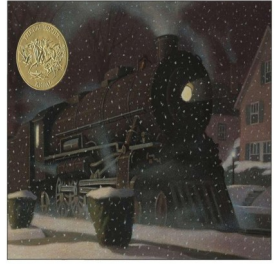


December 2025 Children's Museum Houston Reading List

THE POLAR EXPRESS

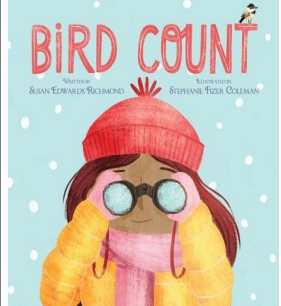


***The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg (2015) Ages: 2+ years**

Late one Christmas Eve after the town has gone to sleep, the boy boards the mysterious train that waits for him: the Polar Express bound for the North Pole. When he arrives, Santa offers the boy any gift he desires. The boy modestly asks for one bell from the harness of the reindeer. The gift is granted. On the way home the bell is lost. On Christmas morning, the boy finds the bell under the tree. The mother of the boy admires the bell, but laments that it is broken—for you see, only believers can hear the sound of the bell.

***Bird Count* by Susan Edwards Richmond (2021) Ages: 4-8 years**

A young girl and her mother participate as community scientists in the Christmas Bird Count. The girl is excited when Big Al, the leader of their team, asks her to record the tally this year. Using her most important tools—her eyes and ears—she eagerly identifies and counts the birds they observe on their assigned route around town. She and her team follow the rules, noting the time of day, the habitat, the birding ID techniques used for each sighting. Finally, they meet up with the other teams in the area to combine their totals for a Christmas Bird Count party and share stories about their observations.

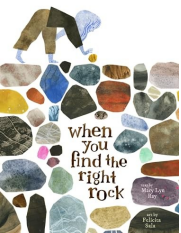
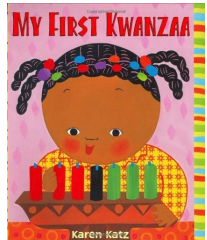


***Meet the Latkes* by Alan Silberberg (2018) Ages: 3-8 years**

Lucy Latke's family is just like yours or mine. Except that they're potato pancakes. And also, they are completely clueless. After lighting the menorah and gobbling the gelt, Grandpa Latke tells everyone the Hanukkah story, complete with mighty Mega Bees who use a giant dreidel to fight against the evil alien potatoes from Planet Chhh. It's up to the Latke family dog to set the record straight. (To start with, they were *Maccabees*, not *Mega Bees*...) But he'll have to get the rest of the Latkes to listen to him first!

***Bubbie & Rivka's Best—Ever Challah* by Sarah Lynne Reul (2022) Ages: 4-8 years**

In this heartfelt introduction, learn all about the Kwanzaa traditions that celebrate history, values, family, community, and culture. A simple way to get acquainted with Kwanzaa. "Hooray! Hooray! It's time to get ready for Kwanzaa." During the seven days of Kwanzaa, we celebrate the importance of family, friends, and community. This warm and lively introduction to a very special holiday will help even the youngest children join in!

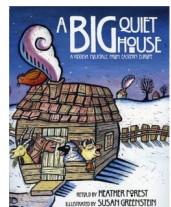


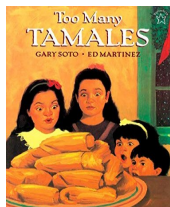
***When You Find the Right Rock* by Mary Lyn Ray (2024) Ages: 3-5 years**

Somewhere, a rock is waiting for you. One just the right color for your windowsill, or just the right shape for drawing a face. Maybe it is a rock from the heart of a mountain that will remind you of how big YOU are inside, too. Maybe it is a rock washed by the sea that knows all about the backs and forths and ups and downs of things. Maybe it is a small rock, just the right size to close your hand around and know that the rock is with you and it is just right.

***A Big Quiet House* by Heather Forest (2005) Ages: 5-8 years**

With a tiny, cluttered house, giggling children, and a snoring wife, one man can't get a good night's sleep. "If only," he thinks, "I had a big quiet house!" He throws off his covers and decides to visit the wise old woman at the edge of the village. Surely she can help him solve his problem and she does, but not without giving him some very unusual advice.



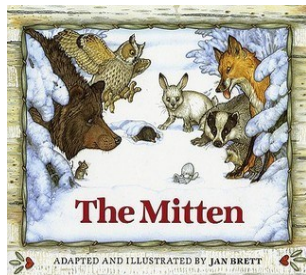
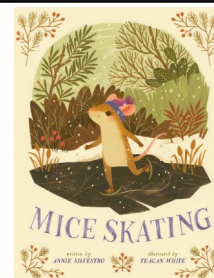


***Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto (1996) Ages: 3-8 years**

Christmas Eve started out so perfectly for Maria. Snow had fallen and the streets glittered. Maria's favorite cousins were coming over and she got to help make the tamales for Christmas dinner. It was almost too good to be true when her mother left the kitchen for a moment and Maria got to try on her beautiful diamond ring . . .

***Mice Skating* by Annie Silvestro (2017) Ages: 2-5 years**

For most field mice, winter means burrowing down and snuggling in. But not for Lucy! She loves snow crunching under her paws and wearing a fluffy wool hat. And most of all, Lucy loves to skate, and she's just ACHING to show off her new skill with her friends. After all, a winter wonderland is twice as nice when you have friends to enjoy it with. But the other mice just don't understand—and after a disastrous indoor snowball fight, it looks as if they never will. Can Lucy find a way to make the other mice come out and “mice skate” too?

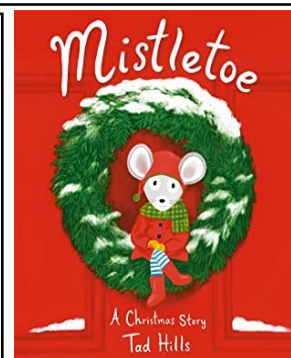


***The Mitten* by Jan Brett (2009) Ages: 1-5 years**

When Nicki drops his white mitten in the snow, he goes on without realizing that it is missing. One by one, woodland animals find it and crawl in; first, a curious mole, then a rabbit, a badger and others, each one larger than the last. Finally, a big brown bear is followed in by a tiny brown mouse and what happens next makes for a wonderfully funny climax. As the story of the animals in the mitten unfolds, the reader can see Nicki in the borders of each page, walking through the woods unaware of what is going on.

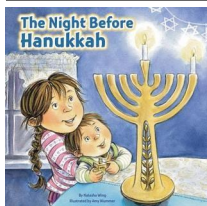
***Mistletoe* by Tad Hills (2020) Ages: 3-7 years**

Mistletoe loves everything about Christmas—the twinkling lights, the cookies for Santa, and, most of all, the gently falling snow. Her best friend, Norwell, is an elephant who likes sitting by the fire and watching the snow from the comfort of his cozy house. On one particularly snowy walk, Mistletoe stops to appreciate the beauty and peace of a snow-covered world. She knows Norwell would love it too... if he weren't so afraid of the cold. Then she has an idea! Mistletoe knits from morning to night—when she's reading, when she's baking, and even in the bath (which isn't easy). By the time Christmas morning arrives, she puts down her knitting needles. Her gift for Norwell is ready—and it is perfect.



***The Christmas Owl* by Gideon Sterer & Ellen Kalish (2021) Ages: 4-8 years**

When Little Owl's home is cut down by people saying it will make a beautiful Christmas tree, she's not sure she wants anything to do with Christmas, whatever that means. But then she is saved by a woman named Ellen, whose house is merrily decorated for the holiday, and filled with birds who need someone to care for them. Surrounded by kindness and helpful new friends, Little Owl begins to wonder if Christmas might not be such a bad thing after all....

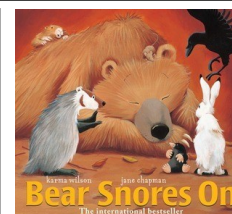


***The Night Before Hanukkah* by Natasha Wing (2014) Ages: 2-7 years**

It's the night before the eight-day celebration of Hanukkah begins, and everyone is excited! Each evening, the family gathers to light the candles and share holiday traditions such as playing dreidel, eating latkes, and exchanging gifts. *The Night Before Hanukkah* captures all the joy and love in one of the most wonderful times of the year!

***Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson (2002) Ages: 1-4 years**

One by one, a whole host of different animals and birds find their way out of the cold and into Bear's cave to warm up. But even after the tea has been brewed and the corn has been popped, Bear just snores on! See what happens when he finally wakes up and finds his cave full of uninvited guests -- all of them having a party without him!



***Winter is Here* by Kevin Henkes (2018) Ages: 4-8 years**

This picture book about winter celebrates the sights, sounds, and smells of the season. Snow falls, animals burrow, and children prepare for the wonders winter brings. The striking text introduces basic concepts of language and the unique beauty of the winter season while expressive paintings beautifully capture the joyful wonders of winter.