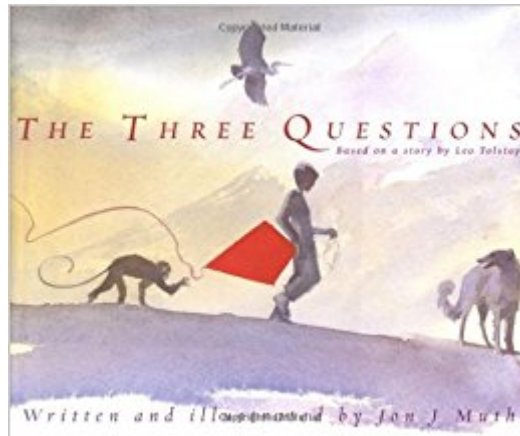




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# **The Three Questions [Based On A Story By Leo Tolstoy]**



## Synopsis

What is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? Nikolai knows that he wants to be the best person he can be, but often he is unsure if he is doing the right thing. So he goes to ask Leo, the wise turtle. When he arrives, the turtle is struggling to dig in his garden, and Nikolai rushes to help him. As he finishes work, a violent storm rolls in. Nikolai runs for Leo's cottage, but on his way, he hears cries for help from an injured panda. Nikolai brings her in from the cold, and then rushes back outside to rescue her baby too.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 410L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 223 customer reviews

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#353 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy & Magic

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Nikolai is a boy who believes that if he can find the answers to his three questions, he will always know how to be a good person. His friends--a heron, a monkey, and a dog--try to help, but to no avail, so he asks Leo, the wise old turtle. "When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?" Leo doesn't answer directly, but by the end of Nikolai's visit, the boy has discovered the answers himself. Award-winning illustrator Jon J Muth's lovely watercolors are the most appealing aspect of this book about compassion and living in the moment. The simple Zen-based profundity of the boy's philosophical exploration may escape young readers, but they will enjoy the tale of a child who, in doing good deeds (for a panda and her baby, no less!), finds inner peace. Muth based his story on a short story of the same title by Leo Tolstoy.

(Ages 5 to 9) --Emilie Coulter

Muth (Come On, Rain!) recasts a short story by Tolstoy into picture-book format, substituting a boy and his animal friends for the czar and his human companions. Yearning to be a good person, Nikolai asks, "When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?" Sonya the heron, Gogol the monkey and Pushkin the dog offer their opinions, but their answers do not satisfy Nikolai. He visits Leo, an old turtle who lives in the mountains. While there, he helps Leo with his garden and rescues an injured panda and her cub, and in so doing, finds the answers he seeks. As Leo explains, "There is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side." Moral without being moralistic, the tale sends a simple and direct message unfreighted by pomp or pedantry. Muth's art is as carefully distilled as his prose. A series of misty, evocative watercolors in muted tones suggests the figures and their changing relationships to the landscape. Judicious flashes of color quicken the compositions, as in the red of Nikolai's kite (the kite, released at the end, takes on symbolic value). An afterword describes Tolstoy and his work. Ages 6-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Beautifully written and illustrated with a great message for children and adults. I can't wait to read this over and over again.

Our four years old love it. We read every day before bed time. Very nicely written. Every parents should have this book.

This book is just so beautiful and is so well-suited for my counseling students who have questions just as important as the Thor in this book. The author seems to truly understand children and how they think and question. The illustrations in this book are wonderful and calming even though the questions are less settling and oh so important. This is based on a shorter story. By Tolstoy and is as relevant now as ever. Just so very beautiful!

While this book is not specifically Buddhist, it has a very Buddhist feeling to it. It's based on a story by Leo Tolstoy and answers 3 fundamental questions ("When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?") in a very Buddhist way: "There is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is

always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. • A marvelous story to share with children.

There are only a few books that are at the top of my favorites, and this is one. I use this book while talking to my kids almost every week. "Who is the most important person?" This is what I ask them when they want to text or call someone. This book helps reinforce important lessons to our kids about staying in the moment, giving attention the people around you, and putting your best effort into what you are currently doing. It's not an overwhelming book - it only focuses on 3 things. It does so in a caring way, providing examples that kids can understand and relate to. The watercolors are beautiful. My kids also love this book. When we first got it, we read it together about 30 times. This is a must have. One that you will keep forever and then read to your grand children and pass down for generations. We go weekly to the library, and love to borrow books. But this book deserves to be permanently on my bookshelf at home - and that is where it will stay.

Great book for children to learn some basic human principles.

I LOVE Jon MUTH, the illustration in his books is really a joy. We checked this book out of the library almost every other visit, because my daughter (2-3 yo) just LOVED it. So when it went on sale here, I got it, and I got about five more for friends. It's a fabulous book that talks about doing the right thing where you are and not worrying too much. Don't run off and do good deeds for anonymous people when the people you meet every day could use a little of your time and kindness. I'd love to see a book like this that incorporates a child with other children talking about these things, instead of a child with animals. I'm sure kids would like to talk to their friends about these same "questions".

This is one of my favorite children's book -- although I have always gifted it to adults who so enjoy the concept and moral of the tale.

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