Bedtime is a wonderful time to read aloud to your young child. (I usually read 3 stories!) I suggest setting aside a special selection of books just for bedtime. Choose books that have a calming, loving nature to them—preferably ones that also have beautiful, tranquil illustrations. I have selected this month’s gems from my favorite bedtime stories. They are:

1. **Time for Bed**  Written by Mem Fox and masterfully illustrated by Jane Dyer. This simple story centers around how various mother animals are settling their little ones in for the night. “It’s time for bed, little sheep, little sheep. The whole wide world is going to sleep.” On most of the pages, I change the first mention of the young animal to its “young name” just for a bit of vocabulary enhancement…thus, I say “…little lamb, little sheep…” (board book)

2. **Snuggle Up, Sleepy Ones**  Written by Claire Freedman and charmingly illustrated by Tina Macnaughton. Another bedtime book based on how animals go to sleep—also in rhyme but, with a bit more varied vocabulary. “Shadows grow deeper, the lion cubs doze. Drowsy heads nod, little eyes start to close.” (board book)

3. **The Napping House**  Written by Audrey Wood—humorously illustrated by Don Wood. Because this is a bit more lively than the rest, I always read this first. Written as a “build upon story”, the author uses some great bedtime adjectives to describe the characters…”And on that dog there is a cat, a snoozing cat, on a dozing dog, on a dreaming child, on a snoring granny (I say, “Nana”!), on a cozy bed in a napping house, where everyone is sleeping.” (Board book)

4. **Kiss Good Night**  Written by Amy Hest and sweetly illustrated by Anita Jeram. This story is about a mother bear’s attempt to put her baby, Sam, to sleep. It gives you many opportunities to act out the kisses that Sam has been waiting for! (One of Ryder’s favorites from 2-3 years… and he still requests it periodically at 4 years.)

5. **The Animals’ Lullaby**  Written by well-known singer/songwriter, Tom Paxton with spectacular painting/illustrations by Erick Ingraham. Mr. Paxton has taken his song, “The Animals’ Lullaby” and turned it into a beautiful bedtime book. “Squirrels are sighing under their bushy tails, high in the hickory branches, safe from the howling gales.” He has
included the music to it on the inside cover, so if you are at all musical, you could learn the tune and sing the lyrics instead of reading them.

6. **Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star** illustrated by Sylvia Long (also a board book). You will learn all of the lines to this timeless lullaby, while moving through a beautifully illustrated depiction of animal children getting ready for bed- a delight. (I already mentioned this last spring, but thought it worthy of including in this list.)

7. Of Course, no list of bedtime stories would be complete without including **Goodnight Moon** and **Goodnight Gorilla**!

If you enjoy making up stories of your own to tell your young children at night, I encourage you to make them rather mundane with everyday themes...an exciting or suspenseful story right before bedtime can make falling asleep a little more difficult or result in restless dreams. Save those adventure tales for earlier in the day!

*Good reading!*

Janet “Nana” Langley