Helped Me Survive Breast Cancer.

Sheron C. Patterson (author), Rootsky Books (editor) and Jaron McGlover (illustrator)

Gratitude Press (2011)

The Blessings and Bling is one woman's account of how a strong sense of faith and a love of fashion helped bridge the gap between despair and hope.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Recommended Reading

Worry Less So You Can Live More: Surprising, Simple Ways to Feel More Peace, Joy and Energy.

Jane Rubietta

Bethany House Publishers (2015)

Weary of worry and its tagalongs: anxiety, discouragement, and exhaustion? Jane Rubietta invites you to leave behind your heavy heart and learn to truly live again. To experience joy and rest in the moment-by-moment pleasure of a God who delights in you--and has all your tomorrows under his control. Jane's picturesque prose offers enduring encouragement and practical tools for change.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Youth – counts for all Reading Plans

The Reason How I Discovered a Life Worth Living. Lacey Sturm

Baker Books (2014) 202 pages

The day Lacey Sturm planned to kill herself was the day her old life ended. As an atheist who thought church was a place for hypocrites, she ended up in the back of a sanctuary after a screaming match with her grandmother. Despite hating everyone in the room, her experience is the reason she is alive today. With raw vulnerability, this hard rock princess tells her story of abuse, her depression and of her ultimate salvation.

2017 Spiritual Growth – Children – counts for all Reading Plans

Just For Today: Saint John XXIII

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (2015) 32 pages

As a child taking his first communion, 7-year-old Angelo Roncalli declared, “I want always to be good to everyone.” Years later, he would become the beloved Pope John XXIII. This celebration of love and humility is a wonderful reminder of the importance of living each day fully.

2016 Spiritual Growth – Youth – counts for all Reading Plans

Coaltown Jesua. Ron Koertge

Candlewick Press (2013). 128 pages

Even though he’d prayed for help for his mother, who hasn’t stopped crying since his brother died two months ago, Walker was still surprised to find Jesus standing in the middle of his bedroom. But as astounding as Jesus’ appearance is, it’s going to take more than divine intervention for Walker to come to terms with Noah’s death. Why would God take 17-year-old Noah? Why would he send Jesus to pick up the pieces? Why didn’t he just keep Noah from dying?

2016 Spiritual Growth

Cured But Not Healed: How to Experience Deeper Faith on Your Journey with God

Kymerley Clemons-Jones

Professional Woman Publishing (2012). 168 pages

Reverend Clemons-Jones asks, “can you be cured but not healed?” In this book, you will find instructions on how to develop a better relationship with your Creator. You will find the author’s words challenging and comforting at times and you will find encouragement to keep seeking the Lord with all your body, mind, and spirit. By the end, you will find restoration in your newly engaged relationship with God. Bible study is included.

2016 Spiritual Growth

Key United Methodist Beliefs. William J. Abraham and David F. Watson

Abingdon Press (2013). 172 pages. E-book available

Deepen your faith and enrich your life through this study of core Methodist beliefs. Written by popular seminary teachers, this book will connect you to the life and ministry of John Wesley, demonstrating relevance for the lives of Christians today as it offers an introductory examination of each.

2016 Spiritual Growth

My Life and Lesser Catastrophes – A Memoir. Christina Schofield

Chosen Books (2011). 160 pages

Just after her thirteenth wedding anniversary, Christina Schofield woke up groggy and disoriented, surrounded by nurses in a hospital. She and her husband had hit a gravel patch while on their motorcycle and crashed into a ditch. With the exception of a concussion, she was fine. But Allen had broken his neck. He was now a quadriplegic. With her entire life flipped upside down, she began an astonishing journey of tenacious faith amid increasing doubt. Full of dark, silent hours and a woman's honest questioning of the God she thought she knew, this is also a story full of miraculous answers to prayer and head scratching, awe inspiring encounters with her loving Lord.

2016 Spiritual Growth - Recommended

On God's Side – What Religion Forgets and Politics Hasn't Learned about Serving the Common Good. Jim Wallis

Brazos Press (2013). 320 pages

Instead of money, power, and prestige, people of faith should be concerned about the biblical “least of these,” following the lead of the so-called Matthew 25 Christians, who focus on social justice. Wallis understands compassion as the doorway to justice for everyone around the world, and while he is poetic, a few notions—like postcandidate advocacy—lack the clear definition and conviction that defines much of the book.

The volume is divided into two parts; the first delves into Wallis's sources of inspiration for his thesis, which range from The Chronicles of Narnia to the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. In the second part, Wallis writes about prioritizing his family life as an example of engaging in more intentional community at home to gradually improve current political and social ills.

2016 Spiritual Growth

Things Your Mother Never Told You: A Woman's Guide to Sexuality

Kim Gaines Eckert

InterVarsity Press Books (2014). 171 pages. E-book available

Conversations about sex and sexuality matter because they are really about our identity as people created in the image of God. So why aren't Christians talking about it? In this frank exploration of all aspects of what it means to be a sexual being created by God, Dr. Eckert explores myths that we have absorbed from popular culture and distorted religious teaching. Allow this book to be your companion into a journey to deeper self-understanding as you explore things you may have never discussed with anyone, yet long to. And, if you dare, find some friends to read along with you.

2016 Spiritual Growth

Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience. Monique Gray Smith

Sono Nis Press (2014). 208 pages

Tilly has always known she's part Lakota on her dad's side. She's grown up with the traditional teachings of her grandma, relishing the life lessons of her beloved mentor. But it isn't until an angry man shouts something on the street that Tilly realizes her mom is also Aboriginal, a Cree woman taken from her parents as a baby. Loosely based on author Monique Gray Smith's own life, this revealing, important work of creative nonfiction tells the story of a young indigenous woman coming of age in the 1980s. In a spirit of hope, this unique story captures the irrepressible resilience of Tilly and of indigenous people everywhere.

2016 Spiritual Growth – **Children** – counts for all Reading Plans

Before We Eat: From Farm to Table. Pat Brisson and Mary Azarian (Illustrator)

Tilbury House Publishers (2014). 32 pages. E-book available

A family sits down to enjoy a meal. Thoughts of those who provide the food, from farmers who plant and tend seed and animals to store clerks who sell groceries, fill each one with gratitude.

- Wooster UMW Reading Circle read

2015 Spiritual Growth - Mission Study

Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God. Cynthia A. Bond Hopson and Sarah Heaner
Lancaster

United Methodist Women. 159 pages

The early Methodist tradition used the language of happiness often. Not only did John Wesley preach and teach about happiness but his brother Charles wrote hymns about happiness that the early Methodists sang. The happiness they sought was happiness in God. This study examines the understanding of happiness and how to live the life that God calls us to.

2015 Spiritual Growth

Eat with Joy: Redeeming God's Gift of Food

Rachel Marie Stone. InterVarsity Press (2013). 208 pages

Food is the source of endless angst and anxiety. We struggle with obesity and eating disorders, and agricultural horror stories make us worry about whether our food is healthy, nutritious and justly produced. Rachel Marie Stone asks us to rediscover joyful eating by receiving food as God's good gift of provision and care and fills this book with practical insights and tasty recipes.

1 print copy public library

2015 Spiritual Growth

Finding God in a Bag of Groceries: Sharing Food, Discovering Grace

Laura Lapins Willis. Abingdon Press (2013). 224 pages

In a tiny food pantry, Laura Willis discovered her own hunger for God and a world of neighbors she never knew: the lonely, the unemployed, chronically poor families and middle-class folks surprised to be struggling in a great recession.

To each she offered a bag of groceries, a compassionate ear and a heart of love. spiritual growth.

4 print copies public library

2015 Spiritual Growth

No Longer Silent: The Empowerment of Women in the Gospels

Susan Dehn Matthews. ACTA Publications (2011). 256 pages

Imagine, along with Susan Dehn Matthews, that you hear the voices of the women in the Gospels, many of whom have been overlooked, ignored, misrepresented or misunderstood. Listen as they reveal the stories behind their words and actions in the Scriptures. They are no longer silent but speak the truth about themselves as it was revealed to them by their encounter with the one they called teacher, prophet, brother, beloved and son.

2015 Spiritual Growth

Praying to Change Your Life: A Guide to Productive Prayer

Suzette T. Caldwell. Destiny Image Publishers (2009). 303 pages

Praying to Change Your Life is an action-oriented, results-driven, howto guide for believers that glorifies God, transforms lives and increases the power of your prayers. Through instruction, prayer exercises, personal stories and testimonies, you will learn what prayer is, why you should pray and how to pray using the six categories of the Lord's Prayer.

6 print copies public library

2015 Spiritual Growth

The Seven Paths: Changing One's Way of Walking in the World

Anasazi Foundation. Berrett-Koehler Publishers (2013). 102 pages

This poetic, moving story presents the meditations of an ancient Native American tribesman who rejects his family and community and sets off on a journey through the desert. He walks seven paths, each teaching a lesson symbolized by an element of the natural world: light, wind, water, stone, plant, animal and the unity of all beings with the Creator.

1 eBook public library

2015 Spiritual Growth

Shopping: Christian Explorations of Daily Living

Michelle A. Gonzalez. Fortress Press (2010). 128 pages

What could be more mundane or less religious than shopping? Yet every day, shopping asks us to choose our values and to weigh the good in ordinary terms. It also brings us instantly in contact with the many relationships and labor of people all over the world who have grown, harvested or crafted the food, clothes and other items with which we sustain and adorn our lives.

1 print copy public library

2015 Spiritual Growth – Large Print

Help, Thanks, Wow

Anne Lamott. Thorndike Press / Gale Cengage Learning (2012). 157 pages

Help. Thanks. Wow. Three simple prayers — asking for assistance, appreciating the good we witness, and feeling awed by the world — get us through the day and show us the way forward.

58 print copies public library

2015 Spiritual Growth – Large Print

The Well Women: Crossing the Boundaries

Ladine Housholder. Copper Teapot Publishing (2012). 424 pages

Nine women are reunited on a tour to the West Bank city of Nablus, the historic site of Jacob's Well. Beneath the stylish veneer of accomplishment and affluence, each woman has been deeply hurt and nearly broken by her life. But as they share their journey to recovery through the healing power of living water from Jesus Christ and the love and support of the group, they truly meet one another for the first time.

2015 Spiritual Growth – Recommended Reading

Living Into Hope: A Call for Spiritual Action for Such a Time as This

Joan Brown Campbell. Skylight Paths (2010)

Ordained in both the Disciples of Christ and American Baptist churches, Campbell was the first woman to govern the National Council of Churches, the first woman to direct the U.S. office of the World Council of Churches, and the first woman to lead the Department of Religion at the ecumenical Chautauqua Institution. This collection is based on Campbell's best sermons. Her stories report from conflict zones around the world, including Belgrade under NATO attack, Palestine, South Africa, and post-9/11 New York. Drawing on her role in reuniting youthful Cuban refugee Elian Gonzalez with his father and on her friendship with atheist astrophysicist Carl Sagan

2015 Spiritual Growth – Children – counts for all Reading Plans

I Can Pray

Suzette T. Caldwell (author). Nikkolas Smith (illustrator). Caldwell Ministries (2013)

40 pages

This book will remind children that as they go about their day, there is always time to pray

2015 Spiritual Growth – Children – counts for all Reading Plans

Nasreddine

Odile Weulersse (author). Rébecca Dautremer (illustrator). Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. (2013). 34 pages

As Nasreddine and his father take dates, wool, chickens or watermelon to market, people tease them no matter who is riding their donkey. The more they tease, the more Nasreddine tries to meet their approval. Until his father helps him understand that he will never please everyone.

8 print copies public library

Spiritual Growth 2014

Embraced by God: Celebrating Who and Whose You Are. Babbie Mason. 2012. 432p. Abingdon Press.

Embraced by God is a 21-day devotional designed to help you discover God's unconditional love for you. The 21-day devotions are segmented into seven overriding themes or promises, with 3 devotions focusing on these themes.

The seven promises include:

God's passion for you is unconditional

God's picture of you is beautiful

God's presence in you is perpetual

God's provision for you is immeasurable

God's plan for you is exceptional

God's power in you is accessible

God's promise in you is incomparable

Each chapter is devoted to a daily devotional in which Mrs. Mason gives you four areas to reflect upon and act upon. She asks you to "Think About His Love", "Read About His Love", "Pray About His Love" and to "Be About His Love". Review - Frugal Experiments

2014 Spiritual Growth

A Faithful Heart: Daily Guide for Joyful Living. Sally Dyck. 2010. 240p. Abingdon Press.

In the pages of this book, Sally Dyck combines scripture, engaging stories and the faith of Mary to encourage you to grow and share your heart. Eight words, simple on a page, when lived out daily can change your heart and the hearts of those around you.*

2014 Spiritual Growth

Silence and Other Surprising Invitations of Advent. Enuma Okoro. 2012. 126p. Upper Room Books. Okoro invites us to look at the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, which is filled with deep sorrow and heartfelt longing. Okoro's tough yet tender wisdom acknowledges the wounds we endure and the blessings we receive, the grief we bear and the joys we're given. Her poetic and poignant daily meditations will echo long after the Christmas season has passed.*

2014 Spiritual Growth

Strong Was Her Faith: Women of the New Testament. J. Ellsworth Kalas. 2012. 176p. Abingdon Press.

In this book, Kalas looks into the life and times of 11 different women such as Elizabeth, Mary, Dorcas and Mary Magdalene and examines the scriptures to see what we can learn about these women, what we can learn from them and how each woman fits into—as well as shapes—the New Testament story. A discussion guide is included.*

2014 Spiritual Growth

You're Already Amazing: Embracing Who You Are, Becoming All God Created You to Be. 2012.

224p. Revell Books. Women feel enormous pressure to be perfect, and under all that pressure we're carrying burdens we were never meant to carry and suppressing our dreams. In this book, popular blogger Gerth helps women understand that we don't need to do more, be more and have more—because we're already amazing just the way God created us to be.*

2014 Spiritual Growth

Jesus: A Biography From a Believer. Paul Johnson. 2010. 242p. Viking.

Journalist-historian Johnson's deliberately noncontentious account of history's most famous man is unapologetically, uncarpingly based on the New Testament. Nearly no other sources are mentioned, and the short further reading list admits nothing by any Jesus Seminar scholar or other revisionist. Since the book is longer than all four Gospels put together, it is obviously more than a conflationary synopsis. Johnson weighs what little is said about Jesus' childhood and youth and why no more is said; discusses Jesus' personal affect; notes the qualities of his teaching, especially in the parables; emphasizes his reservations about the miracles he performs; and analyzes how he differentially addressed men, women, children, and the aged. Johnson outlines the "new ten commandments" that Jesus introduced in deed as well as word and with which he intended to prepare his followers not to change the world but to enter the kingdom of God.

2014 Spiritual Growth

Being United Methodist: What it Means, Why It Matters. 2012. J. Ellsworth Kalas. Abingdon Press. Dr. Kalas develops the Methodist story with passion and interest. His scholarship is thorough and meticulous, although he deftly conceals that fact. Unlike some other Methodist books, which may be heavy on detail and light on interesting moments, Dr. Kalas' book unfolds with steady and engaging dramatic direction. He recounts the Methodist story as an adventure, looking back for the illuminating moments, and looking forward with a visionary eye. He casts a strong vision for where we can go from the foundations of where we've been. "Being United Methodist" is an engaging and most enjoyable book, wonderful as a discussion starter, study resource, or for personal reflection and refreshment. The Rev. Dr. Anthony J. Godlefski, Pastor, Montgomery UMC, Belle Mead, NJ

2014 Spiritual Growth – Youth [include with all Reading Plans]

Esther. John Piper. 2012. 64p. Crossway.

Piper captures our imagination and hearts as he introduces us to Esther the poor orphan and Esther the Persian queen, creatively musing about what could have been in the midst of what really was. Piper's poetry awakens wonder as we experience the beginnings and endings of Esther's life and see throughout the purposeful hand of God.* [one long poem]

2014 Spiritual Growth – Children – counts for all Reading Plans

Traveler: A Story of Trust, Faith, and Hope Encircled By Love. Mary Alice Parmley. 2011. 32p. Indian Trail Press.

The Nativity story is the backdrop for a dog named Traveler's journey to Bethlehem, where he finds friendship and love from his new friends at the inn and the stable where Jesus is born. This book introduces children to the many gifts in life that come from friendship.*

2013 Spiritual Growth

From Preparation to Passion: Devotional and Reflective Meditations. Eleanor Cooper Brown. Xulon Press. 2010. 173p

This resource is intended to allow true engagement in the preparation for a holy passion for Christ on the path to Easter. *From Preparation to Passion* is a resource to use in subsequent years, as it offers insights through the meditative readings on the message that music and the Word of God brings.

2013 Spiritual Growth

In From the Wilderness:She-r-man. David E. Weekley. Wipf and Stock Publishers. 2011. 125p
Stories of transgender people reach back to the beginnings of recorded history. This is the story of a transgender man who has been an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church and who has quietly served for 28 years before sharing his story and spiritual journey with his congregation, denomination and the world.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Morning Coffee With James. Renae Brumbaugh. Chalice Press. 2009. Wm. Be. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2010. 134p

With or without a Bible handy, start the day with *Morning Coffee With James*. This devotional includes the full text of the verses for each day.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Praying for Strangers: An Adventure of the Human Spirit. River Jordan. Penguin Group USA. 2011. 352p

15 copies public library interlibrary loan

As 2009 approached, New Year's resolutions were the last thing on River Jordan's mind. Her sons were about to go off to war – one to Iraq and the other to Afghanistan. All she could do was pray for their safety and hope to maintain her strength, until she unexpectedly came on the perfect resolution – she would pray for a complete stranger every single day of the year.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Reluctant Pilgrim: A Moody, Somewhat Self-Indulgent Introvert's Search for Spiritual Community. Enuma Okoro. UpperRoom Books. 2010. 181p

3 copies public library interlibrary loan

Reluctant Pilgrim traces Okoro's search for a community in which she can embrace both her turbulent love of God and her passion for gorgeous shoes. It's a story of longing and promise, and God's persistent presence. She discovers God in art museums and on street corners, in cathedrals and gymnasiums, and through girlfriends and other seekers she meets along the way.

2013 Spiritual Growth

*Signs of Life: Back to the Basics of Authentic Christianity.* David Jeremiah. Thomas Nelson. 2011. 320p

20 copies public library interlibrary loan

Discover personal transformation that changes the world. Just as there are physical signs that determine the overall health and wellness of a patient, so too there are signs of life determining the extent to which a man or woman has been transformed into the image of Jesus. It's a smile, a simple lifestyle, compassion in the face of misfortune, willingness to commit random acts of kindness, benevolence, social justice, tears, words. In *Signs of Life* bestselling author David Jeremiah leads readers through a forty-day journey to a fuller understanding of what these signs are and how to be a person marked by them. This journey pursues a life characterized by relevancy, surrender, authenticity, generosity, and compassion-and in so doing, transforms individuals, communities, and nations.

2013 Spiritual Growth

When Christians get it wrong. Adam Hamilton. Abingdon Press. 2010. 120p

1 copy public library interlibrary loan

When young adults talk about the problems they have with Christianity and the church, they name attitudes and behaviors they believe are practiced too often by Christians: judging others, condemning people of other faiths, rejecting science, injecting politics into faith and being anti-homosexual. With his familiar style, Adam Hamilton tackles these issues and addresses the hows and whys of Christians getting it right when it comes to being Christ in the world.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Walking Bible Study: The Path of Justice. Becca Stevens. Abingdon Press. 2010

Becca teaches that God will let justice roll like a river and that the diversity of nature, its order and chaos, should call us to walk in humility. Nature reveals a just God who will hold creation accountable for its behavior. But because God's justice is balanced by love and mercy, new creation is all around us and we have reason to celebrate all the springs in our lives.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Walking Bible Study: The Path of Love. Becca Stevens. Abingdon Press. 2010

The world was created when God took the two chaotic elements of the universe that do not allow life--the deep and the darkness---and encompassed them into a loving creation that is called Good. The story of Love is rooted in creation and is so powerful that in its culminating act, it rolls the stone away at the break of Easter morning.

2013 Spiritual Growth

Walking Bible Study: The Path of Peace. Becca Stevens. Abingdon Press. 2010.

In this study Becca looks at various nature images used in Scripture from Isaiah to Paul that describe God's paths. Being in nature allows us to glimpse the peaceable kingdom and to experience the gift of creation. We are reminded that God is on every path, and that in looking at God's handiwork we discover again the specific and unique ways that we are loved by God.

2013 Spiritual Growth – Youth - include in all Reading Plans

Permission to Speak Freely: Essays and Art on Fear, confession and Grace. Anne Jackson. Thomas Nelson. 2010. 194p

1 copy public library interlibrary loan

What is one thing you feel you can't say in church" After Anne Jackson posted this question on her blog, hundreds of people from around the world responded. With raw honesty and humor she explores if faith and real life can coexist, whether any secret is too shameful to confess and most of all, it's really possible (and okay) to be human in church today.

2013 Spiritual Growth – Children – counts in all Reading Plans

Psalms for Young Children. Marie- Helene Delval. Wm. Be. Eerdmans. 2003. 82p

13 copies public library interlibrary loan

This selection of Psalms, paraphrased for young readers, uses language and imagery appropriate for children while remaining faithful to the spirit of the biblical texts.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Hidden in the Rubble: A Haitian Pilgrimage to Compassion and Resurrection. Gerard Thomas Straub. Orbis Books. 2010. 170p.

Prior to the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, Gerard Straub had vividly captured the dreadful conditions that already existed there for a documentary film he was making. Immediately afterward he went back with a team of doctors who rushed in to help the countless victims. This book describes life before and after the earthquake and contains a series of reflections from people fully engaged in helping the Haitians through their darkest days.

2012 Spiritual Growth

All Creation Sings: The Voice of God in Nature. J. Ellsworth Kalas. Abingdon Press. 2010. 124p. e-reader version available.

All Creation Sings wants us to go further than the "green" movement and being simply conscious of the wonder of our creation and the necessity of caring for it passionately. The book calls us to not only see and be grateful for these wonders but to be responsible for them, to go beyond its exquisite beauty to learn some of the lessons it would teach us, lessons about both life and God. A discussion guide is included.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humor. Susan Sparks. Skylight Paths Publishing. 2010. 150p. e-reader and larger print versions available.

Laughter is the gift that you received at birth, one thing you were able to do freely as a child. It's a gift that may fade but never fully disappears. *Laugh Your Way to Grace* is intended to give you permission to reconnect with your own sense of joy and hope.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Ostriches, Dung Beetles and Other Spiritual Masters: A Book of Wisdom From the Wild. Janice McLaughlin. Orbis Books. 2009. 148p.

Ostriches, Dung Beetles and Other Spiritual Masters not only tells us about the wildlife of Africa but also teaches us about ourselves and what we're capable of, how from the elephant we can learn the meaning of community, or from the hippopotamus humility and self-acceptance. The African landscape and its inhabitants become the catechists in this wonderful collection of stories, perfect of individual or group reflection.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Wasabi Gospel: The Startling Message of Jesus. Shawn Wood. Abingdon Press. 2009. 142p. e-reader version available.

Wasabi Gospel takes you on a quest to really examine the words of Jesus and their impact on our lives. Using seven well-known gospel passages, the book unpacks their real significance and explores what life would really look like if we lived out those seemingly subtle commands of Christ.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Seasons of Salt: Meditations. Millie Horlacher. iUniverse. 2009. 232p. large print version.

Whether we realize it at the time, normal events in our everyday lives can have significant spiritual meaning and can also offer valuable lessons-if we only take the time to listen. In more than 60 devotions suitable for individual or group use, *Seasons of Salt* weaves faith and daily living and shows how everyday activities, including childhood games, kitchen challenges and family and church events present perfect opportunities for expressions of faith.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Outlive Your Life: You Were Made to Make a Difference. Max Lucado. Thomas Nelson. 2010. 240p
Outlive Your Life, in typical Lucado methodology, combines anecdotes and stories with theology and practical application to give us a good look at how we can be more like the early church as described in Acts. He calls us beyond the mundane, past the day to day, through the doldrums, and asks us to look beyond the pie-in-the-sky we will have by-and-by - as glorious as the hope of heaven is - and focus on what we can do in the here-and-now to radicalize the world for Jesus.

2012 Spiritual Growth

Francis: The Saint of Assisi: A Novel. Joan Mueller. New City Press. 2010. 272p.

A modern retelling of the life of St. Francis of Assisi, this book combines historical details and dramatic style. The author explores the daily lives of Francis and Clare and the lives of thirteen-century Assisi and beautifully translates their stories in these pages. *St. Francis: The Saint of Assisi* reads like both a love story and a biographical account of the life of the most universally acclaimed saint.

2012 Spiritual Growth

True When Whispered: Hearing God's Voice in a Noisy World. Paul Escamilla. Abingdon Press. 2010. 132p.

Some things are true when whispered, not shouted. Life's finest qualities drain away, Escamilla writes, as intensity, volume, and speed increase. When we hear God's whisper to us, we can address life in a fresher, simpler way - a way that will last beyond the everyday worry and noise.

Dr. Paul L. Escamilla is Associate Director in the Office of Public Affairs and Adjunct Professor of Preaching at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

2012 Spiritual Growth - Children – counts in all Reading Plans

The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights. Carole Boston Weatherford. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. 2010. 36p.

In this book the Beatitudes – the beginning of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount- from the back drop for Carole Boston Weatherford's powerful free-verse poem that traces the African-American journey from slavery to civil rights.