

Book Lists

Here are some books you might want to check out.



[Winterfrost by Michelle Houts](#)

An ordinary Danish Christmas turns extraordinary when a family overlooks an important folkloric tradition. Christmas has come, and with it a sparkling white winterfrost. When Bettina's parents are called away unexpectedly, leaving her in charge of the house, the farm, and baby Pia, Bettina neglects to set out the traditional bowl of Christmas rice pudding for the tiny nisse.

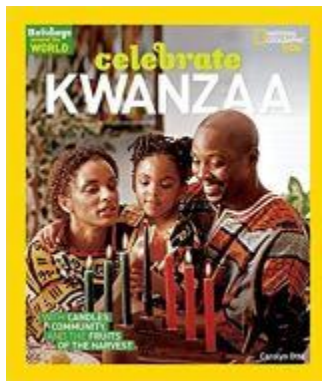
No one besides her grandfather ever believed the nisse were real, so what harm could there be in forgetting this silly custom? But when baby Pia disappears, the magic of the nisse makes itself known. To find her sister and set things right, Bettina must venture into the miniature world of these usually helpful, but sometimes mischievous, folk.



[Penina Levine is a Potato Pancake by Rebecca O'Connell, illus. by Majella Lue Sue](#)

In this Hanukkah story, Penina finds that a glass of cold milk and a hot potato pancake go a long way. Penina Levine is the only member of her family who isn't looking forward to Hanukkah. Not only is it another chance for her annoying sister to steal the spotlight, but her favorite teacher is taking a mysterious leave of absence, and her best friend is deserting her to go on a dream vacation to Aruba.

Then Penina discovers why Mrs. Brown must go away and hears that a snowstorm may ruin Zozo's trip, and Penina knows she's the one who must bring some holiday spirit to her friends. Readers of all backgrounds will relate to Penina as she turns a pile of problems into a Hanukkah to remember.



[*Holidays Around the World: Celebrate Kwanzaa by Carolyn B. Otto*](#)

Over the course of seven days, African Americans, families and friends, come together to light the candles that symbolize their past and future—and their unity. They gather as a community to make music and to dance; to feast on harvest foods and the good things of the earth; and to exchange simple, often homemade, gifts. Readers are introduced to the symbols of the holiday, such as the *mkeka* (a special placemat), *kinara* (candleholder), and *kikombe cha umoja* (unity cup). Important concepts, like the seven principles, are explained. In addition, a note from the book's consultant, aimed at parents and teachers, puts the holiday in its full cultural and historical perspective.

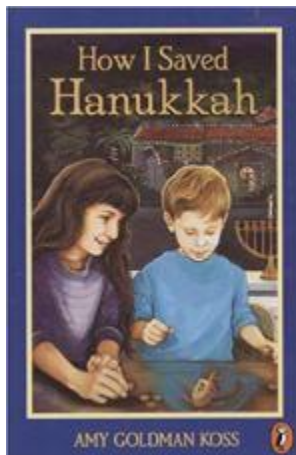


[**Tru and Nelle: A Christmas Tale by G. Neri**](#)

Young Truman Capote thought life in New York City was going to be perfect, but things didn't work out as planned.

In fact, Tru is downright miserable. So he decides to run away to Monroeville, Alabama, and the only friend he's ever had, Nelle Harper Lee. But things don't go well there, either.

Bad things seem to happen wherever he goes. The only explanation: he must be cursed. Christmas is coming, and Tru's only wish is to be happy. But it'll take a miracle for that to come true. Luckily, a special feast brings the miracle he's hoping for. *Tru and Nelle: A Christmas Tale* is based on the real life friendship of Truman Capote and Harper Lee.

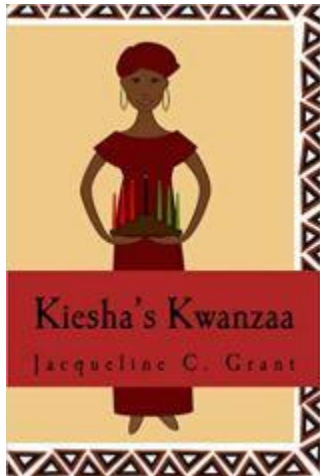


[**How I Saved Hanukkah by Amy Goldman Koss**](#)

Marla Feinstein, the only Jewish kid in her fourth-grade class, hates December.

While everyone else is decorating trees, she'll be forgetting to light the candles and staring at a big plastic dreidel. The holidays couldn't get much worse.

So Marla decides to find out what Hanukkah's really about—and soon she and her family have made the Festival of Lights the biggest party in town!



[*Kiesha's Kwanzaa* by Jacqueline C. Grant](#)

Kiesha doesn't understand what is happening to her family. Papa hides behind the newspaper at dinner time. Her big brother Derrick is grumpy and gets into trouble all the time. And Mama just seems unhappy. If not for her precious library books, Kiesha would be unhappy too.

When she discovers a family celebration called Kwanzaa, Kiesha thinks she has found a way to help her family. She works hard to create a special family Kwanzaa celebration, but is it too late? Young readers will learn about how some families celebrate Kwanzaa, but Kiesha's Kwanzaa is really about family and togetherness and the power of love.

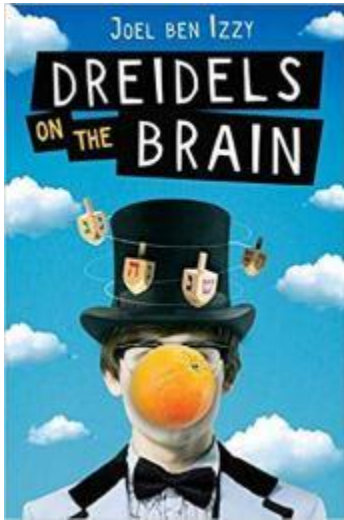


[*Young Scrooge: A Very Scary Christmas* by R.L. Stine](#)

Rick Scroogeman hates Christmas. He can't stand the carols and the pageants. He can't stand the lights and the mistletoe.

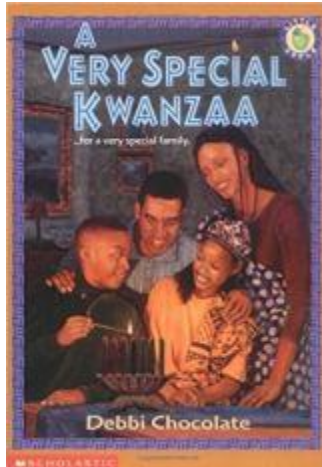
But what he hates the most is having to watch the old movie *A Christmas Carol* every year at school.

Since his name is Scroogeman, all of his classmates start calling him Scrooge. And he *hates* being called Scrooge. But everything starts to change when three ghosts visit him. At first, he thinks it's a dream. But then he realizes that it might be a nightmare. A nightmare that could become real.



[*Dreidels on the Brain* by Joel ben Izzy](#)

One lousy miracle. Is that too much to ask? Evidently so for Joel, as he tries to survive Hannukah, 1971 in the suburbs of Los Angeles (or, as he calls it, “The Land of Shriveled Dreams”). That’s no small task when you’re a “seriously funny-looking” twelve-year-old magician who dreams of being his own superhero: Normalman. And Joel’s a long way from that as the only Jew at Bixby School, where his attempts to make himself disappear fail spectacularly. Home is no better, with a family that’s not just mortifyingly embarrassing but flat-out broke. That’s why Joel’s betting everything on these eight nights, to see whether it’s worth believing in God or miracles or anything at all. Armed with his favorite jokes, some choice Yiddish words, and a suitcase full of magic tricks, he’s scrambling to come to terms with the world he lives in—from hospitals to Houdini to the Holocaust—before the last of the candles burns out. No wonder his head is spinning: He’s got dreidels on the brain. And little does he know that what’s actually about to happen to him and his family this Hanukkah will be worse than he’d feared . . . And better than he could have imagined.

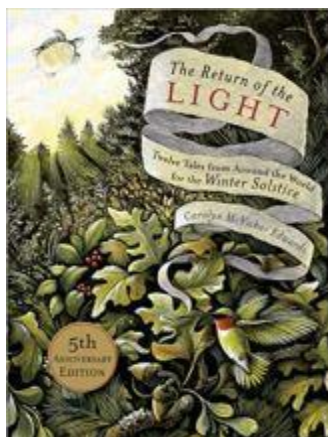


[*A Very Special Kwanzaa by Debbi Chocolate*](#)

Charlie's school is holding a Kwanzaa Festival, and he doesn't want any part of it. Last year, he was chosen to stand in front of the entire class wearing a dashiki, beads, and sandals- in the middle of winter!

When the class jerk decided to crack jokes about Charlie's outfit, he became the clown of the third grade. This year he just wants things to be normal.

But Charlie soon learns that Kwanzaa is a celebration of creativity and caring.



[*The Return of Light: Twelve Tales from Around the World for the Winter Solstice by Carolyn McVickar Edwards*](#)

The winter solstice, the day the “sun stands still,” marks the longest night and the shortest day of the year, and it comes either on December 20th or 21st. Celebrations honoring the winter solstice as a moment of transition and renewal date back thousands of years and occur among many peoples on every continent. *The Return of the Light* makes an ideal companion for everyone who carries on this tradition, no matter what their faith. Storyteller Carolyn McVickar Edwards retells twelve traditional tales-from North America, China, Scandinavia, India, Africa, South America, Europe, and Polynesia-that honor this magical moment. These are stories that will renew our wonder of the miracle of rebirth and the power of transition from darkness into light.



[*The Angel Tree* by Daphne Benedis-Grab](#)

Every Christmas in the small town of Pine River, a tree appears in the town square—the Angel Tree. Some people tie wishes to the tree, while others make those wishes come true. Nobody’s ever known where the tree comes from, but the mystery has always been part of the tradition’s charm.

This year, however, four kids who have been helped—Lucy, Joe, Max, and Cami—are determined to solve the mystery and find out the true identity of the town’s guardian angel, so that Pine River can finally thank the person who brought the Angel Tree to their town.

This is a heartwarming Christmas mystery, full of friendship, discovery, and loads of holiday cheer!



[*Nutcracker* by Susan Adrian](#)

Georgie has waited for this moment her whole life—to dance the part of Clara in *The Nutcracker* ballet. And when she finally gets the part, it’s like a dream come true . . . *Literally*.

Diversity and Inclusion Book List

Every time Georgie dances with the Nutcracker doll, she leaves the ballet studio and enters a world where everything around her—the old wooden furniture, the Christmas tree, the carefully wrapped presents—is larger than life. It's so magical, Georgie can't wait to return again and again. Then the Nutcracker's magic seeps into the real world, putting Georgie's friend in danger. Everything is falling apart, and it's almost Christmas! Can Georgie save her friend, the Nutcracker, and most of all, herself?

As the northern part of the Western Hemisphere is blanketed with snow and the December holidays approach, it's a great time to celebrate by cooking some special recipes. From Hanukkah to Christmas to Kwanzaa, kids can join in the fun by trying some of these recipes on their own. The scent of gingerbread baking, latkes frying in oil, or bacon and onion seasoning collard greens—traces of these delicious dishes linger in the air and on the tongue. What better time to connect with family and friends than by cooking special meals and treats together? These cookbooks may help to make your holiday celebrations more festive.