

## Cuddle up with the kids: These books spread holiday joy

**By Mia Geiger**  
 The Washington Post

Books might not be the first item on the your child's wish list for the holidays. But they just might be a gift they turn to again and again, long after all those batteries need to be replaced or the toys no longer hold their luster.

**"The Great Spruce,"** by John Duvall, illustrated by Rebecca Gibbon. Alec loves climbing the giant spruce outside his house, and he loves hearing his grandfather explain how, many years ago, he replanted the then-tiny tree from a shady part of the forest to a sunny spot near their house. When townspeople see how beautiful the tree is, they ask if they can chop it down and place it in the town square during Christmas. Alec finds a way to save the tree while still allowing it to be enjoyed by the community.

**"Kwanzaa,"** by Rebecca Pettiford. Kids eager to learn about Kwanzaa can find lots to look at in this book, from the upbeat photographs of families celebrating to the rich,

bold colors on each page. The slim volume answers questions such as "What is Kwanzaa?" and "What does Kwanzaa mean?"

**"A Hanukkah with Mazel,"** by Joel Edward Stein, illustrated by Elisa Vavouri. Misha, a talented yet poor painter, lives alone in an Eastern European village and has no one to spend Hanukkah with. One day he finds a hungry cat in his barn. Though he has very little to eat, he shares what he has with the cat, whom he names Mazel. The two happily celebrate Hanukkah, even though Misha has no candles for the menorah and just a few potatoes with which to make latkes.

**"The Doll People's Christmas,"** by Ann M. Martin and Laura Godwin, illustrated by Brett Helquist. Based on the characters in The Doll People series enjoyed by tweens, this new book is geared to the younger set.

**"Potatoes at Turtle Rock,"** by Susan Schnur and Anna Schnur-Fishman; illustrated by Alexandra Steele-Morgan. Annie, her brother, Lincoln,

and her parents prepare to celebrate Hanukkah as they usually do when it snows — with a trek through the forest.

