

## Righteousness: A Bibliography

Righteousness is a hard concept for young people to grasp. This bibliography is intended to help shed light on this concept so critical to living according to God's plan. There are many scriptural references to living a righteous life. I have noted a few and listed a story references as an example. Many thanks to "2001 Translation—An American English Bible" (<http://www.2001translation.com/index.html>) for the scriptural references.

*Matthew 5:6: 'Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blest because they will be satisfied.'*

**The Judge** by Harve Zemach. Ages 4 to 8.

One by one, five prisoners come before a judge and beg to be released on the grounds that they did not know they were breaking the law; they only said what they saw. Each in turn is then put in jail. In the end when a monster comes, the tables are turned on the judge and the prisoners in a surprising and humorous ending that puts Matthew's words into perfect view. Also for the same age group: **Two Bobbies** by Kirby Larson; **Just Plain Fancy** by Patricia Polacco.

*Matthew 6:33, '[If you] put the Kingdom and righteousness in first place, then all these [other] things will be given to you.'*

"The Prophet Elijah's Magic Box" found in **Jewish Folktales** selected and retold by Pinhas Sadeh . Grades 2-8

Elijah has a box that will provide for its owner. He gives the box to a poor man when he visits him with the understanding that he will only be able to keep the box if he also uses the money to build synagogues, soup kitchens and schools for the Torah. After many years he revisits the owner disguised as a beggar. When he asks for food, the previously poor man, now rich, casts him out. Elijah takes back the box and gives it to someone else, who not only does what Elijah asks but retains the spirit with which it was given. Other titles for this age group: **The Comeback Dog** by Jane Thomas; **Three Questions** by Jon Muth.

*Romans 3:4, 'Your words can prove you righteous, and you can win when you're being judged.'*

"Princess and Froggie" from **The Princess and the Froggie** by Harve Zemach. Ages 2-5.

Princess has a problem. Her father has a bird on his head. She shoos it off, but each time she does, it flies back. She is doing the right thing for her father, but is not winning the battle. Finally Froggie helps and in the end they all win...the bird leaves the King's head and the Princess and Froggie get a lollipop. This simple story can help even the youngest child understand righteousness. Christ not only used his words as an example for us, but called us to live out those words. Go and do likewise. Other books for the same age group: **Just Plain Fancy** by Patricia Polacco; **Bunny Cakes** by Rosemary Wells.

*Matthew 25:37-40, 'Then the righteous will ask, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison, and come to you? And the king will say to them, I tell you the truth, when you did it for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it for me.'*

**Skellig** by David Almond. Grades 6 – 8.

Michael was looking forward to his new house and neighborhood until his infant sister became very ill. Now his parents are constantly frantic, the scary doctor is always coming around, and Michael feels helpless. When he goes out into the old rickety garage, he comes across a mysterious being living beneath spider webs and eating flies for dinner. This creature calls himself Skellig, and over the weeks Michael and his new friend Mina bring Skellig out in to the light, and their worlds change forever. Other books for this age group: [Outside Beauty](#) by Cynthia Kadohata; [5,000 Miles to Freedom](#) by Dennis and Judith Fradin.

*James 3:18, 'The seeds of the fruit of righteousness are planted in peace by those who are making peace.'*

“Old Joe & the Carpenter” found in [Thirty-Three Multicultural Tales to Tell](#) by Pleasant DeSpain. Grades 2-8

Old Joe and his neighbor have been best friends most of their lives. One day they stubbornly disagree over a stray calf and stop talking to each other. After two weeks someone knocks on Joe's door. It is a stranger looking for work. Joe hires him to build a fence tall enough so he never has to look at his neighbor or his land again. Joe goes into town and the carpenter goes to work. When Joe returns he finds not a fence but a bridge. Now it is up to the friends to take the next step and cross the bridge and meet each other in peace. Other books for this age group: [Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom](#) by Katherine Paterson (grades 6-8); [The Reluctant Dragon](#) by Kenneth Grahame (grades 2-4).

*James 2: 24, 'A man is called righteous by the things he does, not just by his faith.'*

“Imp in the Basket” found in [The Devil's Storybook](#) by Natalie Babbitt. Grades 6 – Adult.

A baby is found by a clergyman. It is soon obvious that it is an imp, a devil's baby. The people in the village want to kill it, but the clergyman says no, imp or not it is still a baby and will not be killed. Fearful of what might happen, that night the townspeople set fire to the clergyman's house. In the morning they go back expecting to see the clergyman and the baby dead, but instead they find them sitting in the middle of the burned down house safe and sound. Was the clergyman saved because he was righteous or because he saved the devil's baby? Other books for this age group: [What I Call Life](#) by Jill Wolfson; [I Can Make A Difference](#) selected by Marion Wright Edelman.

**Bibliography prepared by Janet Lloyd**