

Thanksgiving

Douglas Taylor

Catherine Taylor

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A Christian prayer of Thanksgiving is a pleasurable read-aloud story for young children and their parents.

Every November, many families contemplate what they have to be thankful for. *Thanksgiving* provides food for thought in the form of an author-described “poem” of simple childhood and family pleasures. The book begins by asking, “What do I have to be thankful for?” and then offers gentle, fun rhymes and relatable artwork answering that very question.

The book does a stellar job evoking seasonal gratitude, perhaps providing respite to teach children to appreciate the otherwise-ignored little things common in the lives of most busy families: “For days of sunshine, for days when it snows, for ankles and elbows and fingers and toes.”

Coauthor Catherine Taylor composed the book while teaching art at an elementary school in Tennessee. She asked her poet husband, Douglas Taylor, to compose something she could read aloud to students for Thanksgiving. The result is more Christian prayer than poetry—other holidays are mentioned, but only from this religion: “For airplanes and rockets and trips to the moon, for Christmas, and Easter, and April, and June.” The child shown on the cover with hands clasped in prayer essentially sets the tone for the entire book.

Many of the ruminations on thankfulness here will have broad appeal unless you come from what is considered a nontraditional family. The random insertion of “reindeer, bison and elephant herds” might be off-putting for some careful readers but could easily play into a child’s imagination.

There’s no mention of the history of this marked occasion, or even parades or football. There is, however, enough sweet sentiment in the Taylors’ book to make it a pleasurable read-aloud story for young children and their parents. Those searching through the virtual cornucopia of Thanksgiving-themed picture books for a light read will most likely be satisfied with this title.

HEIDI LOVY (October 1, 2013)

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