

Review: *Drawn into the Heart of Reading*(Grades 2-8)

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Reviewer: Melissa Worcester

So, you want to use your own literature choices for your reading program, rather than use a program that chooses for you, and, to complicate things further, you want a program that will be easy to implement when used to teach several students of varying reading levels? **Drawn into the Heart of Reading** actually makes all of that possible, while still giving you some structure and helping you make sure you don't skip some important concept.

Drawn into the Heart of Reading ensures that you study various types of literature, including historical fiction, adventure, biography, fantasy, mystery, and non-fiction. You study story elements: character, setting, conflict, mood, prediction and inference, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, main idea, and point of view. Not only that, but the following godly character traits are emphasized: faith, fear of the Lord, responsibility, brotherly love, loyalty, virtue, obedience, joy and integrity.

Each of the nine units focuses on one genre of literature and takes 20 days to complete. The very thick and absolutely necessary teacher's guide helps you plan it all out and tells you what to do for each age group. It also has some reproducible masters to help you plan it out and keep track of things. The student books are consumable and contain worksheets for the student to fill out as they complete the various activities. The activities are designed to get the student thinking, both to help them better understand what they read, but also to help them analyze it from a Christian perspective.

The author suggests you plan to use one to three books per unit. Each unit contains various activities, some meant to be done independently, and some as a group or with the teacher. This is not just a stack of worksheets. There are prereading activities, discussion of story elements, biblical comparison, godly character traits, comprehension checks, and vocabulary activities. There are also various options for projects, both group and individual.

This program is very flexible. You can use it as your complete reading program, or use parts of it as a supplement. You can use it with books your students read by themselves, or you can use it with books you read aloud (or some of both). You can do the units in any order, and with pretty much any books that you might choose that fit into the genre categories. If you have multiple students of varying age (or even the same age), you can have them all read the same book or have each read a different book, and still find a framework that will minimize your work and maximize their learning benefit.