

Get Inspired!
RAPS Explores the World of Inspirational Fiction

Do you get a queasy feeling when a patron asks you to recommend a “Christian” book? Can you not find reviews of the inspirational titles patrons demand? Ever wonder what people see in those “preachy” books? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you need to Get Inspired!

Join the Readers’ Advisors of Puget Sound as we go beyond Oke and LeHaye to explore the changing face of inspirational publishing today. As more general retailers carry inspirational titles and more mainstream publishers add inspirational lines, librarians everywhere need to learn how to meet patron demand in this genre.

In this training, local library manager (and inspirational fiction fan) Sarah Evans will help you understand the appeal of these books, get you ready to match an interested reader with the right subgenre or sub-subgenre and share resources for information on inspirational titles. Plus, hear from two experienced editors for WinePress Publishing about the inspirational publishing market today.

In preparation, please **read at least two** (preferably three) of the books listed below. On the following page, you will also find popular authors you may want to try and discussion questions to get you thinking while reading. Check out related articles, links and updates about this training on <http://inspiredlibrarian.blogspot.com/>.

Author	Title	Description
Bell, James Scott	<i>Presumed Guilty</i>	With his thriving congregation and bestseller about pornography in the church, handsome pastor Ron Hamilton is a rising star in the evangelical world. But when the evidence surrounding the murder of an X-rated actress points solely to him, he's presumed guilty by everybody except his wife. Can their marriage survive until justice prevails?
Billerbeck, Kristin	<i>What a Girl Wants</i>	Ashley Stockingdale is a 31-year-old patent attorney in Silicon Valley. She's cute, eligible, Christian---and sitting home alone most weekends. Until she decides to go for it! But what's "it" . . . a promotion? A new wardrobe? The handsome doctor she recently met? Will Ashley discover the difference between her "wants" and her "needs"?
Billingsley, ReShonda Tate	<i>Let the Church Say Amen</i>	Reverend Simon Jackson has always felt destined to lead, and he's done a good job of it -- having transformed his small Houston church into one of the most respected and renowned in the region. But while the good Reverend's been busy tending his flock, his family's gone astray.
Blackston, Ray	<i>Flabbergasted</i>	Churches outnumber bars 20 to 1 in Greenville, South Carolina---so that's where new-in-town stockbroker Jay Jarvis sets out to meet women. But after a weekend beach retreat with a bevy of bewildering believers---including one particularly captivating brown-eyed missionary---will this searchin' single non-Christian "invest" in their God?
Dekker, Ted	<i>Three</i>	Imagine answering your cell phone to hear a stranger's voice issuing a chilling threat: You have three minutes to confess your sin, or he'll blow your car to smithereens. You pull over and flee just in time---but the threats keep coming. What "sin" is he talking about? How will you escape?

Sarah Evans - Branch Manager
Brier Library - Sno-Isle Libraries
sevans@sno-isle.org

Dickson, Athol	<i>River Rising</i>	In 1927, a mysterious black man named Hale Poser arrives in the little bayou town of Pilotville, seeking clues to his parentage. He's a humble man and takes a menial job with the town's black infirmary. But he soon demonstrates the gift of laying on of hands and the subtler gift of peacemaking. His gentle powers will be needed soon.
Hart, Beth Webb	<i>Grace at Low Tide</i>	DeVeaux DeLoach enjoys her privileged life on her family's 150-year-old Edisto Island plantation. But her world turns upside down when her daddy declares bankruptcy and sells their home. Now her family lives in the caretaker's cottage and works for the new owners. Can her stubborn faith give her hurting family hope for the future?
Hughes, Dean	<i>The Writing on the Wall</i>	The story begins in 1961, the day the Berlin Wall was erected, and weaves the lives of four teenage cousins into the tumultuous events of the early civil rights movement and the Cold War. Three cousins live in Utah, rooted in a large, loving, faithful, but politically diverse extended LDS family. The fourth cousin is trapped with his family in East Germany.
Jackson, Neta	<i>The Yada Yada Prayer Group</i>	An unlikely group of women from vastly different backgrounds are assigned to each other during a women's conference and go on to develop strong ties and support each other through trials.
Kilpack, Josi S.	<i>Tempest Tossed</i>	Despite Tally's determination to make their LDS marriage work, Janet has secrets she is desperate to protect. Soon, she finds herself helplessly trapped within a prison of her own making with prescription drugs. Can she find her way back to the family she once had? Can she forgive herself for all she's done?
Morris, Michael	<i>A Place Called Wiregrass</i>	Erma Lee is on the run from an abusive husband, a mother who doesn't care and a soul-numbing factory job. She and her granddaughter, Cher, flee to the town of Wiregrass, Alabama and form an unlikely friendship with Miss Claudia, an elderly socialite who is hiding a few details about her own past.
Murray, Victoria Christopher	<i>Grown Folks Business</i>	Quentin had been a model husband, father, and business partner. But for all those years, he'd been hiding a secret from his wife Sheridan and everyone. His startling confession is a lifelong attraction to men, and he is leaving his family to be with his lover. Sheridan must lean on her faith and her heart to decide what's best for her family.
Rivers, Francine	<i>Redeeming Love</i>	Sold into prostitution in childhood, Angel is a bitter young woman who trusts no man. But when God tells Michael Hosea to marry her, she learns to love and hope---until fear overwhelms her and she returns to her former life. Can she be redeemed? A skillful retelling of the biblical story of Gomer and Hosea, set amid the California gold rush.
Sampson, Lisa	<i>Songbird</i>	Televangelist Harlan Hopewell scorns psychology, so his gospel singer wife Charmaine conceals her own depression--but an institutionalized parent provers harder to hide. Will Harlan support his wife at the expense of his reputation?
Whittington, Brad	<i>Welcome to Fred</i>	Mark always wondered what life was like in a one-blink town . . . and in 1968 he finds out. When his family moves from urban Ohio to tiny Fred, Texas, the precocious 12-year-old preacher's kid must discover himself---and his faith---in a place with two city-limit signs and little in between.
Wichman, Linda	<i>Legend of the Emerald Rose</i>	King Arthur is dead, Guinevere's been slain, and Merlin has vanished. Servants of the evil one threaten the Isle of Might, but the remaining Knights of the Round Table have a plan---an unlikely princess. Protected from knowing her birthright, Emerald Rose Rayn is a high-spirited lass and skilled warrior with an unshakable faith in God. But can she save Camelot?

Sarah Evans - Branch Manager
Brier Library - Sno-Isle Libraries
sevans@sno-isle.org

For additional reading, try these popular authors:

Author Name	Subgenres
Blackstock, Terri	Suspense/Mystery
Bunn, T. Davis	Mystery, Historical
Foster, Sharon Elwell	African-American
Gulley, Phillip	Gentle Reads
Gunn, Robin Jones	Women's Fiction, Lady Lit, Teen
Heitzmann, Kristen	Romantic Suspense
Henderson, Dee	Romantic Suspense
Higgs, Liz Curtis	Romance, Historical
Kingsbury, Karen	Women's Fiction
Meissner, Susan	Women's Fiction
Morris, Gilbert	Historical, Romance
Nunes, Rachel Anne	Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)
Peretti, Frank	Suspense/Mystery
Weyland, Jack	Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)
Wick, Lori	Romance, Historical, Comedy
Thoene, Jack	Mystery, Action

Christian Fiction Discussion Questions (adapted from Reading Group Guides .com)

- What are some of the major themes of the book? Did the author effectively develop these themes? How so?
- How effectively does the author portray the presence of spirituality in the characters' everyday lives? Has the author succeed in presenting faith in a way that feels relevant and relatable? Are there specific characters whose beliefs resonate with yours?
- Is there anything in this book to which you personally can relate? Is there any advice or ideas you can take and apply to your own life?
- Do you think the author was equally invested in presenting the spiritual world in the novel as he or she was in developing a compelling plot and creating nuanced characters?
- Discuss the book's structure. Does the author use any narrative devices like flashbacks or multiple voices in telling the story? How does this affect your reading of the story and your appreciation of the book? Do you think the author did a good job with it? How do you think it might have been different if another character was telling the story?
- How important is the setting to the story? Is the author's description of the landscape/community a good one? Did the setting of the novel detract or add to your enjoyment of the story? If the book is not set in the present day, are the characters and their spirituality believable and applicable to modern-day matters of faith?
- Were you familiar with the author prior to reading this book? If so, how does this work compare to his or her previous titles?
- Compare this book to others you've read in this genre. Is it similar to any of them? Did you like it more or less than other books you've read? What do you think will be your lasting impression of the book?

Sarah Evans - Branch Manager
 Brier Library - Sno-Isle Libraries
sevans@sno-isle.org