

## Q&A

Q: Why did you write about the topic of joy?

A: Joy is an amazing emotion and a beautiful gift; the more you share it with others the more you experience joy in your heart. My goal in writing *Ella's Joy* is to provide opportunities to talk with children about joy, help them discover the source of this beautiful gift and encourage them to share their joy with others.

Q: Is the character of Ella based on an actual person?

A: The character of Ella is based on my granddaughter. The story and illustrations began taking shape before she was born. Ella is now three years old and bears a striking resemblance to the character created for *Ella's Joy*.

Q: Why does *Ella's Joy* use sign language to help tell the story?

A: I have had the pleasure of working with children who are deaf and sign language interpreters for more than ten years. I have experienced how this language of motion enhances learning for children of all hearing abilities.

Research shows the ability to understand and retain information occurs with higher frequency when children are allowed to engage multiple senses in the learning process.

Kathleen Robertson, sign language interpreter for Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, states "research has proven repeatedly the earlier children learn to sign, the earlier they develop language to communicate and to talk. Research also shows most children, Deaf and Hearing, benefit from having an interpreter in the classroom. The accessibility of information in a visual format has improved grades in both groups, especially in those coping with learning disabilities."

Q: Why does *Ella's Joy* include scripture with this story?

A: *Ella's Joy* is about a child discovering the true meaning of joy. It is an opportunity to learn joy is a choice, regardless of your circumstances. The story is based on Matthew 22:37-39 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind...and others as yourself." Ella finds her joy when she understands the source of joy, having God's love in her heart and sharing this love with others.

Q: Do you plan on writing additional children's books using sign language?

A: Yes. *Ella's Day, Signs of Peace* is the title of my next book. It will be released next fall.