



Christmas in Sugarcreek

By Shelley Shepard Gray
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Questions for Discussion

1. The theme of belonging is an almost-constant one in my novels. *Christmas in Sugarcreek* was no exception. Ben, Rebecca, and Lilly all felt that they weren't quite good enough for the people who loved them. Did they change . . . or did their perceptions about themselves change?
2. Writing about Lilly and Robert celebrating their first Christmas together made me nostalgic. Over twenty years ago, my husband and I started several traditions that have become an integral part of our holiday season. Do you have any traditions that you began? Are there any traditions you wish you could change?

3. The Amish are known to be very giving and charitable people, which is one of the reasons I wanted Caleb and Rebecca to be working on Christmas baskets in the novel. What ways does your family or church or community give back at Christmas?
4. Obviously, Lilly and Robert's story was a twist on O. Henry's famous story, 'The Gift of the Magi.' Have you ever had a Gift of the Magi moment, where you gave someone a gift that they couldn't use?
5. When I finished the novel, I still wasn't sure where Ben and Judith should live. Do you have a preference? Above the store like Gretta and Joshua? In Ben's house? Or, perhaps they need a new place of their own?
6. Is there a character in the Seasons of Sugarcreek novels who you would like to see more of? Why?
7. When I first read the Amish proverb, 'The woods would be silent if only the best birds sang,' I knew it would go well with this novel. Does the proverb resonate with you in any special way?
8. The following scripture verse helped me tremendously when writing this novel. Is there a person in your life who adds 'light' to it? Can you think of a way that you add 'light' to others?

'When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' ' John 8:12