



# Between Us and Abuela: A Family Story from the Border

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## Reading and Activity Guide

### BEFORE READING

+ How do you usually celebrate Christmas? Who do you see, do you travel, exchange gifts, go to church, etc.? Are your plans different this year? Today, we will hear about a family celebrating Christmas together. Notice what's similar to and what's different from the ways you might celebrate.

+ Ask children: What country do you live in? The United States of America.\* Do you know who our neighbors to the north and south are? Canada and Mexico. Our story today takes place on the border between the United States and Mexico. Show a map of the U.S. and Mexico. The family will travel from San Diego to Tijuana, Mexico. Can you find these two cities on the map?

### DURING READING

+ Listen to the Spanish phrases in this story. Does anyone speak/know Spanish? Try to predict what the characters are saying!

+ What invention did Maria create to get the picture to Abuela?

### AFTER READING

+ Think about how Maria and her family celebrated Christmas with their Abuela. In what ways was this similar to how your family celebrates Christmas?

+ How is her family's celebration different from your family's celebration? This year, probably many families' Christmas celebrations will look and feel different. Through it all, let's remember to be grateful for the blessings we do have - large and small - and pray for families who cannot reunite at this special time.

## Springboard Activities:

**Activity #1: Learn more about Friendship Park!** - Visit their website for information on the history of the park, Monument 258, view photographs of how the park and monument have transformed over the years, take a virtual tour, and more! Learn more about The Border Church here.

**Activity #2: Learn more about our neighbor to the south - Mexico!** - What does their flag look like and why? Did you know that Mexico is also divided into states? How many states do they have, and what are their names? What foods do people eat and grow there? What do their citizens enjoy doing for fun? Did you know that the United States imports, or brings in, lots of goods and services from our neighbor to the south? Our relationship is very important! What do we import from Mexico? Color their flag or a map, cook a traditional meal, and have fun researching!

\*If you do not live in the United States of America, learn more about your neighboring countries. Honestly, you can guide children in their interest in any particular country. The old phrase is true:  
**knowledge is power, but it's also compassion.**

