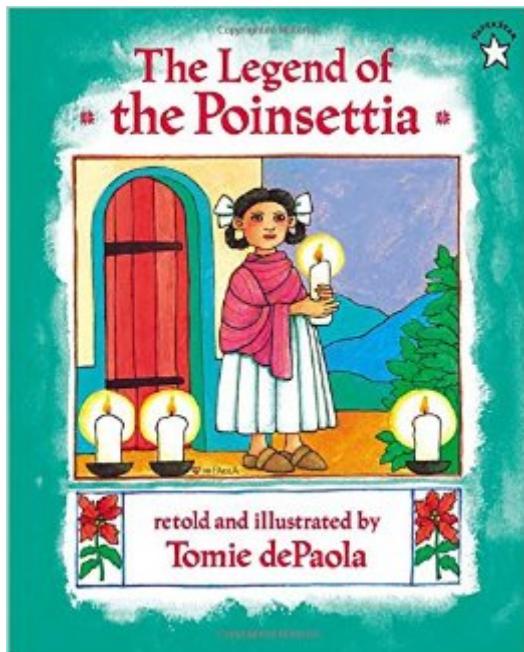


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# The Legend Of The Poinsettia



## **Synopsis**

In Mexico, the poinsettia is called flor de la Nochebuena or flower of the Holy Night. At Christmastime, the flower blooms and flourishes, the quite exquisite red stars lighting up the countryside. This Mexican legend tells how the poinsettia came to be, through a little girl's unselfish gift to the Christ Child. Beloved Newbery honor-winning author and Caldecott honor-winning illustrator Tomie dePaola has embraced the legend using his own special feeling for Christmas. His glorious paintings capture not only the brilliant colors of Mexico and its art, but also the excitement of the children preparing for Christmas and the hope of Lucida, who comes to see what makes a gift truly beautiful.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: AD680L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (October 6, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0698115678

ISBN-13: 978-0698115675

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.1 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (81 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #17,359 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Christmas #393 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths #1483 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## **Customer Reviews**

This book tells a legend about the gift of giving. It is set in Mexico, close to Christmas time. All the families are preparing their gifts for the baby Jesus. One family is making a special blanket for the baby, however the mother gets too sick and she cannot finish the beautiful blanket, so the family will have no gift to give on Christmas. So the young daughter tries to finish the blanket but ruins it beyond repair, so she hides from the rest of the town's people and does not go to church on Christmas. While everyone else is walking into church baring their gifts, the young girl watches from afar. However while there she encounters an old lady who teaches her a valuable lesson. The

young girl learns that it is not the gift that you give but the thought that you have put into it, and the mere gesture of giving. The author gets the point across about gift giving so well. I came away from this book remembering and understand that it is truly the thought that counts and not the gift itself.

This book was one of the best children's books that I have ever read. Well, here's what it's about: This is about a girl named Lucida and her family. Christmas is drawing near and every year at Christmas, a manger scene is put at the front of the town church. Well this year, the blanket they use to wrap around the baby Jesus has become old and worn. So the priest asks Lucida's mother to weave a new one because her skills are so excellent. She accepts, and with help from Lucida, they then begin to weave a beautiful blanket. But unfortunately, just before they finish, on the day before Christmas Eve Lucida's mother gets ill. Lucida can't finish the blanket alone, but she tries anyway because her family would have nothing to offer to baby Jesus. When her attempt fails, Lucida's very upset and doesn't want to take part in the procession going into the church. She then meets an old woman who turns her thoughts around and teaches her a very important lesson. To find it out, read the book today! What a great book for children to read. This book teaches that no matter what gift you give someone, whatever you do, it doesn't have to be the best, the most expensive it just has to come from the heart. That's a lesson that kid's these days should learn, as well as some adults. So read this book to your children today, I'm sure you'll love it..

I used this book as a unit last Christmas on traditions and folklore around the world. Everyone loved it, parents and children alike. Many asked where they could purchase the book to make it permanent part of their Christmas library.

If you are looking for the true story of the legend of the poinsettia, this is not it!!! The only thing that is the same about the legend from Mexico and this story is the fact that the poinsettias were made red on Christmas eve because a little girl brought baby Jesus a weed for his birthday because she was so poor. The names, plot, and special saying that the little girl's brother said in the legend is not in this book, which takes away the impact of the story. The drawings although are beautiful and the story is nice if you don't know the real legend.

This is a much cherished book in our family. My son received it when he was 3.5yo. He loved the story and illustrations then and even more now, a year later. My 2yo is frequently drawn to this book and enjoys studying the pictures. The writing is excellent, the tale is told with great respect and the

illustrations are riveting. We have recommended or given this book to many families and all have enjoyed immensely.

Tomie dePaola is another one of my favorite author/illustrators. While reading this book to my daughter last Christmas I actually learned about the legend behind the Poinsettia. Up until the point of reading this book, I didn't even know there was a legend behind this. This is another great book to add to your holiday reading list. The whole family can learn something new!

I love legends. I always have. I am particularly fond of legends that attempt to explain things such as why the robin has a red breast, or why it snows on Christmas, or why the donkey says "hee haw," and other things like that. That is one of the reasons I was drawn to this little book by Tomie dePaola, *The Legend of the Poinsettia*. Lucinda is a young girl who lives with her parents and younger siblings in Mexico. The colorful illustrations have that southeastern feel to it. Lucinda's community is preparing for Christmas by preparing gifts for the Christ child on Christmas Eve. I loved that the focus of gift giving was for Christ as opposed to the hustle and bustle and commercialism that is so common in American households. The gifts were labors of love too and involved special crafts, skills or homegrown gifts. Lucinda and her mama have been asked to weave the special blanket for Baby Jesus as the one they have used for years is very old and worn. When Lucinda's mama becomes ill, Lucinda is unable to finish the blanket by herself and the more she tries, the more tangled the yarn in the loom becomes. Lucinda is disheartened and worried about her mother, as well as saddened that her family has no gift to give the Christ child. Suddenly an old woman appears and suggests Lucinda pick some simple native weeds and bring them to Christ. In humility, Lucinda does that, and as you can guess, these become the beautiful poinsettia plants, the *flor de la Nochebuena*, that we associate with Christmas today! The reference and picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe was a nice touch for Catholic children who are familiar with story, and it was nice to see the shrine to our lady as part of Lucinda's everyday life. My children identified with Lucinda's fears for her mother, and also her fear of being different from the rest of the community. They also felt it was very brave of her to come forward with such a simple gift in the face of much splendor. After reading the story, my kids also became more aware of the poinsettias at church and other places and we even bought our own! Overall I think this is a very nice book to read during the Advent season in preparation for Christmas, and a nice way for the family to focus on what is most important during this beautiful holiday.

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