

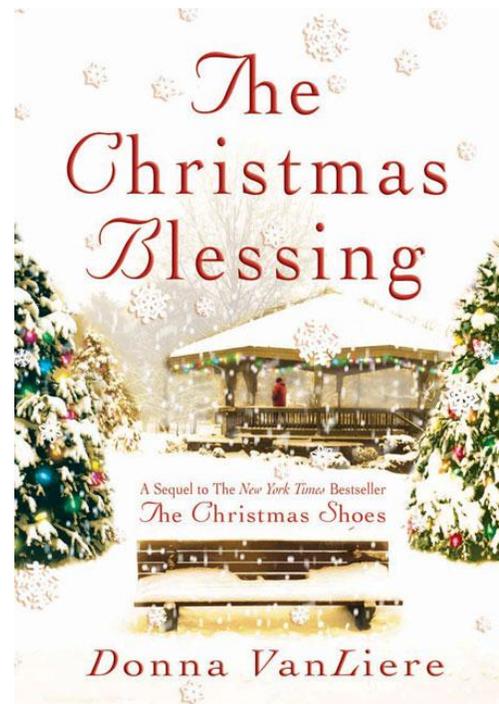
READING GROUP GUIDE

The Christmas Blessing

By Donna VanLiere

ISBN 13: 978-0-312-32293-9

ISBN 10: 0-312-32293-3



About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Christmas Blessing* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Christmas Blessing*.

About the Book

In *The Christmas Shoes*, young Nathan Andrews was a child who lost his mother to cancer. Now his deepest wish is to become a doctor. When a stranger named Robert gave him the money to buy his mother a pair of shoes for her last Christmas, both Robert and Nathan learned the deepest lessons of love and giving. Now a medical student in his third year, Nathan realizes there are still things to be learned about faith, blessings, and sacrifice. Lessons he will learn from Meghan Sullivan—a young woman born with a hole in her heart that has not kept her from becoming a champion runner. And lessons learned from a young boy named Charlie, who teaches how to live a life of true courage. Together, they will help guide Nathan through the darkest period in his life. *The Christmas Blessing* is an inspiring about hope existing in the darkest places, and love is always the greatest gift of all.



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About the Author

Donna VanLiere is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* best-selling author. Her much-loved Christmas Hope series includes *The Christmas Shoes* and *The Christmas Blessing*, both of which were adapted into movies for CBS Television; *The Christmas Secret*; *The Christmas Journey*; and *The Christmas Hope*, which was adapted into a film by Lifetime. She is also the author of *The Angels of Morgan Hill* and *Finding Grace*. VanLiere is the recipient of a Retailer's Choice Award for Fiction, a Dove Award, a Silver Angel Award, an Audie Award for best inspirational fiction, and a nominee for a Gold Medallion Book of the Year. She is a gifted speaker who speaks regularly at conferences. She lives in Franklin, Tennessee, with her husband and their children.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Discuss the role that Nathan's mother's death may have played in his life. What effects, if any, do you see of Nathan's mother's death in the lives of the other characters in the book?
- 2) In *The Christmas Blessing*, what is Nathan feeling? How does he view himself? How do you think he may view others? How do you feel about his struggles as a doctor-in-training? At the end of the book, how do you feel about his chosen career path?
- 3) One of the book's main themes is that our humanly perspective is limited and we must have faith in God that he has a larger plan for our lives. How does Nathan lose perspective in the book? How does his view of himself and his purpose in life change? Can you share a time in your life when you had limited perspective of your circumstances? What was the outcome?
- 4) Why do Meghan's feelings for Nathan frighten her? What are her fears about falling in love with him? How do Nathan's feelings for her become more prominent in the book? How might his marriage to Meghan enhance his role as a doctor?
- 5) Describe the ways in which those who come in contact with Charlie are changed. What is Charlie's view of life? How is that different from the view of the other characters in the book?
- 6) Minor characters are an important part of *The Christmas Blessing*. Can you name three minor characters? Can you describe how one of those minor characters contributes to the fabric of the storyline?
- 7) Have you ever had a boss or work associate like Dr. Goetz? How could Nathan have handled Dr. Goetz' presence in his life better? How can people like Dr. Goetz enrich your life?



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8) Someone gives a generous gift of money to Charlie's parents on Christmas Day. Why do you think they chose to give the money anonymously? Who might have given them such a gift? Do you think it could have been one of the other characters in the book? Can you share a story of something similar happening to someone in your community?

9) How has Robert Layton's awakening in *The Christmas Shoes* influenced his life? How have his relationships changed? How does he manage to become an inspiration? Does his change remind you of anyone you know?

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