

2022 Winner
Moonbeam Gold Award • Nautilus Silver Book Award
National Indie Excellence Award (NEIA)

Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me

Media Kit

[Media Release](#) . 2

[Author Bio](#) . 3

[Illustrator Bio](#) . 3

[Book Synopsis](#) . 4

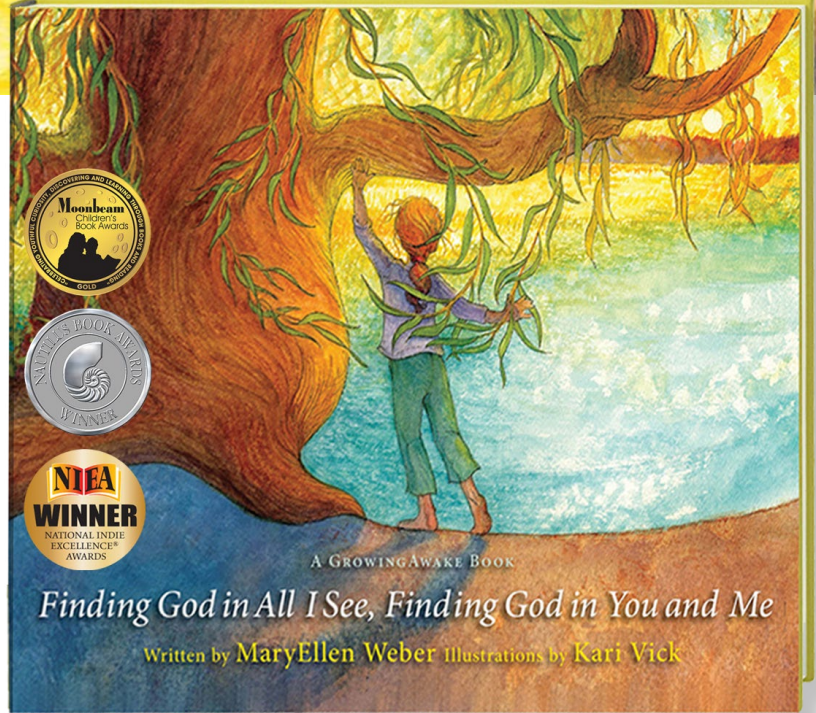
[The Author's Message
to Grown-Ups](#) . 5

[Reviews](#) . 6

[Interview Questions](#) . 7

[Downloadable Images](#) . 8

[Contact Information](#) . 9



Author: MaryEllen Weber
Illustrator: Kari Vick
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bellevue, Washington, USA

October, 2022

Award-winning Seattle Author Teaches Children to Find God Right Where They Are

“It is my belief that we are soaking in Divine Presence.

We can never be separated from it, only asleep to it.”

– MaryEllen Weber, author and spiritual director

When we were children, what did we think about God? Where did we think God lived? What did we think God was like? Where can God be found? Chances are we experienced God in some ways without realizing it because where we were taught to look for God was limited. What if someone in our lives taught us to find God everywhere and in everyone, including ourselves?

Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me, written by MaryEllen Weber and illustrated by Kari Vick, is the story of Little Girl and the teachings of Grandmother Willow. During 2022, her book has won the Moonbeam Gold Award for children’s books, a Silver Nautilus Book Award, and the National Indie Excellence Award (NIEA).

On a day when Little Girl is feeling sad and lonely, she seeks comfort under the swaying branches of her friend, Grandmother Willow.

Grandmother Willow gently invites Little Girl to sit quietly with her feelings until she begins to sense God.

Little Girl asks Grandmother Willow, “Why do I feel better? Where did my sad and lonely feelings go?”

Grandmother Willow tells her, “When you sit quietly, your feelings have room to move and breathe, and they stop holding on to you so tightly. You begin to sense God.”

“I thought God was up in heaven,” said Little Girl.

So begins Grandmother Willow’s teachings that God is not as hard to find as many people think. “God is everywhere and everything is in God,” says Grandmother Willow, showing Little Girl that Divine Presence is in the light, in the lake, in a caterpillar letting go of what it thinks it is in order to become the butterfly it was created to be, in seeds and weeds, even in her annoying little brother, and especially in herself.

Weber, residing in Bellevue, Washington, created *Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me* as a response to helping her granddaughter Teagan with her religion homework in the early stages of the pandemic when schools had closed. It soon became obvious to Weber, a spiritual director by profession, ministering to adults, that there was so much more she wanted Teagan to know about God beyond the loving-Father-figure-who-dwells-in-heaven image we often teach children. With Grandmother Willow’s help this book encourages children (and adults alike) to know God as an intimate and loving presence that comes to expression through all of creation and can be found in the ordinary experiences of their lives.

Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me is Weber’s first children’s book, published by Beaver’s Pond Press, as part of Weber’s GrowingAwake Books series. This meditation in story form reminds all generations that God can be found wherever they are if they only have eyes to see.

Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me goes on sale October 19, 2021, and can be purchased through retail outlets Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and ordered through Ingram wholesale distribution.

ISBN: 978-1-64343-772-9 Price: \$22.95 For Review Copies: maryellen@growingawakebooks.com

Author Bio

MaryEllen Weber has sought God throughout her life. As a child, she experienced Divine Presence in nature and cozy spaces. This longing eventually led her to earn an MA in Transforming Spirituality from Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry. She is a passionate spiritual mentor who knows we can never be separated from Divine Presence, only asleep to it. As a spiritual director, she accompanies people with their inner work of transformation through spiritual growth groups, labyrinth and SoulCollage® workshops, retreats and individual spiritual direction. Now that she is a grandmother herself, MaryEllen is joining her voice with Grandmother Willow's to teach children that God is everywhere and indeed, everything is in God. MaryEllen lives near Seattle with her husband, Jim, and Grandmother Willow.



MaryEllen Weber



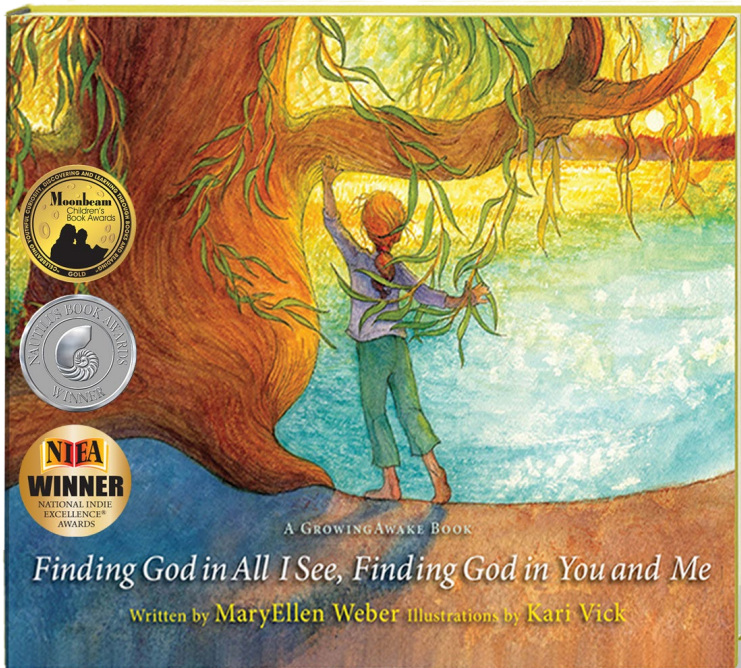
Kari Vick

Illustrator Bio

Kari Vick's search for the divine has always drawn her out of doors. By keeping still, open, and aware, she's witnessed butterflies flitting among prayer flags in the Himalayas, found delicate blooms upon the Arctic tundra, and received wisdom from the eyes of a tenacious eagle. Time spent in communion with people from around the globe has coalesced in her belief that God, the Creator, is boundless. The award-winning illustrator lives with her husband, Jim, on the north shore of Lake Superior in Lutsen, Minnesota, heartened by the rare Trout Lilies that return, without fail, every spring along the creek by her garden.

Book Synopsis

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On a day when Little Girl was feeling sad and lonely she seeks comfort under the swaying branches of her friend, Grandmother Willow. Grandmother Willow gently invites Little Girl to sit quietly with her feelings until, in the space around her feelings, she begins to sense God.

“I thought God was up in heaven,” said Little Girl.

Grandmother Willow smiled, “Many people think God is somewhere else because they have a hard time finding God where they are.”

Little Girl thought for a while. “I want to find God! Can you show me how?”

Grandmother Willow delights in teaching Little Girl to find God in her feelings, in nature, in her pesky little brother, and especially in herself. In this beautifully illustrated meditation, an ancient and very wise teacher reminds us all that God is everywhere and everything is in God.

The Author's Message to Grownups

WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, what did you think about God? Where did you think God lived? What did you think God was like? Where did you think you could find God? Chances are, you experienced God in many ways without realizing it, because the places you were taught to look for God were limited. What if someone in your life had taught you to find God everywhere and in everyone, including yourself?

This story begins with my seven-year-old granddaughter, Teagan:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I jumped at Teagan's parents' invitation to spend time with her by helping her with her homework via Zoom. Her Catholic elementary school had just closed its doors, and all teaching was now online. Because I hold a graduate degree in spirituality, it was a natural fit for me to help her with religion homework. Working with the first-grade curriculum, however, it soon became obvious to me that there was so much more I wanted Teagan to know about God. My desire to introduce Teagan to an intimate, immediate, and ever-present Divine Presence was the impetus for writing this book.

Children are natural-born mystics and contemplatives filled with wonder, curiosity, and imagination. Teagan is no exception. Whenever she visited me in Seattle, we would spend time in my yard on Lake Washington gathering little "offerings" of rocks, shells, flowers, and other treasures. Teagan was eager to search for fairies in the hidden places in the garden and we'd always pause to greet Grandmother Willow—an old (and very wise) willow tree that grew next to the lake. I delighted, as did Grandmother Willow, in Teagan's eagerness to connect with the natural world, for I knew this sense of wonder was the gateway to experiencing Divine Presence.

Although they may not name it as such, children know God in a way that many adults have forgotten or never imagined. Many of us were taught a story of separation from God and our unworthiness. The image of God we are taught as children has a powerful and lasting effect on us. We take these stories and images into adulthood, where they shape our worldview and determine how and where we find meaning and purpose in life. Our God image also influences where we look for Divine Presence and, ultimately, where we find it.

In many ways the story we teach our children about God is too small. Just as our understanding of the Universe has expanded, we need a larger story about God and our relationship with the Divine. What if we taught our children that God is in the air we breathe, everywhere and unseen, finding expression in all of creation—and most especially in and through human beings? What if we taught that God can be experienced in moments of stillness, in moments of sadness and joy, in our friends, and even in those people we find hard to love? What if we taught our children that each of them is a unique expression of God in the world and that they honor God by becoming themselves?

It is my belief that we are soaking in Divine Presence. We can never be separated from it, only asleep to it.

Nature is a powerful teacher of this reality. My hope is that this book encourages you to find God in your surroundings and everyday experiences, to open fresh eyes to what is already here, to awaken to Divine Presence within you and around you, and then to share your experience with the children in your life.

~MaryEllen Weber



Reviews

“Speaking as a theologian with grandchildren of my own, *Finding God in All I See, Finding God in You and Me* is a rare find! Grandmother Willow’s gentle alluring wisdom invites children—as well as grown ups!—to recognize their own wonder as catching the hint of holiness in all that is. Using images that children will easily resonate with—and likely multiply—the neatest thing about reading this tale with a child may well be what happens after you close the book. You might find yourself tagging along to discover where else in their own world they find God with fresh wonder. A marvelous gift for little mystics!”

— David Weiss, author of *When God Was a Little Girl*

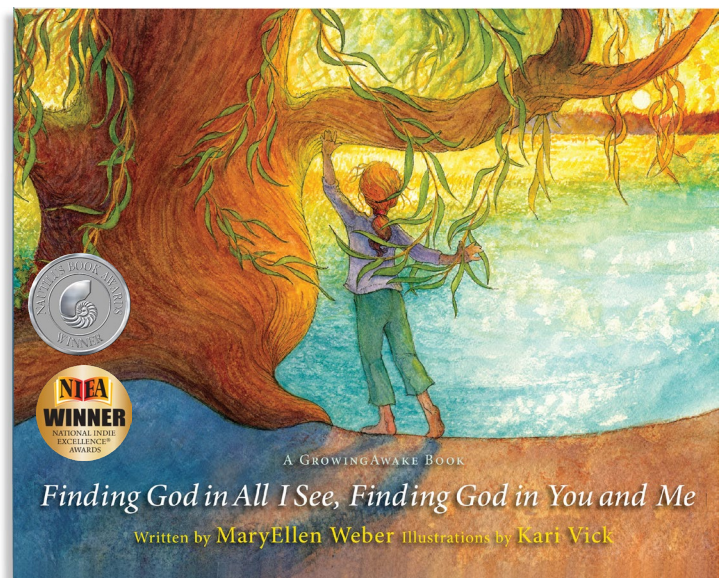
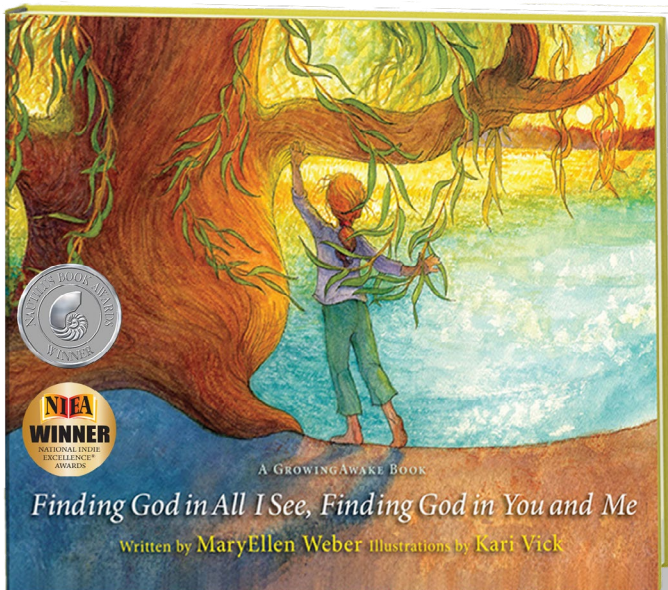


Interview Questions

1. Where did you get the idea for your book?
2. Why did you choose to self-publish?
3. What do you hope parents will take away for themselves? For their children?
4. What do you mean when you say the story we teach our children about God is too small?
5. What are you hoping to teach children through this book?
6. How do you think your book could fit in with a family's already established religious or spiritual focus?
7. What is your image of God?
8. What is your understanding of the difference between religion and spirituality?
9. Tell us about the character of Grandmother Willow and any similarities between her and your role as a grandmother.
10. What is one of your favorite children's books?
11. What is one of the most transformative spiritual books you've read?
12. Do you have plans for future books? What might they be about?

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