

Mums and Stories

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Amma Take me to Tirupati Book Review

The title caught me by surprise as very few stories are written on religious destinations, though millions of Indians are likely to visit these shrines with families every year. To make a point of having discussions at home on the relevance of these shrines that exist even today, the author does take a different route of having a mum –‘Amma’ and her children travel to Tirupati.

The rituals, customs, beliefs, myriad tales on each tradition followed at the holy place are discussed in the story and this book can be of particular interest for children above 9 or 10 years. It would also be a good idea to bring the book if a trip is being planned to Tirupati.

Shiv and Veer in the story have numerous questions like most kids have and it is Amma who has indeed the patience to explain the detailed story of Lord Vishnu. He is also referred as Venkateswara which means the removal of sins and there are intricately woven details like his reasons for descending on the hills, the reason for him to leave a stone statue and more.

For those kids who are already introduced to the ancient tales of Ramayana, Mahabharata and other stories, it would be a good idea to bring about the topic of historical and religious places and their relevance even today.

Interesting facts listed in the storybook:

- The seven peaks that one can see at the holy shrine are said to be the seven hoods of the great snake Adishesha.
- The hair donated at the temple premises is due to the belief that it is given to Lord Venkateswara and that will belong to a princess Neela Devi. The tale goes on how Neela Devi had cut her hair for the Lord and impressed by this gesture, Lord Vishnu (lord Venkateswara) said he will bless all those who donate their hair for in doing so they will help the Lord repay the kindness gesture.
- The reason of the lord dressed in finest and heaviest jewellery as he is the bridegroom.
- Tirupati laddu is patented and there is a secret recipe in making over three hundred thousand ladoos every day.
- Srinivasa means the place where Lakshmi or Sri resides.
- Devotees when they do offerings at the hundi, they are helping the lord to pay of his debt to Kubera and they also earn the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi.

There are indeed very few books that talk of Indian festivals, Indian mythological tales and least of all on holy shrines that can have a new audience of children. Bhakti Mathur’s Amma Take me to Tirupati though detailed can be a good read for the kids who would like to find more on new destinations.

At one point one of the children asks his amma, if wishes come true and Amma replies tactfully “I believe they do. I believe that faith in one’s God and the conviction that he is looking over us is what gives us the strength and will to work hard and make our wishes come true.”

The story book has enough illustrations to depict the shrine, rituals, idols and stories behind them. There is also a section on the daily list of prayers held at the holy shrine and the historical traces of the famed Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy temple.

You can buy the book here- <http://amzn.to/2ClOLwx>

Review by Mums and Stories writer- Reshma Krishnamurthy.