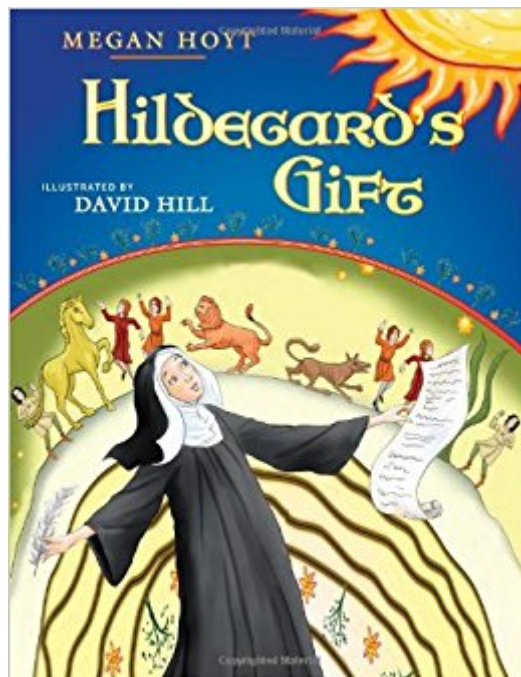


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Hildegard's Gift



Synopsis

Hildegard's Gift was not wrapped in shimmering paper and tied with gold ribbons. It was not a special package left under a beautiful, fragrant Christmas tree by old St. Nicholas. Hildegard's Gift was much more special than that. It took a lifetime for Hildegard to completely understand her gift, but when she finally did, she changed her entire world. This beautiful children's picture book not only celebrates the life and work of Hildegard von Bingen; it also shows children that they, too, have gifts and talents hidden within, just waiting to be released.

Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 10 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 5

Customer Reviews

The gifts of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179 CE) are not easily translatable into a book for young children. She was a theologian, visionary, poet, and scientist and was renowned for her chants. This picture book serves as a good introduction by bringing the phenomenon down to a child's level: Hildegard's gift was this: When she closed her eyes she saw pictures . . . she heard music . . . she wrote poems, songs, and stories. But this was not a gift without strings attached. Hildegard had headaches and was often tired, and while she was a nun, she was overpowered by all that she was experiencing and became incapacitated. A helpful visit from the monk Bernard of Clairvaux reminded her that her writings and music were her gifts to the world. The accessible text is highlighted by lines from Hildegard's writings, most of which

will be understood by the target audience. Child-friendly line-and-watercolor artwork brings Hildegard's stories close. The last spread, which directly addresses readers and listeners, is bumpy, but it gets across the story's message about each person having an individual gift. Grades 1-3. --Ilene Cooper

As an avid reader, one of the first aspects that draws me to a book is an intriguing cover. "Does the world that this book invites me into, through its cover, actually look inviting? As soon as I saw the cover of *Hildegard's Gift*-- I felt delighted at the thought of opening this book and seeing what's inside. I definitely wanted to accept the invitation this book offered. And so the adventure begins...*Hildegard's Gift* is a well-written (by Megan Hoyt) and delightfully illustrated (by David Hill) children's book telling the story of St. Hildegard of Bingen. Captured in lovely prose and illustrations, we begin to see the gifting Hildegard was given by God. The child, Hildegard, first becomes aware of her gift and then learns how to use and enjoy that gifting. Then the story turns and we learn of the sorrow of pain that Hildegard faced. But, in the end, the story has a happy ending. It closes with a wonderful moral: that God has gifted all His children and we should all pursue finding our gifting. Or sometimes, like Hildegard, that gifting will pursue and find us. Although written for ages 5-10, this book is one that all ages might enjoy. What a great gift this book will make -- as it encourages others, both children and adults alike, to step out into the gifting and calling that God has put upon their lives. Kathy Noble April 1, 2014

Author of children's books and screenplays, Hoyt offers young readers a glimpse into the life of Hildegard of Bingen in the newest in a series of picture books about saints. The text is enlivened by former portrait artist Hill's bright and whimsical illustrations depicting Hildegard's imaginative life. As a young child, Hildegard discovers her gifts -- writing, painting and singing. She finds great joy in sharing her gifts with others, but suffers under the strain they bring. With tutelage from a nun, Jutta, and a monk, Volmar, she learns to read and write Latin and to produce plays. After a while, exhausted by the constant work, she becomes seriously ill. A visit from the monk Bernard of Clairvaux restores Hildegard's health. She then finds that her gift has grown even stronger and spends the rest of her life sharing her work with the world. Hoyt believes that every child has a gift, and her book serves as a prompt to talk with children about how to discover their own. Ages 4-8. *Publisher's Weekly* April 2014

As a father of three, I love when I find a good children's book to read with my kids. A compelling story with imaginative illustrations engages my kids and keeps them returning to that book again and again. *Hildegard's Gift* was one such compelling read for my children. My oldest daughter (age six) was interested in the

truthfulness of the story that Megan Hoyt tells; there really was a Hildegard whose imagination was set a flame by God. My younger children (ages four and three) were captivated by David Hill's illustrations of a little girl, medieval monastics and colorful visions. Hildegard was a twelfth century polymath. She wrote books, plays, poetry, music, created art, and she was a Benedictine abbess and mystic. In *Hildegard's Gift*, Hoyt tells the story of Hildegard's visions. From the time that she was a little girl, Hildegard had them. Hoyt pictures her as a little girl who saw pictures whenever she closed her eyes. These visions birthed tremendous creativity and insight. Hildegard's gift was also a source of suffering. It made her tired and gave her headaches. When Hildegard grew up she became a nun, but continued to use her gifts to inspire, bless and direct others. One day her gift was gone. Hildegard went through a season where she could not see visions or do much of anything. She laid in bed languishing. But her gift revived after Bernard of Clairvaux visits and encourages her. She arose and returned to creating and writing. This book is about Hildegard's gift but it is also about the gift every child has (and all us adults too). Hoyt's words and Hill's illustrations explore the specialness of each of our calls and helps kids think about what their gift to the world may be. I am not sure that my children get all that, but the beauty and substance of the story entices them. I am grateful for this book as their introduction to Hildegard. I also really like this book and haven't minded reading it to my kids over and over again. I give this book five stars and recommend for children four to eight. ????? James Matichuk - thoughts, prayers & songs April 2014

This twelfth-century German nun was a Renaissance woman several centuries before the Renaissance. She was not just a composer; she was also a playwright, a theologian, an abbess, a pharmacist, and a mystic. She was quite a gal, in other words, a great example of a woman who used her gifts to their fullest. That's why I'm delighted that she is the subject of a new picture book for kids: *Hildegard's Gift*, by Megan Hoyt and illustrated by David Hill. It's a lovely way to introduce kids to this fascinating woman, and to light the spark of their interest in strong spiritual women from the past. The book starts in Hildegard's childhood, describing her visionary "gift" • the ability to see unique images and pictures and put them on paper. Her gift follows her into adulthood, and the author does not shy away from showing that this gift was not all rosy; Hildegard suffered from great headaches and at times struggled to know how best to use her unique ability for others. But with the support of some key people in her life, she was able to embrace her gift and find ways to use it to draw others closer to God, the source of all creation. Author Hoyt ends the book with an invitation to young readers to think about their own gifts • whether it's drawing, dancing, sports, we all have

something we're good at, and that gift can enrich our own lives and the lives of others. It's a great way to bring Hildegard's story back around to the lives of the book's audience, making a tangible point of connection. The illustrations are very inviting, too. Young Hildegard looks like a real girl, not like a plaster saint, and the pictures of her visions practically pop with bright, happy colors. I also like how quotations from Hildegard's writings are worked into the pictures; it subtly weaves her own spiritual insights throughout the book's pages. All in all, this is a very appealing book which would be a great First Communion gift for a little girl. It's a vibrant and loving celebration of Hildegard's unique gift, and a terrific way to introduce kids to her story. Why wait until adulthood to learn about such a captivating woman?

Ginny Kubitz Moyer, Author of *A Random MOMents of Grace: Experiencing God in the Adventures of Motherhood* RandomActsofMomness.com

The gifts of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179 CE) are not easily translatable into a book for young children. She was a theologian, visionary, poet, and scientist and was renowned for her chants. This picture book serves as a good introduction by bringing the phenomenon down to a child's level: "Hildegard's gift was this: When she closed her eyes she saw pictures . . . she heard music . . . she wrote poems, songs, and stories." But this was not a gift without strings attached. Hildegard had headaches and was often tired, and while she was a nun, she was overpowered by all that she was experiencing and became incapacitated. A helpful visit from the monk Bernard of Clairvaux reminded her that her writings and music were her gifts to the world. The accessible text is highlighted by lines from Hildegard's writings, most of which will be understood by the target audience. Child-friendly line-and-watercolor artwork brings Hildegard's stories close. The last spread, which directly addresses readers and listeners, is bumpy, but it gets across the story's message about each person having an individual gift.

Ilene Copper, Booklist June 2014

Hildegard's Gift, By Megan Hoyt, Illustrated by David Hill, Paraclete, 2014, 32 pp., ISBN 978-1-612-61-3581, \$15.99 (paper). As difficult a subject as Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) is, Hoyt has done a remarkable job in bringing her to children. Hoyt stresses Hildegard's gifts of music, poetry, and stories, but also shows how using her gifts caused Hildegard headaches and fatigue. When she was visited by Bernard of Clairvaux, he convinced Hildegard that her gifts were for the benefit of others and this enabled her to continue using her gifts. The illustrations by David Hill will appeal to children, as will the message that every child has a gift to share with others.

A | 4-8 V | SERVICE

Stefanie Weisgram, OSB, Catholic Library Journal

Once upon a time a young girl named Hildegard received an extraordinary and powerful gift: She could create magnificent pictures, words and songs. However joyful to others, her brilliant talent

challenged and exhausted Hildegard. But, with the help and encouragement of her friend at the abbey, Hildegard used her talent given by God for God. She also realized that every child has a special talent. Colorfully illustrated, "Hildegard's Gift" is an enjoyable story for all children about the new saint and doctor of the church, but especially those who might need a little boost in finding and appreciating their own gifts from God. Ages 5-10. ã The Rockford Archdiocese Observer July 2014

We read this lovely book about the life of Hildegard von Bingen to classes at our small private school as part of composer study. Hildegard was a composer, nun, herbalist, writer, and many other things who lived nine hundred years ago. From the time she was a young child, she suffered from terrible headaches that left her worn out and bedridden at times. Megan's book weaves many big ideas into this children's biography of Hildegard: not all gifts come in packages, with some gifts comes pain, sometimes our frail bodies need rest, sometimes we must persevere even when our body is not cooperating, sometimes our talents are as plain as day, and sometimes they appear in God's good timing. Megan sprinkled Hildegard's words throughout the text. The illustrations by David Hill strike me as Narnian, and that is the highest praise I can give to a piece of art. The tone of the book is sweet and gentle, but also gives children a glimpse of the dark times in Hildegard's life.

Reading the story to my two younger daughters, one remarked on the beauty of Hildegard's music (after listening to a song from the album "The Origin of Fire"). The older daughter remarked that it was beautifully illustrated. This was a book enjoyed by all of us. It left us wanting to know more about St. Hildegard's life. Megan Hoyt should write a part two!

What a fantastic book! It is one every young child should read to help them know they to have gifts. Especially young girls.

This is a beautiful picture book, and will go perfectly with our composer study of Hildegard von Bingen in our homeschool this year.

Captivated my children and helped Hildegard and her music come alive for them where they previously did not care for her music.

Lovely book for my granddaughter's school report on Hildegard.

Well written and I know the children I purchased this for are going to love it!

Cute book to go along with a composer in homeschooling.

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