Little children should experience the holidays as a magical time of year. I love to watch my grandsons' faces when they walk into my house after I have transformed it into a sparkling wonderland filled with angels, Santas, stockings, etc. It is also the time when a large basket of holiday books appears next to the fireplace. These books have become one of Ryder’s favorite parts of his Christmas experience. In fact, for the last two summers he has requested that I get them out of storage for a short time just so he can “feel” Christmas again! (I do this for a day or two and then put them away.) Below are some of his/my favorites:

1. **Little Reindeer, finger puppet book** created by Chronicle Books. This little board book, with the reindeer head sticking out of its center, is told in simple rhyme and delights children from 6 months to 5 years. “Christmas is coming with holly and snow, the reindeer are waiting all ready to go.” The fun of this book is the child’s interaction with the little reindeer finger puppet.

2. **If Christmas Were a Poem** written by Ronnie Sellers and beautifully illustrated by Peggy Jo Ackley. “If Christmas were a small green tree, I'd cover it with lights, and decorate its every branch, until it looked just right; and then I’d gather all my friends and serve them tarts and tea, and tell them all how very much their friendship means to me.” This delightful book is filled with rhyming reflections on the joy and meaning of Christmas.

3. **One Snowy Night** written by M. Christina Butler and illustrated by Tina Macnaughton. This is a sweet, circular (It ends up where it began.) story about the journey of a little red hat. The red hat, which appears on each page, has a soft texture so your little one can actually experience the feeling of the hat, as it is passed on from Little Hedgehog, to Rabbit, to badger, to....” This book also delivers a nice, subtle message about the value of reusing our resources rather than wasting them.

   Two stories by the same author:

4. **The Wild Christmas Reindeer** and **Christmas Trolls** both masterfully written and illustrated by Jan Brett. Anyone, who has seen one of Jan Brett’s books, knows that s/he is in for a delightful, exquisite, visual
smorgasbord; each page is filled with borders that are as rich in illustration as the main picture. The Wild Christmas Reindeer is a story about little Teeka, who has been entrusted with the care of Santa’s reindeer. (Be prepared- their names are not the ones we are familiar with.) After many misguided attempts that result in Teeka loosing her temper, she finally learns the value of kindness and patience.

Christmas Trolls is the story about how a little girl named Treva teaches 2 trolls how to create Christmas for themselves, rather than stealing it. It also shows how giving has its own rewards. (both for 3 years and older)

5. Merry Christmas, Davy by Brigitte Weninger and illustrated by Eve Tharlet. This sweet little story is about a little bunny who gives away half of his family's store of food to animals in the wood that are going hungry. Like many holiday stories, its message is about the value of sharing and working together.

6. The Cobweb Christmas by Shirley Climo and illustrated by Joe Lasker. “More than anything else, Tante wanted some Christmas magic that was not of her own making.” This sweet story is about how Tante, the “auntie” of the village, who helps create Christmas for all of the children and the animals, finally receives her Christmas miracle. (ages 4-8 years)

7. The Little Fir Tree originally written by Hans Christian Anderson, retold by Gaby Goldsack and nicely illustrated by Caroline Pedler. “Deep in the forest, quite hidden from view among the tall pines a small fir-tree grew. The taller trees laughed when they heard the fir moan, "I wish I were taller, I can’t wait 'til I’m grown!" “The forest is fun,” the small fir-tree was told. “Live for the moment. Don't wish to be old.” Thus begins the tale of impatience, pride, disillusionment and ultimately- wisdom.

8. Finally, I must include Robert Sabuda’s beautiful, amazing, pop-up books. Sabuda has taken the idea of pop-up and turned it into an exquisite artform. In my house, these books are put up high and can only be looked at with an adult...but, they are some of Ryder’s favorites. So far, Sabuda has transformed The Twelve Days of Christmas, The Night Before Christmas, A Winter’s Tale, and Winter in White. (There may be others- these are the ones I have.)
9. *Snow Bugs* created and written by David A. Carter, of *More Bugs in Boxes* fame. This cute little pop-up book is filled with a number of interesting bugs enjoying the many activities that come with winter.

Here’s wishing you a season of wonderful reading!

1. **The Easter Egg Artists** Written and nicely illustrated by Adrienne Adams. This delightful little book is all about overcoming laziness and finding your passion...a bit of an older topic, but it is done in such a way that little ones can admire the little bunny who finds out that he loves to paint...and that he wants eventually to do it on his own without help from his parents.