

## **A Bibliography of Children's Christmas Books**

The following is a list of wonderful children's picture books that help tell the story of the birth of Jesus and unwrap some of the major themes of the Advent and Christmas stories. Each of these books are suitable for reading during worship, Sunday school, at home or as a beautiful gift for a child. I have sorted the books under headings that might help you think about which books would work for your church or family.

Most of these books are readily available at Chapters/Indigo or other bookstores with good children's book sections, and are also available for download on Kindle/Kobo.

### **If your church collects warm mittens and hats during this season**

*Mittens to Share* by Emil Sher.

A child playing outside in the snow loses her mittens and digs through the mitten box filled with all sorts of shapes and sizes of mittens and is able to go back outside to play in the snow

### **Advent 1 - Year A - Waiting and Preparing for Jesus to Come**

*Who Is Coming To Our House* by Joseph Slate.

All of the animals in the stable prepare a cozy welcome for baby Jesus

*Waiting* by Kevin Henkes.

Each of the toys on the nursery room window are waiting for something. Then a cat with patches joins them on the window ledge. She didn't seem to be waiting for anything, until one day the thing she was waiting for is revealed.

*The Man With the Violin* by Kathy Stinson

This true story of musician Joshua Bell takes place when a little boy witnesses Joshua playing his violin in a Washington subway station. No one notices the musician except the little boy who is filled with the music he hears and dances with delight. Watchfulness at what is being displayed around us reminds us of our need to wait with our eyes and ears open.

### **Advent 2 - Year A - Peaceable Kingdom and Welcoming Others**

*Room for Little One: A Christmas Tale* by Martin Waddell.

On a cold winter's night one by one animals make their way to the warm stable and make room for each other, until all of them make room for Mary and Joseph and their baby. Take note of each of the animals and wonder how each animal was able to welcome another who they would normally not be with.

*God's Dream* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

This story opens with children wondering what God dreams about. The story tells of God's dream of people getting along even when they are different. Sometimes we don't get along, but even then God dreams that we will not get angry or hurt one another. The children then wonder how God's dream can come true. If you are reading this in worship you may want to read a limited number of pages from the book to keep within time limits.

*Last Stop On Market Street* by Matt de la Pena.

As CJ and his Nana ride the bus after church, going across town to volunteer in a soup kitchen, CJ wonders why they have to go by the bus. Nana reveals to CJ the beauty of all of the people on their bus as each person shares with the others their music, compliments, and experiences. Through the bus ride and his time at the soup kitchen CJ discovers how his Nana sees things differently.

### **Advent 3 - Year A - Joy and Joy Shared With Others**

*Great Joy* by Kate DiCamillo.

This beautiful book shares the story of a little girl who watches an organ grinder and his monkey out in the cold of the city. She wants to invite the man in, but is discouraged by her mother. She invites the man to her church Christmas play, and when he arrives she bursts out her line of great joy.

*The Christmas Miracle of Jonathon Toomey* by Susan Wojciechowski.

A gloomy wood carver arrives in the town and is approached by a woman and her son to have him carve a nativity set that was lost some years ago. Through a number of visits and kindnesses the man becomes friendly and teaches the boy how to carve as the boy teaches the man about his most loved figures in the nativity.

*Extra Yarn* by Mac Barnett.

A little girl discovers a box full of yarn of every colour. As she knits sweaters and hats and mittens for everyone, every creature and even the buildings of her village the town brightens with her work. The box never runs out of wool until it is stolen by an archduke who wants it all for himself. He opens the box to find it empty, but when the box returns to the little girl the knitting carries on.

*The Night Gardener* by the Jan Brothers

In the darkness of the night the trees of the town are slowly being transformed into beautiful shapes by someone unknown. William must discover who is doing all of this. After waiting all night William spots the night gardener and is invited to share in the work that brings joy to the town.

### **Advent 4 - Year A - Love Shared**

*Beautiful Hands* by Kathryn Otoshi.

Vibrantly painted handprints come together to display pictures of all of the wonderful things hands can do to share love with the world. Simply told and colourfully illustrated this book is a great conversation starter for how we display our love with the world.

*Plant a Kiss* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal.

In this simple book a little girl plants a kiss, and then tends and waters it day and night and waits for it to bloom. Her friends come to see it as it blossoms, but caution her against sharing it because of its rare nature. She ignores their words and spreads her love with everyone. All this from one simple kiss!

*Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts.

Jeremy wants the black high tops with two white strips, but his Grandma reminds him what he really needs is boots for the winter. Everyone else has them, well almost everyone. In the end he gets the boots, but finds the high tops in the thrift shop for only \$2.50 and buys them with his own money. Just because they are too small doesn't matter - he'll stretch them. But his friend Antonio needs shoes, and his feet are smaller, and so Jeremy gives his precious high tops to his friend.

### **Christmas Day, Epiphany, and the Flight to Egypt**

*The Friendly Beasts: An Old English Christmas Carol* by Tomie dePaola.

Through strong images and words of the this Christmas melody the story of the birth of the baby is retold.

*One Wintry Night* by Ruth Bell Graham

Caught in a snow storm in the mountains of North Carolina, Zeb Morris is taken in by a woman to wait out the weather. Sitting down in front of the fire Zeb's host retells the story of Christmas beginning with creation, sharing highlights of the Noah's Ark, Moses and God's chosen people, Samuel, David, and the prophets. Mary and Joseph are both visited by the angel and together they travel to Bethlehem where Jesus is born. The book concludes with the crucifixion and the resurrection as Zeb hears how this little baby could save the world. The artwork in this longer, chapter book is absolutely incredible and a page or two could be lifted from book to tell just a piece of the story while showing the art to draw listeners in.

*To Whom the Angel Spoke: A Story of the Christmas* by Terry Kay.

In this story of three very different shepherds with very different feelings, a voice interrupts their evening to tell them of the birth of Jesus. Unifying belief brings them together to celebrate the thing they all believe together.

*A Shepherd's Gift* by Mary Calhoun

Matthew sets out to find his lost sheep and is led to the stable with a gentle couple and their new baby.

*The Grumpy Shepherd* by Paddy Devon.

Joram is a habitual grouch until he is faced with the words of an angel telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. His sadness and loneliness are changed to love and hope when he meets Jesus.

*Jesus, the Word* by Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones.

This beautifully written and illustrated book retells John's prologue (John 1:1-4, 14) and encourages the contemplation of the question, "Who is Jesus?"

*Refuge* by Anne Booth.

This gentle retelling of the nativity focus' particularly on the flight to Egypt with the search for finding kindness in the strange places and among the people they will meet. The dream of Joseph to go is shared in the story, but the particular reason for going to a new land is not revealed - they just need to go and find refuge in the welcome of Egypt.