

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
Archdiocese of Philadelphia Recommended
Summer Reading 2026
Kindergarten Entering First Grade

Required Reading: Kindness Rocks by Sonica Ellis

Upon return to school, students should be prepared to complete a classroom activity that correlates with the required reading.

***Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal** When Alma's father shares family stories about the origins of her long beautiful name, she gains an appreciation for its uniqueness and connection to her history. Martinez-Neal uses smudgy graphite and colored pencil to convey a soft palette that gently transports readers into Alma's rich ancestral past. ©2018 Grade Level K-3. 2019 Caldecott Honor Book

***Blue Sky White Stars* by Sarvinder Naberhaus** In this text, the same words describe both the fabric of America and the Star-Spangled Banner. Beautiful illustrations coupled with sparse text make this seemingly simple book meaningful and thought-provoking as readers weave their way through the history of the nation and its flag. ©2017 Grade Level K-2

***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems** - a hilarious book that kids will love. ©2003 Grade Level K-1 Caldecott Honor, 2004

***Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho** A young Asian girl notices that her eyes look different from her peers'. They have big, round eyes and long lashes. She realizes that her eyes are like her mother's, her grandmother's, and her little sister's. They have eyes that kiss in the corners and glow like warm tea, crinkle into crescent moons, and are filled with stories of the past and hope for the future. ©2019 Grade Level K-2

***Francis: The Poor Man of Assisi* by Tomie dePaola** - a simple introduction to St. Francis of Assisi ©2011 Grade Level K-5

***Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney** - a beautiful book about love and family ©2019

***God Gave Us You* by Lisa Tawn Bergren** - a heartwarming story about God's love for children ©2011

***Hello Ruby, Adventures in Coding* by Linda Kiukas** Without requiring a computer, Hello Ruby introduces kids to a girl, Ruby, who is determined to solve any puzzle. Ruby makes friends with foxes, robots, and leopards as she strives to break down big problems into small ones. ©2015 **Grade Level 1-3**

***If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Numeroff** - a fun cause-and-effect story. ©1985 **Grade Level K-2. Parents' Choice Award**

***If You Were the Moon* by Laura Purdie Salas** If you were the moon, what would you do? You'd spin like a twilight ballerina and play dodgeball with space rocks! And more. ©2017 **Grade Level 1-3**

***Katherine Johnson (You Should Meet)* by Thea Feldman** About a brilliant mathematician who worked at NASA in the early 1950s until retiring in 1986. Katherine's unparalleled calculations (done by hand) helped plan the trajectories for NASA's Mercury and Apollo missions (including the Apollo 11 moon landing). ©2017 **Grade Level 1-3**

***Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey** - a charming story about ducklings in the city ©1941 **Grade Level K-1. 1942 Caldecott Medal**

***Nana in the City* by Lauren Castillo** A young boy spends an overnight visit with his nana and is frightened to find that the city where she lives is filled with noise and crowds and scary things. But then Nana makes him a special cape to help him be brave, and soon the everyday sights, sounds, and smells of the city are not scary—but wonderful. ©2014 **Grade Level 1-3. 2015 Caldecott Honor Book**

***Nerdy Birdy* by Aaron Reynolds and Matt Davies** Nerdy Birdy likes reading, video games, and reading about video games, which immediately disqualifies him for membership in the cool crowd. One thing is clear: being a nerdy birdy is a lonely lifestyle. When he's at his lowest point, Nerdy Birdy meets a flock just like him. He has friends and discovers that there are far more nerdy birdies than cool birdies in the sky. ©2015 **Grade Level 1-2**

***Outside Inside* by LeUyen Pham** - a moving picture book that captures the unforgettable moment during the pandemic when people all over the world came together. It celebrates the essential workers, frontline workers, and communities that worked with each other to protect our loved ones. ©2021 **Grade Level K-2**

Panda-monium at Peek Zoo by Kevin Waldron Peek Zoo is holding an animal parade to celebrate the birth of their baby panda. But when the day arrives, nothing is ready. As Mr. Peek races around preparing, he leaves a trail of chaos — including an escaped baby panda heading for the lion's den! Thank goodness Mr. Peek's son, Jimmy, is there to save the day and ensure the crowd gets the best animal parade ever — marching proudly across a huge gatefold! ©2014 **Grade Level K-1**

***Paper Son: The Inspiring Story of Tyrus Wong, Immigrant and Artist* by Julie Leung** Once in America, Tyrus seized every opportunity to make art, eventually enrolling at an art institute in Los Angeles. Working as a janitor at night, his mop twirled like a paintbrush in his hands. Eventually, he was given the opportunity of a lifetime--and using sparse brushstrokes and soft watercolors, Tyrus created the iconic backgrounds of Bambi. ©2019 **Grade Level 1-2. American Library Association's 2021, Asian/Pacific American Award**

***The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper** - a lesson on perseverance and faith. ©2001 **Grade Level K-2**

***The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad** With her new backpack and light-up shoes, Faizah knows the first day of school is going to be special. It's the start of a brand new year and, best of all, it's her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab—a hijab of beautiful blue fabric, like the ocean waving to the sky. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah will find new ways to be strong. ©2019 **Grade Level 1-3**

***School's First Day of School* by Adam Rex** It's the first day of school at Frederick Douglass Elementary and everyone's just a little bit nervous, especially the school itself. What will the children do once they come? Will they like the school? Will they be nice to him? The school has a rough start, but as the day goes on, he soon recovers when he sees that he's not the only one going through first-day jitters. ©2016 **Grade Level 1-2**

***Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora** Everyone in the neighborhood dreams of a taste of Omu's delicious stew! One by one, they follow their noses toward the scrumptious scent. And one by one, Omu offers a portion of her meal. Soon the pot is empty. ©2018 **Grade Level K-3. 2019 Caldecott Honor Book**

***The Little Red Fort (Little Ruby's Big Ideas)* by Brenda Maier** Ruby's mind is always full of ideas. One day, she finds some old boards and decides to build something. She invites her brothers to help, but they just laugh and tell her she doesn't know how to build. When she creates a dazzling fort that they all want to play in; it is Ruby who has the last laugh. ©2018 **Grade Level K-3**

***Thunder Boy Jr.* by Sherman Alexie** Thunder Boy Jr. is named after his dad, but he wants a name that's all his own. Just because people call his dad Big Thunder doesn't mean he wants to be Little Thunder. He wants a name that celebrates something cool

he's done, like *Touch the Clouds*, *Not Afraid of Ten Thousand Teeth*, or *Full of Wonder*.
New York Times Notable Children's Book of the Year ©2016 **Grade Level 1-3**

Truman by Jean Reidy Truman the tortoise lives with his Sarah, high above the taxis and the trash trucks and the number eleven bus, which travels south. He never worries about the world below...until one day, when Sarah straps on a big backpack and does something Truman has never seen before. ©2019 **Grade Level 1-2**

Water is Water by Miranda Paul Drip. Sip. Pour me a cup. Water is water unless it heats up. Whirl. Swirl. Watch it curl by. Steam is steam unless it cools high. ©2015 **Grade Level 1-2**

When Green Becomes Tomatoes by Julie Fogiano Flowers blooming in sheets of snow make way for happy frogs dancing in the rain. Summer swims move over for autumn sweaters until the snow comes back again. Starting and ending with March 20, the vernal equinox, the author marks randomly chosen days with short, free verse observations. ©2016 **Grade Level 1-3**

When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree by Jamie L. B. Deenihan When Grandma gives you a lemon tree, definitely *don't* make a face! Care for the tree, and you might be surprised at how new things, and new ideas, bloom. ©2019 **Grade Level 1-2**

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak ©1963 **Grade Level K-3. 1964 Caldecott Medal**