

LEVELED BOOK • L

Maria's Family Christmas



Written by Maribeth Boelts
Illustrated by Angela Kamstra-Jacobson

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It was Christmas Eve.
Maria waited for her relatives
from Mexico to arrive.

“They’ll be here soon, Maria,”
said Maria’s mother.
“Let’s finish decorating the tree.”



Maria hung a tin angel from Mexico on the tree. Her brother helped Mama drape the strings of lights. Her sister placed a glittering star she had made at school on top.



“The tree looks beautiful!” Maria said.

Just then, Maria heard a knock on their apartment door.



It was her aunts, uncles, and cousins! Maria hugged them all. She also met her baby cousin, Ruben, for the first time.

“Would you like to hold him?”
her aunt asked.

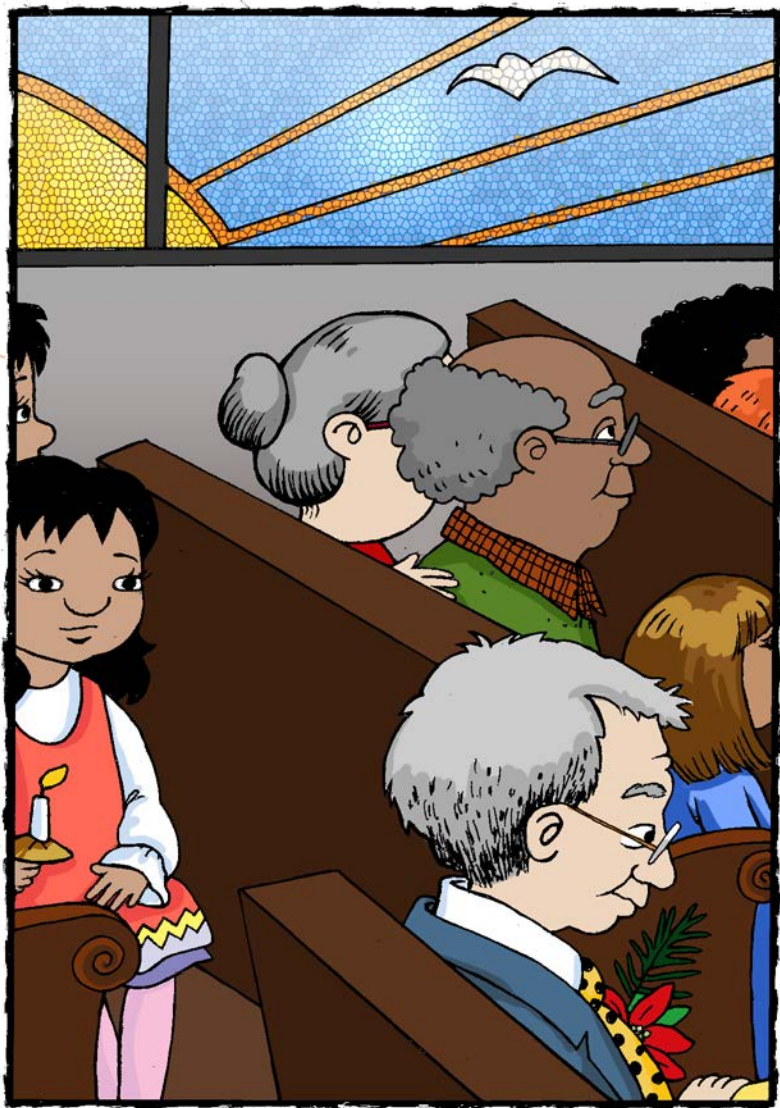


“Oh, yes!” said Maria. Her aunt set Ruben on Maria’s lap.

“His smile is like yours,” Maria’s *abuela* said.



Later that evening, Maria and her family attended church. They held candles and sang Christmas songs in Spanish and English.



Maria noticed Mr. Lewis sitting alone at church. Maria remembered that his only son lived far away.



“Could we invite Mr. Lewis to Christmas dinner tomorrow?” she asked after church.

“That’s a great idea,” said Maria’s mother. Her father agreed.



The next morning, Maria and her cousins woke early. Ruben crawled right to the presents under the tree.

Maria laughed. "How did you know this one's for you?"



All the gifts were opened except one.

“That’s for my friend, Carlos,”
Maria explained. “He’s celebrating
Navidad with his family in Mexico.
They’ll open gifts on Three Kings
Day, January 6th. Then he and his
family will fly back here.”



Everyone had a job to do
to get ready for Christmas dinner.

Maria and her cousins decorated
placemats for the table.
Her father made meatball soup.
Her abuela and mother made tamales.
A turkey roasted in the oven, too.



Mr. Lewis brought Christmas cookies and peppermint ice cream for dessert.

“We’re so happy you could have dinner with us,” said Maria’s abuela.



Maria played with Ruben after dinner. She looked up when Mr. Lewis said, "I've really enjoyed being here today."



“Look, Ruben!” said Maria.

“It’s your first Christmas. It’s your first time in America. Now, it’s your first snow, too!”

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