

Amazing Annabelle

DECEMBER HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS



LINDA TAYLOR
ILLUSTRATED BY KYLE HORNE

“I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Linda Taylor’s colorful character of *Amazing Annabelle*. She is confident, charming, gutsy, and smart. She is a go-getter who does not let anything or anyone keep her down. I can hardly wait to follow Annabelle in her other adventures.”

—*Paulette Williams, Assistant Principal*

“Amazing Annabelle is truly an amazing character! She possesses personality traits that we can all strive for: self-confidence, perseverance, compassion, endurance, and problem solving. She has such a wonderful outlook on life and finds the positive in any situation. What a great role model!

“This is a great character education story that can be read across the elementary grade levels. While reading the story, I was able to bring Annabelle to life in my mind. The illustrations are fabulous! I look forward to reading all her adventures. Such a wonderful gift of storytelling. Well done!”

—*Pam Doughty, Teacher*

“I loved Linda Taylor’s character development. There were many times in the story when I thought the author must have been a fly on the wall in my house. I thought the characters were very real and diverse. I think she has come up with a great idea for a children’s book series!”

—*Jennifer Hall, Parent*

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*To my countless
students—
Oh, how you've
inspired me!*

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December Holidays and Celebrations

December is a festive month.
I'm sure you would agree.
Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa
Annabelle encounters all three.

Embracing many cultures
With a Super Holiday Celebration.
Melville Elementary School
Has really high expectations.

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HANUKKAH LESSONS

December is always a festive time of the year, especially for Annabelle and her family. There are so many activities, parties, celebrations, and presents during the holidays. Annabelle always connected with the joys of the season and became involved in many beneficial projects.

One thing Annabelle and her family loved to do each year was volunteer at the Children's Hope Charity that raised money for needy children and their families. In December they bought presents with all the money that was donated throughout the year.

The charity also hosted a big holiday party for all the kids every year, and Santa came and passed out toys to everyone. Annabelle always loved to dress up as an elf and helped Santa.

She really enjoyed playing games with the kids and seeing the smiles on all their happy faces. This was just one of the activities that was near and dear to Annabelle's heart.

A lot was happening at Melville School during December as well. The entire school recognized all three December holidays: Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Highlighting the value of each was important.

In Mrs. Mitchell's class, they were going to have mini-activities, arts and crafts, and celebrations for each individual holiday. And then the whole school planned to have a great big

Holiday Bash, a fun evening in a setting like a carnival.

Just the mention of this Holiday Bash made Annabelle's eyes become wide with wonder and surprise. During this time of the year, everyone was buzzing with talk of topping last year's Holiday Bash. Annabelle was already thinking about some ideas in that amazing mind of hers.

On the first day of December, Mrs. Mitchell read the class a story about Hanukkah. What made the lesson so great was that afterwards, she let Caleb and Julia share their personal Hanukkah experiences with the whole class.

Caleb talked about lighting one of the eight candles on the menorah each night using the Shamash candle, which is the helper candle centered in the middle of the menorah. He also said his favorite Hanukkah meal was brisket and potato

latkes, which is similar to a potato pancake.

Julia told the class that her family always played the dreidel game in the living room after dinner. She also shared how her grandpa always gave all the kids in the house Hanukkah gelt, which are chocolate coins, after they play the game.

Annabelle learned more about Hanukkah from listening to Caleb and Julia's stories than she did listening to Mrs. Mitchell read the book about it! Annabelle raised her hand to ask a question.

"Mrs. Mitchell, do you think it would be a good idea to actually taste some of the foods Caleb talked about?" she asked.

The entire class liked her idea and thought they should do it.

"That certainly would be a tasty idea, but I don't know who would volunteer to

make everything for our class,” Mrs. Mitchell said.

Caleb immediately raised his hand and said, “I’m sure my mom wouldn’t mind making some latkes for the whole class. I’ll ask her when I get home.”

“Maybe I could bring in some Hanukkah gelt for the class to try also,” Julia added.

The class was really excited over the fact that they might get to taste some new holiday treats. That would be an opportunity for real authentic learning, as Mrs. Mitchell would say.

Mrs. Mitchell always tried to give her class real experiences that brought the learning topic to life. That is just one of the many reasons why Annabelle loved being in her class.

The next day at school, Caleb brought in a big platter of latkes and Julia brought

in a big bag of Hanukkah gelt! She also brought in a box of dreidels so she could teach the class how to play the game.

Everyone was excited except Barry. He started to make a very ugly face. He was a very picky eater who barely ate his own lunch each day in the cafeteria. Barry was getting sick just thinking about eating the latkes and gelt. Mrs. Mitchell noticed the strange look on his face.

“Barry, how are you feeling? You really don’t look well. Do you need to go to the nurse or something?” Mrs. Mitchell asked as she felt his forehead.

“You don’t feel warm or anything. How are you feeling?” she asked again.

Barry finally spoke up. “I’m not really a big fan of foods from other places, Mrs. Mitchell. If it’s all the same to you, I’d rather not have any of the Hanukkah foods today.” At least Barry was respectful.

“Of course, Barry, I completely understand. And if anyone doesn’t like the taste of a latke, you certainly don’t have to eat it. We really just wanted you to experience the holiday a little through food,” Mrs. Mitchell explained.

Mrs. Mitchell divided up the latkes and gave them to the students to taste. The majority of the class liked it and ate the whole pancake. Some just tasted a little and threw the rest away. Caleb’s mom had typed the recipe out and had made copies for all the students to take home.

After everyone was finished eating, Julia explained how to play the dreidel game. She brought in four dreidels to share with everyone.

Mrs. Mitchell divided the class into four groups and gave each group gelt, which are chocolate coins, to put into a

large bowl that was a part of the game. Each group member took turns spinning the dreidel as they played. By the end of class, everyone had become an expert at playing the game.

