



Planting Friendship: Peace, Salaam, Shalom

Callie Metler

Shirin Rahman

Melissa Stoller

Kate Talbot, Illustrator

Spork (Oct 1, 2021)

Hardcover \$17.99 (36pp)

978-1-950169-60-3

Planting Friendship is a warm picture book in which girls from different faith traditions build friendships, exemplifying kindness and understanding.

Three girls from different faith traditions become close friends in *Planting Friendship*, a beautiful, sensitive picture book from Callie Metler, Shirin Rahman, and Melissa Stoller.

Molly is Christian, Savera is Muslim, and Hannah is Jewish. All three are nervous about their first day of school. They wonder if they will be accepted and make friends. To bring them peace and comfort, family members give each girl a necklace that's symbolic of her family's faith.

At school, the girls notice each other's necklaces—the first of the many qualities that they have in common. Fun times at each other's homes strengthen their bond, and a class seed-planting project makes them work, learn, and solve problems together. When it looks like the project might fail, the girls decide to start over. Each uses their own grandmother's wisdom to give the seedlings what they need to thrive. Their plants and friendships blossom.

This is a book concerned with what unites children, rather than with their differences. The girls model kindness, cooperation, and problem-solving. Their interactions, both with each other and with their family members, suggest that their faiths are rooted in love.

The whimsical, delicate illustrations use complementary colors to enliven their scenes. They depict comforting neighborhood and school settings in which children from different backgrounds, and of different identities, meet, learn, and play together. Here, diversity is portrayed with dignity and sensitivity.

The prose is accessible, ably conveying the friendly and accepting message. Its sentences are short and direct. At the end of the book, the faith-related objects that appear in the illustrations are named, and information about their meanings and uses is given to further learning and interreligious understanding.

Planting Friendship is a warm picture book in which girls from different faith traditions build friendships, exemplifying kindness and understanding.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November 30, 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.