



A Calendar of Festivals

Cherry Gilchrist

Helen Conann, Illustrator

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Eight festivals are featured in this colorful, attractively designed book. Arranged chronologically by calendar year, the book starts with Purim, a Jewish Holiday in March, and ends with a Russian New Year's story. Each holiday is described and its methods of celebrations are discussed in one page. A story then follows which either explains the origins of the celebration or which may be told as part of festivities. The one-page introductions are breezy and accessible. They whet the reader's appetite for more information about the varied holidays, which is only partially satiated by the stories. The stories themselves provide an interesting cross section of biblical, mythic and folklore tales. Collected as they are in one title, a reader can appreciate how stories are a central focus of any cultural or religious celebration and are a pleasurable source of knowledge to a young audience.

There is a unifying brightness and precision to the watercolor illustrations even as the characters change for each unique tale. Be it Buddhist or Caribbean, the reader will gain a sense of the people and their style of dress through the artwork.

This is a collection that could easily be used throughout the year and with elementary age children to awaken them to a wide variety of beliefs.

MARTHA TOPOL (January / February 1999)

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