



Sharon's Song: Kaleke Kasome

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Paul Sutherland

Muwanga Daniel, Illustrator

Paul Sutherland (Aug 24, 2017)

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Wonderful details offer a peek into another culture and will help children learn to love and accept all people.

Paul Sutherland's *Sharon's Song* was inspired by Maurice Hasa's "Kaleke Kasome" and is a sweet book about a little girl who loves to sing. With bright colors and lyrics on nearly every page, the book flows from beginning to end.

Sharon sings everywhere she goes. Many adults are critical of her singing, but the children in her village enjoy hearing her songs. One day, a new girl comes to school. The girl cannot talk and has very limited vision, but she loves to hear Sharon sing, and the two become immediate friends.

When the girl is missing from school the next day, Sharon is worried; when the two are reunited, she finds out that the girl has no name and no family. Sharon is quick to invite her to be her sister.

There are a lot of lovely messages in *Sharon's Song*. Sharon sings for herself and for those who can appreciate the beauty in her music, and she learns to be strong and loving and generous. When she is picked on, her cousins protect her and teach her how to use her voice and her words to protect herself.

The illustrations on each page depict a colorful, vibrant African village, as well as interesting details not mentioned in the text: the nameless girl appears to have a cleft palate; children come in multiple shapes and sizes; adults, particularly the women, are dressed in colorful patterned fabrics. These wonderful, unspoken details will help children learn to love and accept all people, and offer a peek into another culture.

There is a guide at the end of the book for parents and teachers that primarily addresses appropriate touch. It describes who it's okay to hug and kiss, who it's okay to shake hands with, and the kind of touch a child should be wary of, alongside a list of internet resources on this topic. Though the information here is certainly good, the topic of appropriate touch is only mentioned once in the context of a song and is not the primary focus of the book.

Sharon's Song is a lovely book, full of positivity. It will be a wonderful addition to any library.

CATHERINE THURESON (January 31, 2018)

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