THE EPOCH TIMES



Joy and a Moral Compass Are Imperative to Learning

Social distancing restrictions highlight the importance of relationships for kids

CATHERINE YANG

onths of distance learning, online schooling, ad-hoc homeschooling, and hybrid methods that began in the recent school year have shown that course material is far from the only thing that matters when it comes to learning.

Structure, consistency, character, and perhaps unsurprisingly, play, are also deeply necessary in creating a good environment for

66 Every day is about valuing the process of learning, not fixating on the product.

Andrew Cotten

learning, as many experienced teachers know. Eighth-grade creative writing teacher Andrew Cotten says that despite the upheaval of normalcy this past year—from teaching online in the spring to a cautious new alternating schedule in the fall—certain principles that have served him well still hold true, although they may be more challenging right now.

"What works well and what will always work well," he said, "is having a relationship with students. Being there for them ... seeing them as people, getting to know them." Relationship-building is hard with distance learning, though Cotten's class had the benefit of already having gotten to know him and their peers earlier that year. But as students returned in the fall, holding each other at arm's length and even, he said, carrying some trauma, it took a lot of time, grace, and effort on his part to work to foster trust and relationships.

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Chin Up! 4 Steps to Sanity in Crazy Times

How to keep our spirits up and stay active in a year beset by pandemic, lockdowns, and riots

Many parents who have been unhappy with the state of public schooling this year have opted for private schools or homeschooling.

JEFF MINICK

Recently, I emailed a friend in a disheartened mood about the new pandemic lockdowns, including more dictates from the governor here in Virginia, about the elections, and about the glum mood of our nation this holiday season.

Here is her reply: "Evil times, yes. But as a friend told me, we should be happy we live in these times. When else has the meaning of life been so clear? When else has standing up for truth been so important? This is the greatest adventure in a very long time."

Coincidentally, during his homily the following Sunday, our priest counseled

against giving way to despair in dark times and referenced this exchange between the hobbit Frodo and the wizard Gandalf in "Lord of the Rings":

Frodo: "I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened." Gandalf: "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with

the time that is given to us." As we near the end of this awful year of pandemic, lockdowns, riots, and election fraud, we delude ourselves if we believe that a change in the calendar will magically

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Chin Up! 4 Steps to Sanity in Crazy Times

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Continued from Page 1

erase the gloom and turmoil plaguing our country. Indeed, given the battered state of our nation, our troubles may become even

And so, as I pondered the messages of encouragement from my friend and the priest, I began searching for ways to battle against the black mood that sometimes threatens to engulf me as well as others I know in these ugly times. Here are four steps that should help us keep our spirits up.

Step 1: Recognition

The circumstances in which we live are as they are. Trying to wish our problems away or pretending they don't exist is no solution. The homeowner who ignores the need to replace his roof will soon have water dripping into the living room.

Here, Gandalf's words and the priest's message ring true: These are the times given us, and we must decide not whether but how we will face adversity. This is the first step of any project: to acknowledge a problem and then figure out how to address it.

In my case, elected officials and bureaucrats behaving like dictators generally prompt my dark melancholy. It doesn't take a conspiracy theorist to see that governments around the world are hungry for greater control over the lives of their citizens. Our daily headlines proclaim it so. In Europe, in Canada, and in the United States, our national governments grow larger and more aggressive by the year, making ordinary men and women feel more like voiceless serfs than free citizens.

There: I had identified a cause for my un-

Next up, the second step. Step 2: Limitations, Acceptance, and

Before taking any action, we must recognize our limitations. My son-in-law can build everything from bookcases to houses, whereas I am in no way a hammer-and-nail kind of guy.

The same holds true when we wrestle with larger issues. Take the pandemic, for example. We wake one morning and discover that our governor has again locked down our schools, churches, restaurants, and small businesses. This news has deep and dire implications for us or for some of our friends, and we rage against the government's stupidity, or else flop back into bed and pull a blanket over our heads.

Because we're helpless to change or influence these mandates, we find ourselves further disheartened, brought low by forces beyond our control. Masks and restrictions may also make us feel isolated, and we slog through each day with chains hanging on our hearts.

It's then we might remember Reinhold Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer, which even the atheist author of "Atlas Shrugged," Ayn Rand, admired for its "eloquent simplicity" and its



This is the first step of any project: to acknowledge a problem and then figure out how to address it.

Families may choose to

get together despite their

ping gathering numbers.

seek to achieve." Here are words which, if we heed them, can bring a 180-degree change in our attitude: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

By accepting that we cannot change the governor's edicts, we can look for ways we can change the effects of those edicts. If he closes our schools, we can consider withdrawing altogether from the system and homeschooling our children. If he forbids gatherings of more than 6 people in our homes, we can invite 12 people to a holiday party. If he closes down our gym, we can join others and make our voices heard, as did a group of protesters in Buffalo, New York.

"mental attitude which a rational man must

Step 3: Take Action

Right now, "the courage to change the things I can" is already a living motto for millions of Americans, and the past four years in particular have heartened those who for so long have felt themselves the losers in our cultural wars. Events on the national stage have roused an army of ordinary people Step 4: Seek Allies determined to resist in whatever way they can a government bent on devouring their

A woman I know teaches her children the Pledge of Allegiance and songs and stories celebrating our past. She has also experienced a political awakening this year and now boldly defends conservative principles on Facebook, losing some "friends" and taking some heat but refusing to back down. Her husband helps coach their older son's rugby team and instills in his players the principles of fair play. An in-law of mine teaches political science and Constitutional law to classes of home-educated students, showing them how our republic is supposed to function. The young husband and wife who live across the street from me have become more politically engaged, discussing events with family and friends, and refusing to adhere to some of our governor's more extreme pandemic edicts.

From the homeschooling families whose children I once taught to friends, neighbors, and family members, I know scores of people who every day mount the battlements and defend our liberty and culture. Small deeds, yes, most of these, but they add up.

For decades, the radical left has run rough shod over conservatives and centrists, capturing our schools, driving the public discourse, and leaving the rest of us baffled and defeated, foot soldiers in a lost cause.

Because the left in this election showed ts true colors, many Americans—Republicans and Democrats—turned their backs on them, voting for conservative candidates from the House of Representatives to state egislatures. Radicals in this election suf-

fered a major setback. Which means we have allies, millions of them. We have family members and friends on our side, and for the sake of our mental and spiritual health, it's important for us to remain in contact with them. When we are disheartened, we should seek encouragement from them, and offer them the same.

Remember: We are not alone.



Rachel Thorlund, manager at The Den Cafe, walks past a table following reimposed restrictions on indoor dining in Orange

County in Santa Ana, Calif., on Nov. 17, 2020.

A restaurant's outdoor dining tent stands empty on the first day of California's new stay-at-home orders in Los Angeles on Dec. 7, 2020

Winston Churchill once said something that was similar to the encouragement offered by my friend: "Do not let us speak of darker days; let us speak rather of sterner days. These are not dark days: these are great days—the greatest days our country has ever lived."

Let us entertain no delusions. Churchill's "sterner days" lie ahead of us. Those who would radically transform the United States of America will not give up their efforts, and we must resist them. Small deeds, forming bonds with others in the resistance, and keeping our morale high are for now our best weapons against those who would op-

So, rather than become dismayed or depressed, let's look at these times as a special opportunity to defend our liberties and, as my friend says, to join in "the greatest adventure in a very long time."

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

stuffed animal, or a holiday book may be just the thing to send little ones off to dream of dancing sugar plums.

Movie Watching

Don't let the season pass you by without enjoying the same holiday movies you enjoyed as a kid. Pop the popcorn, make more hot chocolate (you're going to need a lot of that), and snuggle in for all the holiday feels.

Head out into nature for a family photo shoot.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION:

'Never, Ever Take Your Loved Ones for Granted'

→ Advice from our readers to our voung people

During the summer of 1969, I received a letter in the mail from the president of the United States, Richard Nixon, that began with those infamous words, "Greetings, you are hereby inducted into the Armed Forces of the United States of America."

I was obviously upset and crumpled the letter into a ball, throwing it into the corner. My mother was lying in her bedroom in our small house. She was 42 years old, dying of cancer, and I was the eldest of five siblings. She called to me asking what it was that came in the mail. My reply was simply an attempt to avoid the whole thing. "It was nothing, Mom, just a bill for record club." She was having none of that and asked me to please bring it in to her (she was bedridden at the time) ... so I proceeded to take it to her room, where she read it and began to cry, pulling me toward her and hugging me very tightly, sobbing. She had two brothers and a brother-in-law who fought in Word War II, injured and changed permanently by the experience. She knew the risks and dangers of war and didn't want that for any of her children.

Meanwhile, my buddies were out front honking their horn for me. We had plans, and I was selfishly wanting to get out of there. "It will be OK, Mom. Lots of my buddies from high school have gone and even some of my cousins, and they made it back just fine. I'll be OK, really." She didn't want to let go, but I insisted that I really needed to go, they're out front waiting for me, and we can continue this talk again later.

My mother died shortly after that. I cannot tell you how many nights I cried myself to sleep on my pillow wishing so badly that I could relive that day, have an opportunity to see and hug and talk to my mother just one more time ... but that was gone forever!

If I can pass on a very hard-learned lesson for anyone willing to listen, it is to never, ever take your loved ones for granted. Never pass up an opportunity to hug them and tell them how much you love them, and appreciate them ... you have to do so.

—Ed Koehnemann

My message to the younger generation: Like most 76-year-olds, I have had many life experiences, both challenging and rewarding. My childhood years included the original neighborhood watch, my parents and neighbors sitting on their front porches. My value system was shaped by my parents, grandparents, and teachers, not social media. I have been thinking of what I want to share with my granddaughter who is graduating from college this year. Perhaps these words and advice are applicable to others in the younger

I want her and other young people to understand that life is not about what we get but what we give; not about who we know but about how we treat those we know; not about possessions, but about possibilities; not about fame and fortune, but about the content of one's character.

I want her to understand that life is not often easy or fair, but each day affords us new opportunities to make a difference for others, no matter how small or significant that difference might be. I want her to know that all choices, however big or small, have consequences.

I want her to find her passion and be enthusiastic in what she does. I want her to understand that you cannot do things alone, to recognize what others can contribute and ask for help when needed.

I want her to know that she will make mistakes and have some regrets but be able to admit her mistakes and know that sometimes we get second chances to not make the same mistakes again. I want her to see the good in people and be able to forgive them, even when they disappoint her and let her know.

Above all, I want her to be her own

Take appropriate direction and advice from others, but let conscience be your guide. And remember, be good to yourself. There is only one you

The past can't be changed, where the future can, but only in the present.

I enjoyed and agreed with Grandy's Proverbs. Here are a few that I use with my

kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids: 1. Always look for the "big picture." It will help you create better solutions.

2. Quickly volunteer for the tasks nobody else wants; it will make you indispensable. 3. Never stop learning, and avidly self-

4. At your next work review, set a goal to make "go get (your name)" the first thing your managers think when they need

something done well. Ask your boss to help you achieve that goal. 5. Write your own personal philosophy. The more aspects of your life that you evaluate will help you better define your beliefs. It is also important to write it down and update it at least annually. This

helped my confidence and peace of mind

over several decades.

-Kurt Hasper Jr.

Growing up in the '50s and '60s, we kids ate at a bar in the kitchen that faced a bulletin board. My mother, ever clever, posted up clippings on the board for us to read— Ann Landers, Dear Abby, et cetera. One that she left up has always stayed with me:

"Be glad for dirty dishes They have a tale to tell While other folks go hungry We're eating very well With home and health and happiness We shouldn't want to fuss As by this stack of evidence, God's very good to us."

And, yes, we hated washing and drying dishes before we got a dishwasher, and

I truly believe the new generations don't have context for how lucky they are. They were brought up in the AYSO soccer world where everyone plays and everyone gets a trophy. That is not life. While this poem is about dishes, it's also about responsibility and appreciation, not expecting the world given to you on a platter.

—Stacy Gannon

Dear Next Generation, I may not be as old as some who share their sage advice through this column, but I believe much of the knowledge I have gleaned over the years is applicable

to situations you will face.

Firstly, learn to love God, respect people, and work hard. These three pillars will see you through every situation you will ever face. Belief in God is essential for your life and beyond. Learn to trust him in all your ways, and He will make your paths straight.

Secondly, learn to respect people and hold them in high esteem, and learn to be tolerant of others whose beliefs and practices may not be like your own. Especially in regards to relationships and chivalry, being courteous to women (if you're a man) is essential. From early on in my life, I was taught this, and it paid off.

Thirdly, hard work is essential as well. You may have the opportunity to work in a wide range of areas, whether this is sitting at a computer from 9 in the morning to 5 in the evening, or getting dirty in a hands-on job, such as construction and contracting.

In all of these, seek to honor God with your hard work, even when it's tough. Abide by these pillars, and you will be the kind of person that other people will talk to their kids about and say, "Now, you could learn from them."

—Luke Pierce

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What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to:

Next Generation, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

It's the Little Things

10 simple holiday traditions to enjoy with your family



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Pile in the car and take in the local Christmas lights.

BARBARA DANZA

Making holiday memories doesn't have to be an elaborate or expensive undertaking. Sometimes, the very best traditions are the simplest ones.

Here are 10 ideas you may want to add to your repertoire this holiday season.

House Decorating

Make a day out of holiday decorating. Perhaps you start out at a Christmas tree farm and later find yourself digging through boxes in the attic. Put on your favorite holiday playlist, set out holiday treats to keep everyone going, and make what could be a chore a delightful family day together.

Lights Peeping

Put on your Christmas jammies, fill travel mugs with warm hot cocoa, and pile into the car for a tour of the local Christmas lights. Wherever your journey takes you, pipe in holiday tunes, and revel in how joyful this free outing with your family is. You'll definitely want to do this year after year.

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Photo Shooting

Dress everyone up and head out into nature for a family photoshoot. Whether you've got a photographer in tow or are taking your own pictures, make a day of it and enjoy your beautiful surroundings and time together.

Cookie Baking

I'm not one to need an excuse to bake **Ornament Gifting** cookies, but holiday time is the best one Each year, give your children a special of the year. Involve the whole family in mixing, baking, decorating, and gifting your favorite varieties of holiday treats.

Story Reading

Plan ahead by requesting holiday titles from your local library and gathering the ones you already own. Each night, choose a different story (or more) to read aloud. For the perfect touch, read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" on Christmas Eve (see B10 for more suggestions).

Shopping for a Sibling

ner up with your spouse to take your Eve. Some new pajamas, a snuggly

children on separate Christmas shopping trips. Allow each child to put their heart into finding the perfect gift for their brother or sister. Perhaps you may encourage them to even pay for it themselves. At the end of the day, meet up with the whole family for a casual dinner or pizza night at home.

Christmas ornament all their own. When they're grown, they'll have a meaningful collection to start their adult life with.

Christmas Eating Designate a simple food item or two that

you always eat on Christmas. (My family, for example, always has cinnamon rolls on Christmas morning. The house smells of cinnamon, ingraining a wonderful memory in our minds forever.)

Early Opening

Waiting for Santa is hard. Set aside one If you've got more than one kiddo, part- small gift to be opened on Christmas

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Social distancing restrictions highlight the importance of relationships for kids

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Grades Versus Growth

Cotten, who teaches in Mountain Brook. Alabama, had a mentor who once told him that teachers were no longer considered the gatekeepers of knowledge, that the smartest one in the room was no longer the robed scholar at the chalkboard, but a device in everyone's hand. But the focus on children is timeless, Cotten said.

Cotten teaches 13-year-olds, students at that in-between age where "they're at the Peter Pan age—Wendy wants him to grow up, the Lost Boys want them to stay young forever."

"There is still a child in them, as cool as they want to act," Cotten said. "They're at this really weird crossroads." He says they want to assert their independence, but they still need plenty of guidance. They want attention, but they also want to be invisible. At this age, in a creative writing class, they are no longer at the stage of drilling fundamentals, they need something else.

"It's about serving them not serving the content," he said. It's about helping the kids grow and love learning.

A student is someone who asks "When am I ever going to need this?" and "Is this going to be on the test?" and goes through their school days with anxiety over grades.

"But learners are people who are willing to take risks, to grow, to see this as a holistic experience," Cotten said.

A learner sees opportunity in everything they do to pick up and hone their skills, even if the lesson is learning to work with people you don't see eye to eye with, or learning to sift through information, or the lesson that loads of practice is what leads to mastery. In Cotten's class, essays are "a chance to express yourself, to practice communication, to be effective in your communication."

"Grades versus growth is a big belief that has helped me in my understanding in being a teacher in regards to relationships, that students aren't just here to earn grades, and if they are, how can I help them get something out of this and view this as an opportunity for growth?" he said.

"Every day is about valuing the process of learning, not fixating on the product."

Cotten's classroom culture is based on a personal mantra he has: be silly, be honest, be kind. "Silly" is a reach for 13-year-olds, honesty sounds deceptively simple but can be harder when it comes to emotional honesty, and kindness is a deeply important and firm rule in the classroom, but with modeling and



unflappable enthusiasm, Cotten sets a good example to allow the students to do that. Silliness encourages curiosity, developing learners instead of grade-fixated students, and that changes the entire student-teacher relationship.

"The problem is students want to push against their teachers, right? But they start to lean against their teachers and use them as a support," Cotten said. "If the teacher doesn't care about you, every classroom's a war zone, you know? But when there's a culture built, it really, it takes a tough kid to want to be mean in there."

Passion and Play

Grades versus

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One of Cotten's favorite descriptions of writing is something a professor once told him: "Every sentence is a playground"—he's a firm believer in play, both in and out of the

"I had a student put it this way: There is a huge difference between 8 to 3 [the school day] and 3 to 8. What are you doing from 3 to 8 that brings you joy? I think that feeds into what you do from 8 to 3," Cotten said. "That impacts you as a student during the day, both positively and negatively."

Aaron Benner, who taught fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders, said the most effective thing he did to build trust, and, in effect, authority, with his students was organizing football games during recess.

"My favorite strategy was playing football with my students," Benner said. He'd eschew lunch at the teacher's lounge for time outdoors with his kids, and take on the role of she wasn't informed of the assault, and when quarterback. Any kid could join, and often the mother raised questions, the school put students from other classes did. The rules Benner under investigation—the first of four. included two-hand touch and that everybody gets a chance to catch the ball.

"We always try to look out for everybody, and try to make sure everybody has fun. "It just decreased a lot of animosity and decreased a lot of tension," Benner said. "It was like a miracle worker, and it kept me in

shape as well." "They were more willing to learn, they were awake, the changes were swift. If any disciplinary issues did arise, the respect they had for me was astronomical, it was completely different from the other teachers," Benner

For 21 years, Benner taught at an elementary school in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the school had its share of disciplinary issues.

Discipline and Safety

Bennerwas known for having a safe and stable

But outside of his classroom, it was a different story. There would be a blatant disregard for rules in the hallways, disruptions, and even violence. In fact, Benner made national news a few years ago when he became a sort of whistleblower for the kind of disciplinary

In 2017, he had filed a lawsuit against his school district for what they did to him after he spoke out against the policies. The school where Benner worked already had disciplinary issues, but when the district in 2014 adopted a racial equity program that sought to decrease suspensions for black students, Benner found that administrators stopped taking disciplinary actions against black students almost entirely, disregarding teacher recommendations. Benner added that as a blackman, he's certainly faced racism himself, but that was no way to address it.

The policy reduced the number of suspen-

a fourth-grade boy punch a girl so hard she was knocked unconscious and he reported the incident to the principal. He spoke to the girl's mother two days later and learned that

television about what was happening in his school, with students' safety tossed aside because of racial equity programs, and his teachers' union pressuring him to admit to things he didn't do instead of defending him.

on a daily basis.

of my students throughout the school day," Benner said.

classroom; often, he would even have students from other classes or grades placed with him from classrooms that were too rowdy for the teachers to fully handle.

disregard in his school district.

sions, which meant the principals could get cash bonuses, but it didn't reduce bad behavior and violence. Instead, bad behavior

Things came to a head when Benner saw

Benner ended up speaking on national

"The things I saw when my kids were walking the halls would be just almost criminal," he said. "I was always just shocked at how resilient kids at the public schools in St. Paul could be because of the chaos they would see

"The bottom line became that I had to keep mykids safe, teaching was second to the safety

An added challenge was to maintain his own

see other kids get away with it on the playground. It wore out good teachers like Benner. Benner's case was settled last year, but he had already quit a few years prior and taken a Dean of Students position at a private Catholic charter high school. He misses teaching,

classroom culture, because the students were

now getting mixed messages; fighting was

punished in Benner's class, but they would

Demonstrating Stability

behavior to his new role.

When Benner used to teach elementary grades in St. Paul, from day one, he would make sure to be clear with his students about the rituals and routines of the class, and would both explain and demonstrate the rules.

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MIGUEL SCHINCARIOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Brazilian pianist João

Carlos Martins, 80, at

his home in Sao Paulo,

Brazil, on Jan. 29, 2020.

is right and

wrong.

Aaron Benner

but brought a lot of wisdom about student

"If I didn't want students to walk around in class, I would model that, I would explain that, and I would have a lot of movement breaks," he said. He would also have everyone agree on behavior at the beginning of the school year. "And sometimes it would be silly, like 'Are we going to allow anybody to fight in the class?' 'No.' 'Are we going to allow foul language?' 'No!'"

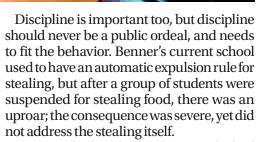
Benner said he did fun things in class like celebrating the end of the school year by making French to ast for the students—but he was always very clear that he was there to be a teacher, not their friend.

"And it would shock my students: 'I am not here to be your friend.' They'd gasp," Benner said. "I'd say, 'I'm here to be your teacher. I'm here to challenge you."

"I like helping people become better," he into teaching while working at a halfway house as his first job after getting a degree in sociology and criminal justice. Benner had extra time that he spent volunteering at a school, and it sparked something in him when he realized the students listened to him more than their regular teacher.

As a teacher of young fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students, Benner was very aware that the classroom was a character-forming place, as well as a place of learning. "You need to be a person of good moral

character," he said, "You don't have to be religious but you have to teach what is right and wrong. You have to have a moral compass, you have to talk about ethics, you have to teach your students to be critical thinkers, those are very important things."



Benner asked graduating seniors who had lunch money left in their accounts whether they would be willing to donate it to a lunch money fund, so students who ran out of money could come to him to get a free lunch

No one gets expelled for stealing food

You need to be a "You're trying to be kind and compassionate, but you are also trying to teach students there are consequences for your behavior, moral character. there are consequences for your actions," Benner said.

Having parents and teachers on the same page is also imperative if you really want to impart lasting lessons on character and behavior, he explained. It creates a sense of stability in the students' lives, which translates almost consistently to good behavior.

For instance, Benner's first phone call home, always early in the school year, is always good news. He wants parents to know that he won't only call when there's trouble; that prevents parents from putting up a defensive wall. He also makes sure parents are aware of all the rules and consequences at the beginning of the year, something his new school also does extensively.

Not long ago, he ran into one of his oldest students, now 37 years old, who reminded him of how much Benner's home visits meant. It wasn't Benner's idea; it was a school requirement when he was starting out, but Learning to appreciate your siblings goes the student laughed and said he had been hand in hand with being obedient to y worried the neighborhood gangs would scare his teacher away, and thought it was so cool his teacher cared enough to visit anyway.

"He gave me a hug and told his wife, 'This guy used to go to my house and he would check on me," Benner said.

Brains and Bodies

Leigh Bortins, a North Carolina-based homeschooler and founder of Classical Conversations, was also quick to note the importance of movement.

"Our brain's attached to our bodies and some us learn while we are moving," she said. "So that's why you'll see a girl sucking on her lip, pacing her bedroom while she's trying to figure out what to write, or you'll see a boy who has to go out and shoot some

Bionic 'extension gloves' aid finger dexterity

a lot to do with movement. In effect, it's just a continuation of all the very good things you started doing as a new parent with a young child, Bortins said. "And, of course, one of the things you first do with your very young infant is teach them how to control their bodies. "They reach out to grab things, eventually potty training, getting the food in their

their thinking," Bortins said.

mouths, making their beds, all of those things. "What's natural to teach a child is how to control themselves, because you don't want them wiggling like a worm in every situation that they're in. So what a lot of people forget is that one of the best preparations for academic

hoops before he can solve a math problem. "Motions can very often help when we're struggling. One of the things we're very good at doing with our little kids is giving them crayons and pencils and big pieces of paper—this is why we need to do the same with the adolescents who struggle with that issue—let them go to the board, or let them do it in chalk on the driveway, let them be big in

Behavior and a sense of discipline also have

training is, of course, full body control. You have to have hand-eye coordination to hold your crayon, your paintbrushes, your pencil,"

It's much like practicing a skill; an acquaintance of hers had three young children, one of whom was especially rowdy, but several moms came together to help walk the child around the building to work off his extra energy while giving her time to work with her two other children. It taught the young boy that rules wouldn't be dropped just because they were inconvenient, and that they wouldn't give up on him just because he didn't learn how to do something right away. "You also have the idea of controlling yourself to get along with one another," Bortins said. One of the things she's told her own children is how you need to esteem your brother

your sister more than your dolls. "The sibling relationship is the first place, even before you go to school, that children learn to control their appetites and passions and desires, and expect to share."

more than your legos, you need to esteem

Family is the first place we learn about relationships, behavior, and how to interact with the world. Bortins remembers that growing up, when she or her siblings left the house their parents would say, "Remember, you're

"All four of us grew up knowing that we represented our mother and our father, and our siblings and our grandparents, and our cousins, aunts, uncles, the whole family," she said. "That it reflects on all of us, that we're a family. It's just having this attitude of, 'You're not alone in this, we're going to help you, and this also means you're going to hurt us,' and that's what love is, is the ability to be hurt."

parents, Bortins said, adding that may be not everyone likes the word obedience, but that's really what it is. You teach or train your children to behave in a certain way. It's possible, and it makes the family experience one that is pleasant.

"And character lessons aren't always for the kids—sometimes they're for the parents," Bortins said. Character forming is a lifelong process, she said, and "We're all practicing for the next day."

School sometimes has people thinking in terms of weeks or periods or semesters, but life isn't like that.

"As homeschoolers, we don't really think in small segments, we think in the life of our child, the life of our family, and even now with my grandchildren," she said.

Renowned Classical Musician Plays Piano Again After 2 Decades

LOUISE BEVAN

A pair of mechanical gloves gifted João Carlos Martins, an acclaimed Brazilian classical pianist and conductor, the precious ability to play his favorite Bach sonatas again after more than two decades. As a star pianist, Martins has performed

across the United States and Europe with leading orchestras before his talented hands were stilled by a degenerative disorder. Martins lost the use of his right hand after a mugging incident in Bulgaria in 1995.

Four years later, he lost the use of his left hand to a neurological condition called focal dystonia, a movement disorder that causes involuntary contractions of the muscles. Talking to The Epoch Times via telephone

interview, Martins shared how he was overcome with emotions when he played the music for the first time after putting on the special gloves based on a Formula One race car technology.



I always say that music explains that God exists. You are talking with a very healthy, happy Brazilian man

... because of the music, no doubt.

João Carlos Martins, conductor and pianist

"I cried," Martins said. "It's kind of a new life for the old man and a young child at the same time. After 22 years, I can put the 10 fingers on the keyboard again."

Martins said the last concert where he played the piano with both hands was on June 25, 1998, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. After that, he had surgery and lost the use of his right hand. Four years later, he also lost the use of his left hand, he said, and could only move three or four fingers.

After losing the use of his right hand, Martins went on tour in China, playing with just his left hand. While touring in Paris, London, and New York, Martins sought the advice of specialist doctors. The celebrated pianist endured 24 surgeries in total, but after the last, he could only manage to play using his thumbs.

For Martins, music represents the divine. "Then I started to go to church," Martins said, "because I believe in a superior—I believe in God—and I believe in my determination, too."

"I always say that music explains that God exists," he said. "You are talking with a very healthy, happy Brazilian man ... because of the music, no doubt." "If I don't start my day with music, it is the

same thing that if I would not take break-In 2019, Martins collaborated with the in-

dustrial designer Ubiratan Bizarro Costa to explore a solution to regain his capacity to play the piano. "It's an 'extension glove' made for

me," Martins said. "I told him about my problem, and then he built these gloves. Now I can put all my fingers on the key-"I am not a man accustomed to technol-

ogy," he added. Martins's black neoprene gloves were produced by a 3D printer and are based on Formula One race car technology. They cost less than \$100 to make and use rods that

spring the pianist's fingers back to a "ready"



position after depressing each piano key. On Sept. 22, Martins shared a video of himself playing the "Adagio" from Bach's "Keyboard Concerto in D minor," using 10 fingers for the first time in 22 years, on his

was pure catharsis.

Reflecting on the time doctors told him he would never play the piano again, Martins said that in desperation, he approached one of Brazil's most renowned universities with a new ambition: to become a conductor.

The video went viral, garnering over

300,000 views. For Martins, the moment

The director, recognizing the renowned Martins immediately, called him into his office with an impassioned request: Would he agree to direct the music department while studying? Martins agreed.

Just six months after starting his training as a conductor, Martins returned to the stage.

"I can conduct at Carnegie Hall, I can conduct in a prison, in a reformatory, in a slum," he said, "and I'm trying to show that classical music can have a democratic way to get inside all, to get inside the hearts of every kind of people."

Today, the acclaimed musician runs a classical music project for children and joint ventures with 516 orchestras across Brazil. He also has two promising students of his own.

ics, Martins is playing the piano again. He cites Johann Sebastian Bach as his all-time favorite composer, and Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Garota de Ipanema" as one of his favorite songs to play.

And now, aided by the gift of biomechan-

Martins will celebrate the 60-year anniversary of his first appearance at New York's Carnegie Hall on Oct. 17, 2021. He plans to conduct the orchestra.

"At the end," Martins said, "I intend to play one of the pieces that I played at my first concert ... it's a very difficult piece. So during the pandemic, I am practicing three, four hours a day.

"I never gave up. I always like to run in favor of my dreams. And one day, dreams will run after me."

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Telling a Girlfriend She Has Gained Weight

→ Advice to help a damsel in distress in modern times

Dear June,

I have a dilemma I've been struggling with for about a year now. About 2 1/2 years ago, I met the woman of my dreams. She was 39, and I was 43. The first time I lay eyes on her, I was completely smitten with her beauty. As time went on and we got to know each other, I realized she had just as much inner beauty as outer beauty and was the girl I wanted to spend the rest of my life with. She moved in after about six months of dating and things have been great ever since.

The reason I am writing to you is that she has gained a lot of weight, and it

is affecting our relationship. First and foremost, I am concerned about her health. She is on the verge of becoming obese and I know a slew of issues can come with that. I myself have always maintained a good fitness regimen and took health very seriously. This is one of the things that attracted me to her. When we first met, she was in the gym every day and eating a healthy diet. Over the past year and a half, she has done a 180 on a fit/healthy lifestyle. She no longer works out and eats a lot more than she used to. This will no doubt continue unless she does something drastic with her routine. I hate to sound mean, but I want to be honest, I am definitely not as physically attracted to her and therefore our physical intimacy has greatly suffered. I want so much to propose to her, however, I have reservations. My question to you is, how do I talk to her about this issue without offending her? I love her with all my heart, but a good relationship needs to be well-rounded including a physical attraction. This issue has to be addressed, or I fear it will permanently affect our relationship.

Please help, Mr. Worried

Dear Mr. Worried,

Do you have any idea why she has changed her lifestyle so dramatically? Does this coincide with other stressors in her life—job-related, the death of a loved one? Or is there something about your relationship that caused the shift?

For example, could the weight gain be a symptom of something deep inside her that is hurt or scared? Weight issues can point to issues of self-worth. Maybe her father told her or gave her the impression that she is not worth loving and so now, when she has a man who loves her, a subconscious part is trying to prove that this cannot be by making herself unattractive. Or conversely, maybe the subconscious thought is trying to prove that you will love her no matter what. Or maybe she feels so relaxed, loved, and comfortable with you that she has allowed herself to become lazy about fitness? Whatever the case, it seems she is wrestling with something, and your love and faith in her will be key to her defeating it.

I would first observe her closely for a while to see if you can gain any insight into what may be happening. Then ask her directly. Choose a time when you are both calm and relaxed, tell her how much she means to you, that you are concerned for her, and that you want to understand what is happening and how to help.

If you are sincere and she does become angry or offended, then I would guess it means you have touched a sore spot. Allow her upset to pass and stay calm—this is a modern-day opportunity to help a damsel in distress, because there is a dragon within. If she is willing to work on and improve herself, then I think you can have faith that together you will slay it (perhaps also with the help of therapy). This healing process will take some patience and endurance on your part, but it will show her that you are willing to love and protect her no matter what.

And, since you know she is the one, you could also demonstrate your faith in her by going ahead with your proposal.

Dear June,

I called for technical support because my DISH wouldn't come on. The representative accidentally removed my present package, which was local channels only. She said she couldn't put it back on, so she transferred me to someone else who also said they couldn't put it back on, because once it is removed it is gone. So I asked to speak to someone else, and he also said once removed, it couldn't be put back in. I said I never asked for it to be removed and again they said, "I know, but it's gone." So they wanted to charge me \$73 a month instead of \$15. I told them, "This is fraud. Your person screwed up my account, and you can't fixit? What kind of scam is this company running?" Any advice?

Could you cancel your account, then sign up with a different one? Maybe your husband or other family member could get an account in their name.

Check first, though, to see what is being offered to new customers. Note that companies sometimes offer promo deals that end after a certain period of time, so read your contract carefully, as otherwise you may start receiving a higher bill in a year or so.

Also, if you know any other people using this same company, I would ask them about their experience. Or perhaps your neighbors could recommend a different company?

My general advice for when you talk to customer service is to pause before you call and have a kind thought for the person who will be helping you. I have always thought customer service work must be draining—talking all day with people who don't really want to be talking to you and dealing with their problems. So I would imagine it is a relief for them to talk to someone who is considerate. Of course, you may need to be persistent, but be as polite and pleasant as you can. Especially if you are asking for something that is outside the bounds of their normal protocol, you can get a lot further by apologizing for the inconvenience, perhaps jokingly commiserating about how hard it is to deal with situations like yours, or thanking them for the extra effort. You can also look into a consumer advocacy organization such as the nonprofit organization Elliott Advocacy (Elliott.org) for help and resources.

Sincerely,

Do you have a family or relationship question for our advice columnist, Dear June? Send it to DearJune@EpochTimes.com or Attn: Dear June, The Epoch Times, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001.

June Kellum is a married mother of two and longtime Epoch Times journalist covering family, relationships, and health topics.

2 2 1



(Left) The main reading room at the Thomas Jefferson Building. (Above) The ceiling of the Thomas Jefferson Building says: "That this nation under God should have a new birth of freedom. Have government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.'

(Below) Mosaic of Minerva by American painter Elihu Vedder, in a central arched panel leading to the visitors' gallery.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

An Ode to Beauty and Knowledge: The Thomas Jefferson Building

ot until I stand before the judgment seat of God do I ever expect to see this building transcended," a visitor proclaimed of the new Library of Congress building in Washington, which opened on

The library, now known as the Thomas Jefferson Building, is inspired by Palais Garnier (built to house the Paris Opera), which is considered the best example of the Napoleon III style of late-19th-century architecture. The Library of Congress building is an exquisite example of the Beaux Arts architectural style, where ornate decoration and functional design meld together with theatrical appeal.

Visitors must ascend a monumental staircase at the main entrance to the library that faces the Capitol Building. The library's many flights of stairs and landings offer



visitors a chance to stop and admire the surrounding grandeur. Corinthian columns and portrait busts

of famous writers adorn the façade. And at the entrance itself, three bronze doors are graced with allegories of "Tradition," "Writing," and "Printing," as if announcing the treasures inside. Also echoing the building's intent, on the apex of the library's reading room dome, the "Flame of Knowledge" is alit in gold, heralding a world of inspiration held within the building.

The exterior beauty of the Jefferson Building is but a prelude to the national treasure trove that awaits visitors inside. "In this library is found, of what yet survives, the best of what has been made, said, and done: within the stacks and vaults, universal knowledge, history, biography, literature, invention; upon the walls, names, quotations, portraits, pictures, and statues," writes author Michael Curtis in "Classical Architecture and Monuments of Washington D.C.: A History & Guide."

Advocate for Adoption

A loving family adopted Ayden Lincoln, who was abandoned in a shoebox as a baby

LOUISE BEVAN

Eighteen years ago, a newborn baby girl was abandoned in a shoebox at a train station in China, just a day after her birth and with her umbilical cord still attached. But now, having grown up with the support that she needed to thrive, she's become an advocate for adoption.

Born on Oct. 28, 2002, and weighing only 3 pounds, Ayden Lincoln was taken to an orphanage as a day-old baby. She then spent 10 months neglected and overlooked in a crib.

However, her life changed when hope arrived in the form of an adoptive family from Forks Township, Pennsylvania.

While Patrick and Christina Lincoln had two biological sons, Christina desperately wanted a daughter. After a lengthy application process to adopt overseas, they found Ayden and traveled halfway around the world to meet their baby daughter.

Adapting to life in the United States was no easy feat for the little girl, who hadn't known love in her formative months. Ayden claims she suffered a brain injury from lying in her crib at the orphanage for so long and has struggled to socialize

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF AYDEN LINCOLN UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE



Adoption advocate Ayden Lincoln.

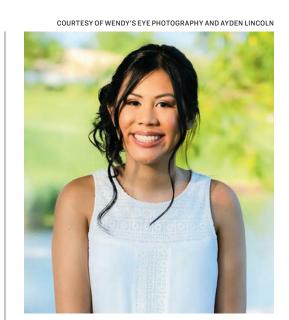
(Bottom left) On

brother Maclean.

Ayden's 1st birthday,

pictured with her older

(Below) Ayden Lincoln



ever since, according to a story she wrote for the pro-life website Human Defense Initiative. "For as long as I can remember, I have

struggled with and still struggle with mental health, bullying, friends, and trying to get people to understand me," Ayden said. As a young child, Ayden would act out violently at school and would often get into

"I was labeled as the 'bad kid," she recalls, "and no one seemed to understand what I needed." However, through her childhood, Patrick and Christina supported their daughter as she explored treatment options for anxiety and ADHD.

Ayden's behavioral breakthrough came when she was assigned a teacher trained to deal with her specific needs. The little girl began to thrive.

"It felt like fate," Ayden says. "Instead of ounishing me, she would hug me, hold me, let me cry on her, and spent most of her free time and day with me while making it discreet."

The 18-year-old said she still remains in touch with this special teacher to this day. The teacher was her confirmation sponsor, and their two families, Ayden said, have grown close.

In a statement on Lehigh Valley Live, Christina admitted that adoption can



"In the moment, those challenges can seem insurmountable," Christina wrote, "however, they became opportunities for us to gain new perspectives and insights about love, relationships, and commitment."

She and Patrick say they feel blessed to be part of Ayden's story.

Today, Ayden is a senior with plans to attend Northampton Community College. In her middle school, she was a National Junior Honor Society member. As a young teen, she started her own jewelry business and sold her creations at craft shows with her father. One day, she hopes to work in music industry marketing.

As a young child, Ayden would act out violently at school and would often get into trouble.

Ayden was interviewed by Miss Pennsylvania about her journey and adoption on Nov. 30 and wants others to know that a tough start in life doesn't mean that dreams can't be accomplished.

"The world may stare and be afraid to ask questions because I do not look like my family; however, I often do not think about being adopted," Avden said.

"Adoption is an amazing gift," she said, noting that "not only does it have the ability to save lives, but it also forever changes them."

"If you are considering adopting or are in the process, please do not give up," she implored. "The process is long and can be emotional, but in the end, it is worth it.

"I have realized throughout the years that it has been fate, family, and hard work on my part, along with a great support system that has shaped me into the person I am today," she said. "I hope my story can teach anyone like me that they are not alone."







(Above left) Detail of a ceiling in the Thomas Jefferson Building. (Above middle) A ring of Grecian girls decorates a dome in the Librarian's Room. (Above right) The west façade of the Thomas Jefferson Building faces the Capitol Building.

(Below) Aerial view of the historic Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building. (Right) "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding," says an inscription below a mural representing understanding. (Bottom right) "They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts," says the inscription below an allegory of Summer.







FAMILY

Caring for Our Elders in Trying Times

BARBARA DANZA

The year 2020 hasn't been easy for many, but it's been particularly hard on seniors. I asked Lisa Cini, an expert on lifestyle and aging issues, about her ideas for how to best support and care for the oldest members of our family in times like these. Here's what she said.

The Epoch Times: In your work advising seniors, what have you found to be the biggest challenges they've faced this year? Lisa Cini: Most seniors already feel increased isolation, so with restrictions on visitors at senior living facilities and enforced social distancing, many have found a profound sense of loneliness and sadness during this time. In addition, things that can come naturally to younger generations, like setting up FaceTimes or Zooms, may not be as easy to navigate, as older adults tend to rely on their children and grandchildren to help them with any tech troubles.

The Epoch Times: Many families are concerned for their elder family members as we navigate trying times. What can people do to comfort and support

Ms. Cini: There are many things we can do from a distance to support our loved ones! The things we enjoy in person can easily be shared via Zoom, like cooking together or enjoying a meal. For grandparents who miss telling their grandchildren a bedtime story, I suggest simply sending a copy of a cherished book to a loved one and keeping another copy at home. That way, kids can hold the book while grandparents read to them over video chat.

Studies from AARP show that 90 percent of seniors don't want to go into senior living. If the option is there for you, now is the perfect time to consider a multigenerational household, as you're able to support and care for each other in person. My grandmother, my parents, and my kids and husband were all able to live in our house. By living in this environment, we're able to see and learn things about each other that we normally wouldn't get to if they lived by themselves.

The more active seniors can be, the better. Getting outside for some fresh air and exercise is beneficial.





Studies from AARP show that 90 percent of seniors don't want to go into senior living. If the option is there for you, now is the perfect time to consider a multigenerational house

Lisa Cini

hold.

I outlined my family experience in my book "Hive: The Guide to Multigenerational Living," which provides tips, tricks, and interior design to have the best experience while living with multiple generations under one household.

The Epoch Times: What practical things can we do to bring joy to the seniors in our lives this holiday season?

Ms. Cini: These are trying times, and it's been difficult to maintain some sort of normalcy. Make sure you are still connecting with the seniors in your life—you should have regular calls and take the time to share memorable moments. If the kids make a present or cards for their grandparents, send it over to them! Create memories together by thinking outside of the box, whether that's throwing a virtual dance party, doing a car drive by, or coming up with a family cookbook with favorite recipes.

The Epoch Times: What are your favorite gift ideas for seniors this year? Ms. Cini: The best ideas are thoughtful and tactical. Presents that can improve quality of life are great, like the Human Charger light therapy device to enhance energy levels and help get restful, sustained sleep. The charger provides an entire day's worth of sun in 12 minutes

Gifts I highly recommend year-round are devices from Fitbit, Garmin, Apple Watch. and Kardia, which give key into get moving through fitness competi-

and plugs into earbuds.

tions, whether that's meeting a step count, going for daily walks, etc.

The Epoch Times: What advice would you give a senior about how to thrive during these times?

Ms. Cini: Be as active as you can be. If you're able to exercise, do a chair workout, take a short safe walk—anything helps. The more active, the better for mental and physical health. Getting outside for even 10 minutes a day decreases anxiety, improves blood flow, and fresh air is great for the lungs.

Get in touch with loved ones, even those you may not have seen in years. If you know how to Google or Facebook search, you're one step ahead! If not, ask a loved one to help. Reach out to old classmates, roommates, and so on. You can start a pen-pal system. Consider joining a virtual book club. From the comfort of your own home, many library systems are offering free e-books to download onto a smart device. This is a simple way to stay connected, even if from a distance.

The Epoch Times: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Ms. Cini: Reduce your sugar intake it's horrible for the brain and the body. Because we're cooped up and not moving as much, we are not able to burn off what we once could. Sugar is also linked to poor cognition. Get a pair of earbuds so you can hear better on Zoom or FaceTime. You'll be able to sights to health. You can challenge seniors connect much better when you're not struggling to hear.



Legendary Lights

by Alter Abelson

O the legendary light, Gleaming goldenly in night

Like the stars above,

<mark>In our Te</mark>mple, magical—

Memories, now tragical-

Holy hero-hearts aflame With a glory more than fame; There where a shrine is every sod,

Lit these lamps of yore.

Lights, you are a living dream,

Faith and bravery you beam,

Youth and dawn and May.

Stirred us, spurred us, aye!

Till the beast in man we tame,

Tyrants bow to truth, amain,

Brands and bullets yield to brain,

Guns to God, and shells to soul,

In your fairy flames, we'll see

The Omnipotence of Right.

Pillared lights of liberty,

Hounds to heart resign the role,

Faith's and freedom's Phoenix-might,

Fabled memories of flame,

Beautiful, like lights in dream

All one glory and one love.

Eight, the taper-flames that stream

Every grave, God's golden ore,

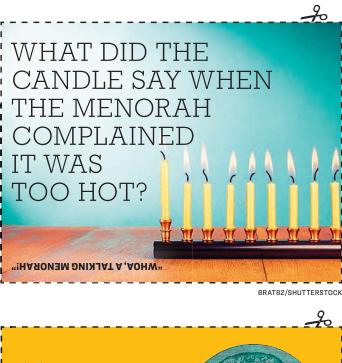
With a paean whose rhyme to God,

Would your beam were more than dream,

Would the light and love you stream

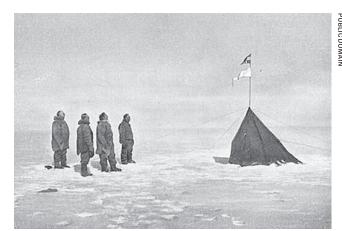
FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



They have exalted notions. because they have not yet been humbled by life or learned its necessary limitations. ARISTOTLE (384 B.C.-322 B.C.), GREEK PHILOSOPHER





Dec. 14, 1911.

The explorers at

the South Pole on

n Dec. 14, 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first man to reach the

He had originally set his sights on the North Pole but found that American Robert Peary had already achieved that feat. In June 1910, Admunsen set sail for Antarctica, beating rival explorer Robert Falcon Scott and returning safely to base camp at the Bay of Whales in January.

By Aidan Danza, age 14

DUCK IDENTIFICATION

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

SEA DUCKS



BOOKS

6 Classic Christmas Books to Share With Your Kids This Season Take time out this holiday season to read these timeless treasures together

BARBARA DANZA

The magic of the holidays can beckon even the biggest kids back to your lap (or pretty close) to share in the stories that bring us all back to our own childhoods this time of year. Of course, there is a

myriad of options when it comes to stories about Christmas, but some stand head and shoulders above the rest. So, light a fire, grasp your mug of hot chocolate, cozy up in your winter snugs, and settle in for these classic Christmas books with your family.



'The 12 Days of Christmas' by Laurel Long (Dial Books)

The classic English Christmas carol that counts the gifts "my true love gave to

special days comes to life through the stunning oil paintings of Laurel Long in this beautiful book. As the familiar song cumulatively progresses and new gifts are added each day, the illustrations become more elaborate and readers can revel in searching for the hidden gifts in each. Complete with a brief

me" over the course of 12

history of the well-known carol, along with sheet music, this version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is a must-have and would make a wonderful gift as



'The Gift of the Magi' by O. Henry, illustrated by P.J. Lynch (Candlewick) The young husband and wife in the story each

sacrifice their most prized possession to give the other a wonderful gift. The

end shows their unfaltering love for each other. This classic tale of sacrifice and love by American writer O. Henry, gracefully illustrated by P.J. Lynch,

will give young and old

alike an appreciation for

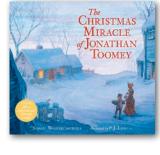
surprising mix-up at the

what truly matters. THE POLAR EXPRESS

'The Polar Express' by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin) In this modern classic, pretty pastel illustrations evoke the magic inherent throughout the enchanting tale of a boy who steps on a train journeying to the North Pole on Christmas Eve and is taken on an adventure that solidifies the spirit of Christmas in his

heart forever. As you probably know, this critically acclaimed book was subsequently adapted for the big screen

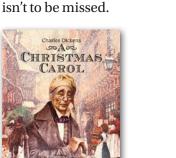
into an entertaining and high-flying adventure starring Tom Hanks. The movie is great fun, but the book can be enjoyed in contrast as a calm, peaceful, and magical read.



'The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey' by Susan Wojciechowski, illustrated by P.J. Lynch (Candlewick Press) Possibly a bit too heavy a story for the littlest readers, "The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey" is an absolute treasure for those 4 and older. This beautifully written and

illustrated tale of Christmas depicts a journey of hope brought forth by the simple request of a young widow and her son to a gloomy woodcutter at Christmastime. While perhaps not as

well known as the other



titles on this list, this one

'A Christmas Carol'

by Charles Dickens,

illustrated by Robert Ingpen (Penguin) When you're talking great literary classics, my preference for my children is to present them with the true and unabridged version, rather than a watereddown approximation

whenever possible. This is surely possible with Dickens's "A Christmas Carol." This edition features just enough illustrations to keep younger readers interested, while providing the complete, masterfully written tale.

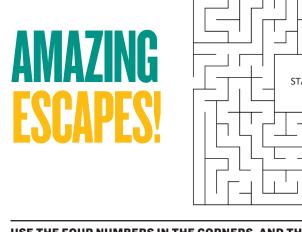
Obviously, this pick calls for a greater investment of time and can be read chapter by chapter or enjoyed as an audiobook. You can find readings

on LibriVox.org for free or enjoy a particularly welldone recording by actor Tim Curry via iTunes. The audiobook would make a great accompaniment to any long drives to visit family.



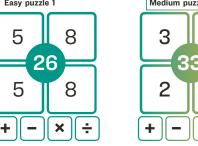
'The Night Before Christmas' by Clement C. Moore, illustrated by Ted Rand (NorthSouth Books) If there's one book you simply must read this year, it's this one, and on Christmas Eve, of course. While we have numer-

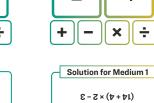
ous versions of this on our shelves, this is my favorite, as it's a sturdy board book that will stand the test of time and the illustrations are just perfect. Other noteworthy editions to look out for are Jan Brett's and the nostalgic Little Golden Book publication illustrated by Corinne Malvern.



USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example: $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$ and $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$

14

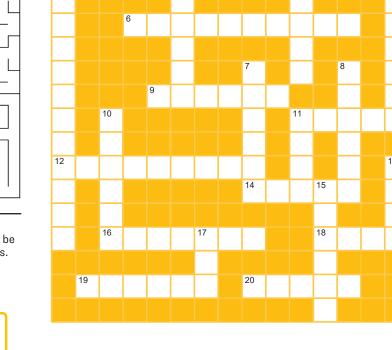


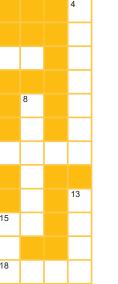




9

5





2 It may be lit in a menorah (6)

3 Leader of a Jewish congregation (5) 4 Hanukkah toy (7)

5 Hanukkah, for example (11)

Jewish homeland (6)

Service station? (6)

10 Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Community, etc. (6)

On Hanukkah, it may be chocolate! (4)

13 What you do with a dreidel (4)

15 Hanukkah starts in this month (6)

17 Just a bit lit the Temple's menorah for 8 days (3)



"Impossible" happening (7)

Menorah, e.g. (10)

• • • •

Of the Hebrew faith (6)

12 Freedom from bigotry (9)

14 Applesauce-topped nosh (5)

16 When the Hanukkah begins (7) 18 22nd letter of the Hebrew alphabet (4) 11 Dreidel letter (5)

19 Jewish song of praise (6)

20 Egg noodle casserole (5) \bullet

• • • •

- Solution For Easy 1

9+9+8+8

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• • • •

28

12

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MICHAEL DILORENZO

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