

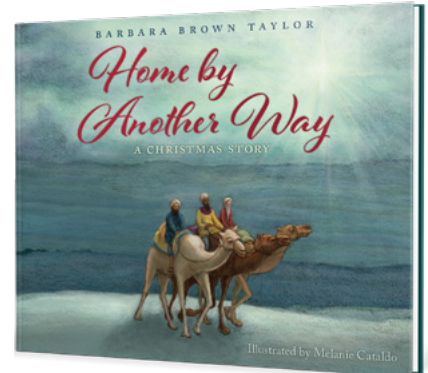
READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

Home by Another Way

By Barbara Brown Taylor & Melanie Cataldo

The story of Jesus' birth as we know it has expanded far beyond the limited details in Scripture, and for good reason. This story, which is among the most foundational of our faith, is full of compelling characters and actions that would benefit from more details. In this beautifully illustrated book, readers are invited to imagine what those details might be, including everything from the personalities of the wise men to the bad breath of King Herod to the demeanor of Mary and Joseph as they welcomed these unlikely guests. This book provides a wonderful starting point to rethink this beloved story by engaging curiosity, imagination, and wonder in bringing familiar characters to life. Even as you explain to children that this book isn't a literal account of the wise men's journey, embrace the opportunity to connect with this vivid retelling and continue imagining other parts of this story.



★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- The illustrator created vibrant and detailed images of both the characters and the landscape of this story. In what ways did her illustrations match your imagination? In what ways did you imagine things differently?
- When we think of the wise men, often the first thing we think of is gifts.
 - *With Younger Children:* The book describes the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh as being "all the wrong things" and offers ideas of what they should have brought. What gifts would you choose to bring baby Jesus?
 - *With Older Children:* When the wisemen leave, they thank Jesus for the gifts that he gave them. What has been a gift that you can't see (like the ones named by the wise men) that you've received?

★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- There is a long tradition of expanding stories from the Bible. Often, through various stories, music, and art, elements not actually in the Bible become part of our understanding. Read this book side-by-side with the gospel account of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12), noticing both what is spelled out in Scripture and also where the author has elaborated. For more comparison, read the hymn, "We Three Kings."
- The title of this book comes from the last verse of the wise men's story in the Bible, "... they left for their own country by another road" (Matthew 2:12 CEB). Just as the author imagined details about the journey to find Jesus, imagine together what you think the journey home might have been like for the wise men.

PRAY

God who made the stars in the sky, may this story of following a star fill us with wonder as we imagine the wise men's journey in new ways. Help us see how we can share the Good News of Jesus with others. Amen.



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Christmastime can be challenging for families to balance the rich, faith-based rituals of Christmas with the cultural festivities of the season. While decorations, parties, gifts, and movies are important traditions, it would be a missed opportunity not to engage more deeply in the incredible story of Christ's birth, both at home and in church. This book can serve as a launching point to dig deeper into the story of the Magi and its place in our celebrations around Christmas and Epiphany. Some ideas include:

- Explore traditions around the day of Epiphany including the things that you may do in your congregation as well as how it's celebrated in other cultures.
- Have a conversation about how your family approaches the giving and receiving of gifts. Some ideas to guide your discussion include: whether you exchange gifts with a large number of people or just a few; ways that you give to others in need (such as participating in angel tree or similar programs); and the types of gifts given (for example, handmade vs. store-bought, or physical gifts vs. experiences).
- Adopt a 'star word' for the year. In *Home by Another Way*, the imagery (both written and illustrated) often centers on stars. In recent years, many churches have adopted the practice of offering "star words" to worshipers as a guiding word for the year. If your church does not participate in this practice, consider doing an internet search to find possible star words, and have each family member select a word.
- Seek out examples of the Christmas narrative being told differently in stories, music, or works of art. Bring an imaginative mindset to what is likely a very familiar narrative and see what new insights come!

MORE TO READ & DO

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ADDITIONAL BOOKS FOR HOLIDAYS & CELEBRATIONS

- [*The Night of His Birth*](#), by Katherine Paterson & Lisa Aisato
- [*The Worst Christmas Ever*](#), by Kathleen Long Bostrom & Guy Porfirio
- [*Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*](#), edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell & Carol A. Wehrheim
- [*Baptism Promises*](#), by Carol A. Wehrheim & Roz Fulcher
- [*Dedication Promises*](#), by Carol A. Wehrheim & Roz Fulcher
- [*Psalms of Wonder: Poems from the Book of Songs*](#), by Carey Wallace & Khoa Le - [Also Available in Spanish](#)

Guide written by Becky D'Angelo-Veitch and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)" (pcusa.org/aroundthetable).



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