



Date: February 13, 2026

Building Faith, Literacy, and Character—One Story at a Time—One Child at a Time.

Introducing the Dirt Dog and Friends Children’s Book Series

Dear Educator,

Are you looking for a resource that **strengthens character, builds self-esteem, reinforces Biblical principles, and engages children to grow in literacy** within today’s rapidly changing cultural landscape?

Please consider the *Dirt Dog and Friends* series, created specifically for children ages 4–8 to reach them during their earliest and most formative years.

Designed for preschool through first grade, this children’s picture book series blends engaging storytelling with character education and foundational literacy development. The first book, *Dirt Dog Invites Prissy Poodle to the Prom*, gently teaches children that our value comes from our hearts—not our appearance. Dirt Dog struggles with self-esteem, but through encouragement from his father, he learns perseverance and confidence.

The core message is drawn from **1 Samuel 16:7: God sees the value in our hearts, not outward appearance**. Each book also includes a discussion section to **promote meaningful conversations between children and adult readers, encouraging reflection and comprehension**.

Why Focus on Self-Esteem and Literacy So Early?

Research shows that **children begin forming a sense of self-esteem as early as age five**—before entering kindergarten. The *Malta Independent* reports that most children develop feelings about themselves at this early age. The Christian Youth Mentoring Initiative states, “Low self-esteem can **lessen a student’s desire to learn, ability to focus, and willingness to take risks.**”

At the same time, **literacy rates are declining nationwide**. According to NAEP data released in January 2025, **only 31% of fourth graders are reading at proficiency**—a 2% decline from 2022. Long-term studies show that students not reading at grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school. In fact, **88% of high school dropouts were struggling readers in third grade**.

So what can we do? We can provide engaging stories that spark imagination and nurture a love of reading. **Reading just 15 minutes per day exposes a child to more than one million words annually and significantly strengthens school readiness**. When children enjoy reading, they read more—and literacy improves naturally.

Addressing the Cultural Landscape

In Nehemiah 13:23–24, we read that children of that generation could not speak the language of their faith due to cultural blending. As a result, they could not read the Word of God or fully know Him. Today’s children face their own cultural challenges, including constant digital distractions and exposure to negative influences.

We have the opportunity to offer **uplifting, faith-centered literature that builds literacy while reinforcing Biblical truth**. If we cultivate a love for books early, perhaps the pull of excessive technology will lessen, and children will be equipped to avoid its pitfalls.

Recent research reflects a growing secular shift:

- Arizona Christian University reports that **younger generations are ushering in a “new morality,”** and **less than half of adults embrace the Bible** as their primary guide for morality.
- PubMed Central notes **increasing secularization from one generation to the next.**
- The Center for Bible Engagement found that **one of the most effective ways to disciple children is to encourage them to read or listen to the Bible.**

***Dirt Dog and Friends* engages young readers with sweet, meaningful stories while introducing valuable Biblical principles from Scripture.**

Endorsement

Book One has been **endorsed by Carol Kent, Executive Director of Speak Up Ministries and Christian award-winning author of over 30 books:**

“Dirt Dog is a heartwarming, tail-wagging tale that beautifully teaches children the importance of inner character over outward appearance. With humor, charm, and relatable life moments, author Lisa Pritchard reminds young readers that love and acceptance are found not in perfection, but in authenticity. A delightful read for families and classrooms alike, it gently weaves in the truth of 1 Samuel 16:7—that while people may focus on the outside, God looks at the heart.”

Program Overview

Dirt Dog and Friends is a supplemental children’s literature resource designed to support early literacy development while reinforcing Biblical principles, character education, and social-emotional learning.

Written for children ages 3–6 (Preschool–1st grade), the series uses engaging narrative text, relatable characters, and real-world scenarios to strengthen:

- Reading comprehension
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Listening skills
- Social-emotional development

The books are well-suited for classroom libraries, guided reading groups, family literacy programs, and independent reading for emerging readers.

Program Goals

- Help children understand their inherent value and reduce low self-esteem.
 - Strengthen early literacy and foster a lifelong love of reading.
 - Encourage engagement with Scripture and Biblical principles.
 - Support character development: respect, honesty, perseverance, kindness, and responsibility.
 - Promote meaningful discussion and reflection.
 - Provide an uplifting alternative in a tech-saturated culture.
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As a former CTE teacher, literacy team member at both the local and state levels, and literacy workshop leader, I understand the life-changing importance of reading, writing, and comprehension skills. *Dirt Dog and Friends* is designed to support those academic goals while also nurturing moral character and faith foundations.

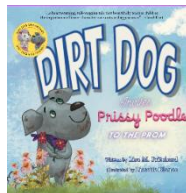
My prayer is that this series will glorify God and help children know their Creator while strengthening literacy and character. You can learn more at www.DirtDogandFriends.com, where subscribers will find free printable activities—including writing practice sheets, mazes, and coloring pages—created to provide safe, enriching alternatives to online content.

I will be attending the NRB Conference in Nashville next week and will be available after February 24. I would be honored if you would prayerfully consider partnering with me to strengthen faith, literacy, and character for the next generation.

We truly cannot begin too early.

Warm regards,

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Pre-sales February 16, 2026
 (See Aqua QR code below)
Release March 17, 2026



In addition to *Dirt Dog and Friends* (for 3-6), I am co-authoring a series for 7-10- year-olds, *Pets to the Rescue, A Cousin Crew Series*, endorsed by Dr. Gary Chapman (*The 5 Love Languages of Children*). It is written with intentional alignment to elementary literacy goals emphasized in both NC and SC standards.



Book One, *Apple Butter Adventure*, and subsequent books in the series will also meet the standards below and more.

Standards Alignment Overview

The series supports key components of:

- **NC English Language Arts Standards (Grades 2–4)**
- **SC College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards (Grades 2–4)**

Including:

- Vocabulary acquisition through context and glossary use
- Reading comprehension of narrative texts
- Analysis of characters, motivations, and themes
- Oral discussion, reflection, and written response opportunities
- Application of lessons across social and civic contexts

Instructional Design

- Grade-appropriate language and sentence structure
- Built-in glossary and applied life lessons
- Encourages evidence-based discussion and critical thinking
- Supports cross-curricular connections (ELA, Social Studies, SEL)

Beyond literacy skills, the series reinforces responsibility, empathy, collaboration, civic awareness, and respect for family and community—values increasingly recognized as essential to whole-child education.

The co-author of *Pets* and I offered creative writing workshops aligned with literacy goals, successfully taught through our local American Heritage Girls program and are available as school enrichment opportunities.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss how *Pets to the Rescue: A Cousin Crew Series* can support district literacy initiatives, classroom libraries, or supplemental curriculum adoption. In the meantime, these are the QR codes for Pets to learn more and/or to purchase.



Please prayerfully consider both series, and I hope to hear from you so we can partner together to improve the literacy of a generation.

Warm Regards,



Lisa M. Pritchard