From our librarians—Reusable book menu cards

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When students aren't allowed in the library, how can you help them—especially younger kids—pick out items they want? We are proud of the creative solutions librarians continue to develop, including this cool idea from a fellow Alexandria user, Deanna Contrino! Since her students aren't allowed in the library, she created reusable library cards with "book menus."

Here are some photos of an example card from Deanna.

On Deanna's cards, one side has a "book menu" and the other side has the student's name and barcode. The book menu lists different categories of books that students can choose from. For younger kids, there are also options for information vs. fiction and read alone vs. picture books. When Deanna visits classrooms and passes out the cards, students circle the type of book they'd like with a dry-erase marker. She can then pick out an appropriate book for each student, check it out to them with the card, and then drop off the books in the classroom.

How can you use these in your own library? Follow the steps below!

Create the cards

Materials: postcard paper (or other sturdy paper), printer, Alexandria labels, laminator or page protectors, scissors

1. Make a book menu for each grade or age group. Deanna used an online program called Canva, but there are many others you can use!
2. Print one book menu onto each postcard.

> ⚠ Remember to print the book menus at the right size!

3. Use an Alexandria report to print labels with each student's name, barcode, and other information you want to include. Attach these to the other side of the postcards.
    a. v7
        i. Use the *Library Cards (2x5) report* if you want to include the patron's picture.
        ii. Use the *Patron Barcode Labels (3x10) report* to easily peel the labels off the sheet and stick them on the back of the postcards.
    b. v6
        i. Use the *Patron Cards report* or one of the patron barcode reports.
4. Laminate and cut out the cards or place them in page protectors.

Use the cards

1. Visit a classroom. Deanna talks about the book categories or "big ideas" and shows examples of each. She likes to make sure students understand that the image representing the category isn't necessarily the book they'll get.
2. Pass out everyone's library cards and dry-erase markers.
3. Ask each student to circle the kind of book they would like.
4. Collect the cards.
5. Choose a book for each student depending on their preferred category and reading level. Once you have chosen a book, tuck the card into the book with the barcode side up.
6. After you've selected all of the books for a class, scan them all at once in **Circulation**.
7. Deliver the books to the classroom. Once each student has their book, collect the cards and store them in folders labeled by class.

And there you have it! Feel free to adapt this idea to what would work best for your library. If you give it a try, let us know how it's going in the comments below. And thank you to Deanna Contrino for sharing this awesome idea!

Before you go...

Have you used the new Patron Details, Item Details, and Copy List? Let us know what you think in our short survey! Your feedback will help inform future improvements.

> ⓘ Still on version 6? Learn about switching to Alexandria 7!
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