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### cause of our joy

Catholic mother of three girls including a Kindergartener with Down Syndrome discusses her daily life, struggles, triumphs and failures in the light of her faith.

## My Sister Alicia May

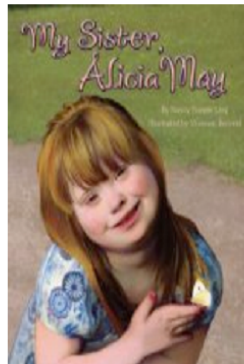
Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Written by Nancy Tupper Ling

Illustrated by Shennen Bersani

Pleasant St. Press 2009

In this view into the daily life of a little girl with Down syndrome, big sister Rachel lovingly describes her six-year-old sister, Alicia May. Alicia May has endearing traits; she bursts through Rachel's door in the morning with a sunny greeting, she gives great hugs, and she counts the dots on a ladybugs' backs. Alicia May is good at remembering the names of the neighbors, and loves visiting Rachel's friend Katie, however, she has temper tantrums when it's time to leave,



which Katie learns to dissipate with a bit of bargaining. Rachel is growing in courage as she learns to defend Alicia May against the cruelty of their schoolmates. She is both proud of Alicia May's accomplishments and frustrated by her stubbornness. Sister relationships are complex and beautiful things. When one of the sisters has special needs, the relationship may seem one sided; often the focus is on the special sister, and this is a mixed blessing. The typical sister learns to give more of herself and put up with more than most sisters do, growing emotionally beyond her peers, yet there are days when she runs short of patience for her demanding sister. "My Sister Alicia May" describes this unique relationship with a unique blend of candor and tenderness.

When I read the book to a group of older sisters of little girls with Down syndrome, there were some knowing grins when Alicia May acted up and surprised expressions when author, Nancy Tupper Ling acknowledged their 'special ness' as well. As a mother to an Alicia May and her two big sisters, I say it is long overdue praise for the big sisters.

This book will make those who love someone with Down syndrome alternately well up with tears and laugh as they relate to Rachel's authentic description of her sister. Shennen Bersani's lavish and vivid illustrations alone are worth the price of the book. Her realistic drawings of the girls portray with tenderness the unique character of our much-loved children.

This book is a must for anyone who loves children with 'designer genes'.

Review by Leticia Velasquez

Catholic Media Review

This book is available from [Pleasant Street Press](#)

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