

“A Book on Every Bed”

Start a new Holiday Tradition

Twenty years ago, “A Book on Every Bed” was a concept recommended by advice columnist Amy Dickinson. In collaboration with the Family Reading Partnership, she encourages families to start a Christmas tradition that would far outlast any toy.

Dickinson suggested that after children fall asleep on Christmas Eve (or another winter holiday); place a special gift-wrapped book on each child’s bed. When children awaken, they will find a present that they can open right away. As the first gift of the holiday, it demonstrates to children the importance of books in their lives. It reinforces the value of books and the place that literacy has in their lives.

The original idea came from historian David McCullough who recalled that when he was a young boy, he would wake up on Christmas morning to find a wrapped book on his bed.

Dickinson wrote, “...no matter who you are or what you do, reading will unlock untold opportunities, mysteries and passions. When you have a book and the ability to tell, read and share stories, you gain access to the universe of others’ imaginations. And avid readers know that if you have a book, you are never alone.”

Many families have embraced this tradition of beginning a special day with a special gift.

Holiday Reading Activities

- ❖ Pick one family favorite book and read it aloud each year. Each time it is read, record the date and place where the book was read on the inside cover. Then take a photo of the family with the book and slip it in the book to look at next year.
- ❖ Start a collection of holiday/winter books for all ages. Enjoy them during this time of year and then pack them away in a special box to open and rediscover year after year.
- ❖ Plan holiday meals or decide on baked treats to make by reading cookbooks together.
- ❖ Help your child make bookmarks to enclose with a gift book they helped to pick out.
- ❖ Check out library books about another culture’s winter celebrations.
- ❖ Choose books to read each night of Hanukkah or Kwanzaa.
- ❖ Record a story for a special person and give the book and recording as a gift.

www.familyreading.org