

Listening for sleigh bells

Leo missed Polar Express Day at school when he was sick last week, so we decided to watch *The Polar Express* together as a family.

John and I had seen it once before, but never with our children. I was surprised to find that I had tears in my eyes as I watched our boys' eyes grow wide with awe and excitement.

The movie tells the story of a boy who is starting to doubt the existence of Santa. When he rides the Polar Express to the North Pole, he realizes other children—those who believe in Santa—can hear the sleigh bells the reindeer are wearing, but they are silent for him.

When he decides—or realizes—that he believes in Santa, he can suddenly hear the bells ring.

Leo sat by my side as we watched, and he had in his hands a replica of a sleigh bell from the movie—thanks to his kindergarten teacher, who makes everything special.



At the end of the movie, the boy opens a gift from Santa, a sleigh bell, and rings it. His parents can't hear it, but he and his little sister can.

Leo started ringing his bell.

"I can hear my bell," he said.

He rang it for his brother.

"Can you hear it?" Leo asked, and Daniel said yes.

Then Leo rang it for John and me. He was so happy when we said we could hear it, too.

I hope hearing Christmas bells will always make Leo smile.

And, whether or not you are listening for sleigh bells tonight, I hope you and those you love have a blessed Christmas, full of shared memories and much to look forward to in the coming year.