

CHRISTMAS IN NEW PLACES

Books used are *An Ellis Island Christmas* by Maxine Rhea Leighton and *The Christmas Doll* by Amy Sparkes.

Sometimes a move has happened in life, and Christmas that year means being in a new place that you may not be familiar with. Today's books deal with new starts and being far away from home.

Read *An Ellis Island Christmas*.

Pause a moment and think about what you just read. Imagine being separated from a loved one by an entire ocean as they try and make a new start for you and the rest of your family. Look around your room and choose one toy and one book that you would take with you. Think about saying goodbye to your neighbors, close friends, and maybe relatives knowing you will most likely never see them again. It wouldn't be easy, would it?

According to

<https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/overview-history/#:~:text=Annie%20Moore%2C%20a%20teenage%20girl,United%20States%20via%20Ellis%20Island>. 12 million people entered America through Ellis Island beginning in 1892 and continuing for the next 62 years. Isn't that amazing to think about? Some of you who are reading this came from families who made that choice and that long journey. This book was inspired by the author's family's journey from Poland to the United States.

Read *The Christmas Doll*.

Sometimes people have to leave their homes during Christmas for safety reasons. In this story, which is based on true events, Evie had to leave her home because of World War II. In World War II many countries were fighting each other, but this story focuses specifically on England and Germany. Germany was bombing the capital of England, London. Many parents made the difficult decision to take their children and put them on trains and send them out into the country to live to try and keep them safe. Many children spent Christmas far away from home. In fact, according to <https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/overview-history/#:~:text=Annie%20Moore%2C%20a%20teenage%20girl,United%20States%20via%20Ellis%20Island>. 1.5 million children were evacuated beginning September 1, 1939. When I think about this, I just have to stop a moment and offer up a prayer of Thanksgiving that I have never had to make so difficult a decision! We are so blessed to live in the country we do!

EXTRAS

We need to start with a little bit of mapping to understand these stories more deeply. First, locate Poland and then the United States. Second, locate Germany and London, England.

Today's lesson merits a little dive into the topic about how difficult decisions sometimes must be made in life. There is no getting around it. However, despite difficulty, we are promised that if we know Christ, He "will not leave us nor forsake us." Deuteronomy 31:6-8. We are never alone!

Do you know your ancestry? Did your family come through Ellis Island? Try and learn a little more about your heritage.

The Repair Shop is a real TV show from Britain. The people shown in the story are real and work to repair people's heirlooms. I recently watched

an episode on YouTube, and it was so moving, fun, and breathtaking watching the amazing craftsmanship. I can't fully recommend the show based off of one episode, but I will definitely be watching lots more of it in the near future! The episode I watched, Season 4 Episode 9, is appropriate for all ages. I watched it with my family.