

KIRKUS REVIEWS

JACQUES AND THE FORBIDDEN CHRISTMAS

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The meaning of Christmas flourishes amid oppression.... Jacques and his family are heading to town to see the Nativity scene put up at the cathedral. But when they arrive, they discover that a soldier is standing guard and they are told that there are no religious celebrations allowed within-just banquets and balls.

Dejected, Jacques wonders aloud to his father how there can be a Christmas at all this year, to which his parent responds: "By helping someone else remember the Christ Child." Inspired by his father's words, Jacques begins to sculpt his own little Nativity set, beginning with the Holy Family and then extending his figures to include his neighbors....

The soldier eventually warms to Jacques' attention and celebrates Christmas with the boy's family. The tale is followed by a brief, useful history of religious oppression during the Revolution as well as intriguing information about the tradition of homemade Nativity figurines, called santons....

[T]he vivid historical setting and theme help to lend interest to his tale. This would be a good introduction to conversations about the history of religious persecution of all kinds.