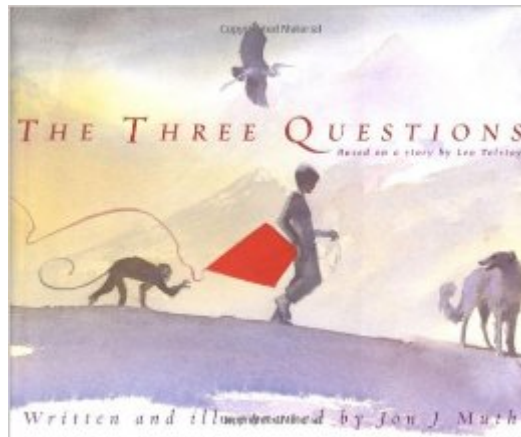


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# The Three Questions [Based On A Story By Leo Tolstoy]



## Synopsis

With his stunning watercolors -- and text that resounds with universal truths, award-winning artist Jon J Muth has transformed a story by Tolstoy into a timeless fable for young readers. What is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? Nikolai knows that he wants to be the best person he can be, but often he is unsure if he is doing the right thing. So he goes to ask Leo, the wise turtle. When he arrives, the turtle is struggling to dig in his garden, and Nikolai rushes to help him. As he finishes work, a violent storm rolls in. Nikolai runs for Leo's cottage, but on his way, he hears cries for help from an injured panda. Nikolai brings her in from the cold, and then rushes back outside to rescue her baby too.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 410L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 10.2 x 12.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (191 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,561 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

"There was once a boy named Nikolai who sometimes felt uncertain about the right way to act..." He wanted to be a good person, but was unsure how to accomplish his goal. Nikolai had three important questions...When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? "If only I could find the answers to my three questions... then I would always know what to do." So he decides to seek the counsel of Leo, the turtle. "He has lived a very long time. Surely he will know the answers I am looking for." But as he reaches Leo's home, high in the

mountains, disaster strikes, and without even thinking Nikolai takes action, and in the process finds the answers he's been searching for..... Based on Leo Tolstoy's short story, Jon Muth has authored a reflective and inspired picture book retelling of The Three Questions. His simple and eloquent text, with its gentle message of compassion and living for each moment, is enhanced by lovely and evocative watercolor artwork in quiet and subdued tones. Together word and art answer Nikolai's questions in a captivating and engaging way..."Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. For these, my dear boy, are the answers to what is most important in this world." With an Author's Note at the end to augment the story and introduce Tolstoy and his works, The Three Questions is a perfect fable for youngsters 5-9, and is sure to open interesting and thoughtful discussions.

What is the best time to do things? Who is the most important ones? What is the right thing to do? So I hope that doesn't give it away for you, but that's the book's central search...a boy Nikolai, his three friends Sonya the Heron, Gogol the Monkey, Pushkin the Dog, and the final answers are facilitated by Leo the wise Turtle. The watercolor art is the true gem in this book and the Zen-exercise in the meaning of life takes a close second."The Three Questions," is currently my two year old's nightly request...although he sometimes asks for the three questions and sometimes ask for the "Nikolai" book. The writing is really to engage children of older ages but something about the characters, language, and pictures connect with children and adults of all ages.The esoteric Zen exercise may seem a little off-putting or prententious to some, but it gets kids thinking about morality and ethics at an early age. It gets kids thinking about what is the best approach to life and an approach to be mindful about the present and others.A wonderful wonderful book with beautiful art throughout. This one comes recommended as a magical treatise on thinking about life.--MMW

This is a beautiful and very touching book with a special message of love, compassion and introspection. These themes could be deep for a child but they are conveyed with characters and images that captivate and draw in the reader, whether young and old. The story is very touching and nurturing and the themes are ones that a person is never too young to be introduced to. I collect children's books and count this one among one of my favorites.

Author Jon J Muth certainly understands the uncertainties that children face. His main character, Nikolai, asks his three best friends the questions he thinks are most important. If he only knew their

answers, he believes, he will be a good person. Recognizing his friends' limitations, however, Nikolai wisely seeks further for his answers, and visits a wise old turtle. The turtle never answers him directly, but when a storm comes up and two panda bears are in danger, Nikolai dashes to their aid without a thought for himself. In his action, he finds answers. This is a gentle tale, told well. Muth's illustrations are graceful and elegant, and beautifully enhance the many moods of the story. Based on a short story by Leo Tolstoy, who is probably best-known for *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, *The Three Questions* succeeds in getting children to think of being of service to others. And to realize that, contrary to what advertisers would have us believe, life isn't about getting; it's about doing.[...]

The three questions *What is the right thing to do? Who is the most important one? And when is the best time to do things?* are very tricky questions to answer. These three little questions have a different answer every time. A young boy tries to find the answers with the help of an old turtle and his animal friends the heron, the monkey, and the dog. The young boy finds the answers by helping a mother panda bear and her cub. Now I won't tell you what the answers are, so you will have to read it on your own. The young boy in this story is very intelligent and very helpful. The author John J. Muth uses excellent words that actually make you think on what is happening. He doesn't go out and say what the problem is. He also expresses a really good lesson on life. I think that this is a great book for the ages 6-12. Me, being 13, don't read many short stories anymore. But I loved this book. I believe that you will love it too if you get it now!

I love this book. I haven't read a children's book since I was 10, but I think this is a book that is in fact life changing. Here is an excerpt. Nikolai, the young protagonist, asks three questions, "When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do?" Leo (a turtle) replies, "Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing by your side.... This is why we are here."

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