

# Nightly Family Reading for Building Memories and Imaginations

## Episode 240

Rachel Winchester [00:00:00]:

Have you ever said, I just wish I could talk to someone who has done this method? Does it really work? Well, today we have a treat for you. In this episode, we are returning to our conversation with a family who uses this method and has seen the fruit of it with their own family. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively and enjoyably. Carole Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades now, and this is one of the families who have attended our seminars and consulted with Carole over the years. We know the second part of our conversation will encourage you. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:40]:

So what is other than the reading, which, I mean, Ben, I just need to say publicly, you are my hero, that you are reading every night. If ever a man could say I'm too busy or too tired, it would be Ben Applebee. But you as you are reading to your flock that God has entrusted to you every night and you think outside the box, so many if you can hear the excuses that I hear sometimes from dads, oh, well, he this or he that or, you know, his life is really stressful. His job is really hard. He comes home really tired. I'm like, really? I mean, your wife isn't? Like, I'm not

Rylee Applebee [00:01:16]:

Right. Exactly.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:17]:

Right? And so what you're doing in the shaping, what are some of your main memories from reading with the kids? What are some books that you've really been impacted by as a family?

Ben Applebee [00:01:28]:

Yeah. Well, you bless me and honor me. Thank you for that, and I wanna quickly just qualify. It may not be a perfect record of every night. You know that. It's not, but it's certainly the rule and then the nights where I say, hey, guys. Guess what? No. We got home too late, and it's just a no.

That's the exception. But Right. I I just wanted 2 seconds on that before I get to some books that are already in my mind. And I wanna encourage any dads and moms who are listening and say, hey. Part of why it's the genius of it for us is that it's a system for winding down. So we're all getting calm. We, my wife and I, we lament the people in our in our flock and in our neighborhoods that let kids run around until 9 and 10 PM, and then whoopsies, you know, intimacy time for mom and dad has just gone out the window because we're boundless, and the kids tell us when they wanna wind down. That doesn't that's not gonna work.

So I wanna just give a double incentive. Yes. You're gonna do formation and vivid imagination work through these amazing books in this curriculum. Yeah. For sure. But the second win that you're gonna get out of it is a system that safeguards the marriage, the intimacy, and the kind of routine. That's a better word than system. Forgive me.

But there's a beautiful routine thing there that is our saving grace. People wanna know how do you do it as a large family. Well, we live and die by routines, and that nighttime read aloud routine is such a blessing in more ways than one. So I just wanna emphasize that I love it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:48]:  
Yeah.

Ben Applebee [00:02:48]:  
Yeah. Good. I so 2 books, and I hope this is in our curriculum, but I just the other day, this is not planned, But I was just thinking we we had to rent for a time while our house was getting some work done, and I'll and that maybe that was what made it such a searing memory. But in a span of 6 months, we did both *Doctor Doolittle* and we did *Around the World in 80 Days*. And, like, to this day, the graphic imagery of those books just like Rylee said, I heard they're doing a show. There's a limited series on *Around the World in 80 Days*, and I said, oh, I can tell you how that story goes. And I you know, it's not like I have this photographic memory, but, I mean, goodness, those are such classic tales.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:21]:  
Oh, I love it. My granddaughter loved *Doctor Dolittle*. I have not read that book interestingly for some reason, but, yeah, I actually just loved it. And it really, was significant for her when she was a little girl, and she talked to me about it frequently. Yeah. What else? What have you done, like, any series? Like, have you done Narnia? Have you done the Little House books?

Ben Applebee [00:03:44]:  
Oh, gosh.

Rylee Applebee [00:03:45]:  
Yeah. We've done both

Ben Applebee [00:03:46]:  
of those. Are you gonna are you gonna make me as a man, Carol, come out on here and talk about Little House? Yes. You're gonna play you're gonna play me like that? Okay. Well, let me just first of all, make sure I we're not having a computer error here.

Rylee Applebee [00:03:57]:  
Oh, there we go.

Ben Applebee [00:03:59]:  
Yeah. So we the those books and their series set are strewn about the house right now and I I wanna plan a trip to go up to it's Prince Edward Island. Isn't it? Is it Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:08]:  
Where Erin is from and the

Ben Applebee [00:04:10]:  
Oh, excuse me. I'm switching the series. Yeah. Little House and, oh my gosh, that large family.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:16]:  
Yes. Mhmm.

Ben Applebee [00:04:16]:  
And they're and how the series evolves into even the a boy's home. I mean, for, you know, foster care, basically youth. Oh, those stories are

Rylee Applebee [00:04:25]:  
so good. You're talking about now you're now you're mixing all of them up. He's also read The Little Women. So now he's talking

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:31]:  
about that. Little Women. Okay. So you've read Joe's Boys is what you're saying and

Ben Applebee [00:04:36]:  
That's right. Yes. Little Men, Little Women.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:38]:  
Love it.

Rylee Applebee [00:04:39]:  
He's read those. Laura and Mary, you probably read those. Those are probably his first read. So that was really long time ago. Okay.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:45]:  
So Little House in the Big Woods, Little House

Ben Applebee [00:04:48]:  
Oh, of course.

Rylee Applebee [00:04:53]:  
They've done Narnia, all the Narnia books.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:55]:  
Yes. Now tell me about reading Narnia with your kids. I'm sure they're all at very different ages and stages. What kind of spiritual impact, if any, did you see as you were reading those books?

Ben Applebee [00:05:11]:  
Yeah. They it's it's profound to have again, there's this great, Canadian pastor Daryl Johnson. He wrote this, great, I think, chapter and verse study on the book of Revelation. And he said that Revelation is, it's not a new thing. It's the gospel retold through images. And there's just some that was the first time, and there's so many others who have said a similar idea well, like, that our we need a baptism of our imagination. We're being we're being formed by this world. We need to be reformed by the gospel, by imagery, you know.

Our brains are awash with imagery. And so that series is profound for that they can have a graphic idea of God and the people of God and his restoration plan. It does all of that. I mean, we're even reading Marco Polo right now getting through that one, which is, like, one of our densest, you know, reads. And I'm trying to pooh pooh it, by the way, and my 12 year old son is saying, no, dad. No. It's so interesting. There's so much good stuff.

But you're seeing all of this eastern worldview Yeah. And, you know, the Khans in the 1200. And, I mean, even for them to see the 2 worldviews laid alongside each other, Narni on the one hand and the the Khan that, you know, the Chinese civilization in the 1200 is they're getting it. I mean, it's a profound what they get. Wow.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:32]:

Wow. And you know what I love about reading good books, you guys, is you don't have to dissect it like a frog on a table. But the books do the work, and you just are, like, watching the magic happen. You don't have to say, did you notice in this book that, you know, Eustace, blah blah blah. You know, you don't have to do any of that. The books do it all, and we don't analyze books for children. We just let them fall in love with books.

Rylee Applebee [00:07:04]:

Yeah. And I think they really do just make such a profound impact on them and their character. I think my favorite book that I've read with the kids has to be Corrie ten Boom. And it was so fun because I've read it twice now. Like, that's the nice thing about having such a wide age span is I will get to reread books and really absorb them. But, we and then we found out that Corrie Ten Boom was actually buried right here

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:32]:

She was.

Rylee Applebee [00:07:32]:

In Orange County. So we got to go visit her grave. And so that was such a special, thing, but that book is just a character book.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:43]:

Now are you talking about *The Hiding Place*?

Rylee Applebee [00:07:46]:

Yes. *The Hiding Place*. Sorry. And we quote it regularly when we're struggling with things, like maybe something's messy or we're just feeling ungrateful and it's hard. And we talk about how her sister, actually, Betsy, would give thanks for the fleas because the fleas allowed her to get to preach the gospel because the soldiers were too scared to come in because it was so overrun by fleas.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:15]:

Yes.

Rylee Applebee [00:08:15]:

But, yeah, just those character aspects that are alive in these books that are forming our kids, and we don't even have to say anything. Let the books do it. Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:25]:

It does it for you. I just Yeah. Yes. And when you read the same books, you have the same friends.

Rylee Applebee [00:08:31]:

Yes. Mhmm.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:32]:

And so you've had all these shared experiences without leaving home. And that's the beautiful thing is that, when JJ, my son, was a little boy, my mother was a school teacher. She was she was retired by them, but she had been a special ed school teacher and she thought homeschooling was really weird at first, and then she thought she invented it later. But, I mean, but, they were walking along and she was trying to interview him a little bit, you know, on a little walk in their neighborhood, in my mom's neighborhood. And JJ said, well, some of my best friends are people that I've met in books. And, you know, coming out of the public school system where kids don't read for pleasure or entertainment or relationship, They're reading out of duty or, you know, reading the cliff notes usually anyway. And so she was so intrigued by that. But it's true that, no matter how poor you are, no matter how limited your resources in your home are with a library card, you can travel the world without leaving home.

Rylee Applebee [00:09:39]:

Yeah. Yeah. I was just gonna tell you a funny story today that made me think of you. Our oldest daughter has a library in her room, and she likes to regularly, resituate it. And she literally has created, like, library cards, so that people who check out her books

Ben Applebee [00:09:57]:

Yes.

Rylee Applebee [00:09:57]:

Will bring them back to her. And so today, I had to, like, break up a little tiff around whose books were whose books. And that is so the culture that has been created in our house because of your influence. Like, books have such a high value. Each child now has their own area where they keep and hoard their books. And if you have taken one of their books, you better bring it back because yeah.

Ben Applebee [00:10:22]:

Sweet Evie. Dad, I have 67 books in my personal collection.

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:28]:

That's unbelievable. Well, years ago, I was visiting with a friend who had kids a little bit younger than J. J., not much. And I walked into their family room and there were stacks of books, all my books that I had sold them all, you know, over the years. They're all stacked in the family room. And I said, well, what what are these stacks? And the girl said, well, we are deciding who gets which book when we get married.

Rylee Applebee [00:10:52]:

Oh my gosh. That is so funny.

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:53]:

9 years old, 7 and 9, something like that. But they were thinking ahead and, very, you know, territorial about their books. And I just love that. I love when kids love the physical book, like, the smell of it, the holding of it, the cracking it open. And, one day, I, left a book open, like, on its belly. Do you know what I mean? Like, spread spread out. Yeah.

And Eisley and it was one of Eisley's books, my granddaughter's, and she said, grammy, grammy, don't ever leave a book like that. Use a bookmark. And I'm like, oh my gosh. I know.

Ben Applebee [00:11:34]:

Books are our friends. That's a mantra in the house.

Rylee Applebee [00:11:37]:

Yep. Because our toddlers will, try to tear up books in their beds. And so that's our mantra. We're like, nope. You lost your books for the week then because books are our friends.

Ben Applebee [00:11:47]:

Little destroyers that they are.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:50]:

Well, this has been such a joy. I could talk to you guys for days. You're just the personification of what I pray is the fruit of Homeschool Made Simple. And you have taken the bit in your mouth and you have run with it and left us in the dust. Like and

that's always as a mentor, that's always your dream is for your mentees to leave you behind and take another level. And, wow, it's such an honor. And as in the pastoral role, you're modeling publicly so many core values that we share and value and, you're reproducing yourselves. That's really the nature of a pastor's family.

It's a lot of pressure. But if it's done with a happy heart, like, well, you know, we're not perfect and our kids throw up on the way to church just like yours do. But but this is what a way that we have found to be successful and work. And, our kids aren't perfect and they're if you ever doubted original sin, come over to our house. But Right. But it's it's beautiful that the Lord has kind of put you on a, you know, on an altar, I guess, of just being watched, being observed, and and that you are modeling an easy yoke. You know, when I see you guys, you don't look stressed. You don't look annoyed.

You don't look fatigued. Some families with 2 kids look like they're gonna have to, like, go to the Bahamas for a year to get food. Right? But you've just how have you kept such a light heart carrying as much as you carry?

Ben Applebee [00:13:35]:

And, you know, we do have to consistently bless our our parents and our in laws. You're a generational blessing to us, Carole, and I hope you know that. But in like fashion, you know, we are fortunate enough that we live in the same basic vicinity as grandparents that are very active and involved. They help and, you know, we get date nights, you know, semi-regularly because of them and Yes. They're helping hands. We have a church, that's supportive of what we're doing. They get that our family is our first calling and and that and the church is always gonna be second.

So they provide finance. They provide support, resource, time. So taking time is my greatest compensation to be home. That my schedule, and, obviously, I'll let Rylee speak to her, a subjective part of that. But Yeah. For me to be able to call my calendar and rush home in an afternoon where I need to, you know, help and and partner in parenting, I can do that. And then I can also take that time to recover my soul and go slow.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:34]:

Your equilibrium.

Ben Applebee [00:14:36]:

Yeah. And to have, you know, have habits and disciplines that feed my soul, and those are all a whole another conversation.



Carole Joy Seid [00:14:42]:

But I was just gonna say, can we do another podcast on that? Because that is something that I'm really in love with is these patterns and systems that we create in a daily rule.

Ben Applebee [00:14:54]:

Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:55]:

And, yeah, I always say I really should have been a nun. JJ says that about me all the time. I mean, you really should have been a nun. It's like I've read so many things about monasteries, and and, you know, I'm reading one of the, Hawk and the Dove series. I don't know if you guys have read those by Penelope.

Rylee Applebee [00:15:11]:

Yeah. I have.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:11]:

Penelope look like okay. Well, she's just released, I think maybe her 9th or 10th in that series. And I just and I as I was making the bed this morning, I thought I I moved the book and I saw where the bookmark was. I'm like, oh, it's almost over. I'm I don't want it to end. Yep. Like, I just there's this longing. So you've created those things.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:33]:

Yeah. Have there been any books that have influenced you in in that area?

Ben Applebee [00:15:39]:

I will say quickly. You took the words out of my mouth. I was going to say, if it weren't for read about a rule of life, which I think you're pointing to, from from a guy named Pete Scazzaro, and he was a tenured pastor in, New York. And then now he just helps people with their what I'd call soul care. And we have a whole another conversation we do about self care versus soul care. There's a big difference, folks. Rylee could say I don't know. I'm looking forward to what her answer is gonna be because, boy, how God expands her margins is phenomenal to me. I don't know how she does it. But, when I would not have been able to be qualified as a lead pastor if I had not found Pete Scazzaro's *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* on my father in law's bookshelf.

I would not have made it. I'm telling you, in four short years of being a lead pastor, I would not have made it at all. So that was a huge grace to me that God pointed me in that direction.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:25]:

Yeah. I when I worked at my church in Wheaton, that was a required book that we had to read a staff. Oh. I love his story because he was so burned out and burning everybody else out around him that his wife actually asked if he minded if they went to a different church even though he was pastoring. She asked She and

Rylee Applebee [00:16:46]:

the children. Ben read that to me.

Ben Applebee [00:16:48]:

Yeah. I'm not leaving I'm not leaving the church. I'm leaving your church. Yeah. It's a classic story.

Rylee Applebee [00:16:52]:

I was like, you better stay in line because I just learned something from her.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:58]:

Yeah. These resources keep our balance, don't they? They call us to accountability and to common sense and to balance.

Ben Applebee [00:17:08]:

Yes.

Rylee Applebee [00:17:08]:

Yeah. Yeah. I think it's funny that you say that because the idea of the monastery of motherhood has greatly, impacted how I view being a mom. And I read a article that was called, like, just was looking at what motherhood is and how it relates to actually the monastic lifestyle. And Wow. It talked about how the monks, when the bell rings, they have to go and attend to, what they're called to. And just the same thing for moms, when that bell rings, we have a call. And whether that's at 2 in the morning or

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:47]:

Yeah. But the bell you're referring to is not your smartphone. No. It's what? What is the bell you're referring?

Rylee Applebee [00:17:53]:

Yeah. It's our children and their needs. And but I love the reframing of that because, that's my worship. My worship is changing a diaper and it's feeding my children. And with so many needs, it can feel taxing and overwhelming, but I realized that when I

change my mindset and view it as, an offering to the Lord, then my heart follows. And that monastic view of motherhood has greatly influenced me in times of parenting that feel like too much. And you know what? They are too much for me, but they're not too much for God.

Ben Applebee [00:18:31]:

If I may, I just found the article. Sorry, Carole. I just wanna name it real quick because it's framed it's so in line with your DNA, and it's framed our whole household ministry. But if someone googled the domestic monastery and the name the original source document would be Ron Rolheiser.

Rylee Applebee [00:18:45]:

He has a book.

Ben Applebee [00:18:46]:

Ron Rolheiser.

Rylee Applebee [00:18:47]:

A little book.

Ben Applebee [00:18:48]:

Yeah. But you can read even the short for the margin of time you have, you could read even his original, newsletter article on at the domestic monastery. So that's that would probably help some.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:56]:

Oh, that is just beautiful. Wow. I just love you guys. Thank you for being in my life and what a support you bring to our ministry. And so, Ben, I would love it if you would just pray these things on our listeners. Would you would you be willing to do that for us as we close?

Ben Applebee [00:19:17]:

I'd love to. Can I even remind people of a couple things, just reminders? Would that be okay? Yeah. So 2525, we're hosting here at 3186 Pullman Street. That's Watermark OC Church. That's gonna be the great conference for Southern California. Right?

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:31]:

In January.

Ben Applebee [00:19:32]:

January.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:32]:  
Put 125 20.

Ben Applebee [00:19:34]:  
1. 12525.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:36]:  
That's right.

Ben Applebee [00:19:36]:  
Yeah. So please mark that down. And would it be okay? You can totally say no, Carol, but can I reference something Rylee and I put together just to help families even locally?

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:43]:  
Love you too.

Ben Applebee [00:19:44]:  
Okay. It's it's kind of a mouthful, but we have this just a newsletter, and it's parenting with grit and grace.com. So parenting with grit and grace.com. If that's helpful for anyone, we just wanna throw it out there to your friends.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:57]:  
Why don't I know about this? Hello?

Ben Applebee [00:20:00]:  
Well, it's new.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:01]:  
Okay. So Yeah. And you pulled this together at, like, 2 o'clock in the morning? Like, when when did you find that window? I'm impressed.

Ben Applebee [00:20:09]:  
Yeah. Just minutes before we click to record, probably.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:11]:  
So yeah.

Ben Applebee [00:20:12]:

People will see that. They're gonna find us out. But if we can encourage even 1 household, we'd love to do that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:16]:

Oh, thank you for your work. Thank you.

Ben Applebee [00:20:19]:

Thank you, Carole, for you're a great blessing to us. I'll pray.

Jesus, thank you so much again for just this fun. This has been a total delight, and that you, you know, you brought us Carole and her sweet ministry. It has shaped our whole house and now generations of Applebee's. So bless her, God, in everything she does, everything she touches, every call she has, every conference. Protect her in her mind and her body and her spirit and everything she does. God, thank you for the listener. Help them. We are right there with them. None of us have arrived and figured this out perfectly. We are all on the front lines together. So the family that's just trying to hang on, I just pray that word that Carole said earlier. Give them your easy yoke. Give them an affirmation and a confirmation that they're not pulling alone, that they're pulling with you, and they're pulling in the same direction that you would have them go. So bless and keep all of us, and, bless this ministry and the conference upcoming in Jesus' name. Amen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:14]:

Amen. Thank you, Ben and Rylee. You are bright light in the firmament of my heart.

Rylee Applebee [00:21:22]:

Thank you.

Ben Applebee [00:21:22]:

Thanks again.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:23]:

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