
CHILDREN'S STORIES

Sponges, Brains and Character

ELAINE OLIVER

Biblical Principle

AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT IS THAT GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD.
ROMANS 12:2

Resources:

- Extra Large Sponge
- Clear water - 4 oz.
- Clear Container
- Water color paint (red, blue, or green)
- Picture of brain in a child's head

Song Suggestion: Read your bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow! (*Or select an action song that is known in your church*)

Illustrate: Show sponge.

Ask: What is this? What does it do?

Say: It can absorb water.

Illustrate: Soak in water

Say: It can soak in water. What will come out when I squeeze it?

Allow children to answer.

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Adapted from a children's story heard at the Seminar Schloss in Bogenhofen, an educational institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Austria and for Switzerland.

Illustrate: Squeeze sponge.

Illustrate: Put drops of paint in water. Hold up container.

Say: What will happen if the sponge soaks in the green (or selected color) water?

Allow children to answer.

Say: What will come out when I squeeze the sponge?

Illustrate: Squeeze sponge.

Say: It will squeeze out what it soaked in. Green (or selected color)

Illustrate: Show picture of brain.

Say: Our brain, our mind, is like a sponge. Everything we "soak in" - what we see (on TV, videos, books, etc.) and what we hear (music, etc) gets soaked into our brain.

If we see and hear good things, we will speak and act in a good way. In the same way if we see and hear things that are not good, it will show when we act and when we speak.

So be careful what you see, what you hear, where you go, what you touch. Spend time reading the Bible, studying your Sabbath school lesson, memorizing your memory verses, and praying. The more we study about Jesus, the more we will become like Him, and walk like Him, and talk like Him, and love like Him.

Close with prayer. (Ask for volunteers).

Sing the selected song with the children.

Biblical Principle

THE MEMORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS
BLESSED...
PROVERBS 10:7

Materials Needed

- 1 or 2 of your favorite children's books
- A small photo album filled with some of your favorite family photos.

Narrative

(Read the Bible verse and emphasize the word "memory.")

That verse in the Bible reminds me that we all like to remember things that are good. I have a bag with some of my favorite things that I like to remember.

How many of you have a favorite story book or picture book that you remember? I remember that I loved to read as a child. In fact, I still love to read today. I love books.

What is your favorite book?

(Allow the children to respond)

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Memories

PAMELA CONSUEGRA

I brought a few of my favorite story books with me today. I have a shelf at home filled with story books on it, but I brought some of my favorites to share with you.

(Pull books out of bag, one at a time and show them. You can mention a brief comment about the book and tell them why it is your favorite.)

But this is probably my most favorite story book!

(Pull out the photo album filled with pictures. Flip through the pages and show them several of your family members.)

It is true that there aren't words in this book, but the pictures tell a story to me... I remember the story behind the pictures when I see them. I have great memories of all of these pictures. Let me tell you a story out of this book...

(Open the album, and point to one of the pictures and tell the story about what is happening in the picture. Tell the children where you were, who is with you, and what was so special about the event captured in the picture?)

Why do you suppose this one is my favorite?

This photo album tells stories about me, and about my friends and family! I remember the day that it happened.

This book filled with photos of my family is a different kind of story book than...*(list the titles of the other books you brought with you)*.

The photos in this book remind me of the stories about my own life experiences!

Do some of you have photos at home of yourself and your family and friends?

And do some of you hear stories around the dinner table told by your parents or aunts and uncles or cousins or grandparents – stories about themselves, or about you when you were younger?

I hope that in the weeks ahead, I get to learn more of your special family stories, and I will share some of my special stories with you, too! Talk to each

other. Tell others of your favorite family memories. It is good to share those with your friends.

Sharing some of our own personal family stories – the kind that come from our memories—can help us learn even more about each other so that you and I can learn what it means for us to be family with each other – a church family.

Will you pray with me?

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for picture books and Bible stories. Thank you for photographs and family stories. Help us to become good friends as we share our memories and make new memories together. In Jesus' name, Amen

The Never-To-Be-Forgotten Birthday

ADAPTED BY ROSEMAY CANGY

Biblical Principle

...AND REMEMBER THE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS, THAT HE SAID, 'IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.'
ACTS 20:35

Materials Needed

- 3 x \$1 bills
- A gift bag or a poster tube

Narrative

It was Eric's birthday and he had received a letter from his Uncle Don with three \$1 bills included in the envelope. In addition, Uncle Don also gave Eric a challenge for his birthday. He asked Eric to use the money to buy one special gift which he would match in value. If Eric chose to buy something good, Uncle Don would match it and if he bought something silly, Uncle Don would also buy something silly to match it.

Eric planned to go shopping after school on Friday with his sister Becky who was two years younger so that she could help him pick a gift from the shops nearby. He explained that he needed to decide what he was going to buy with Uncle Don's money as he realized

that it would be extremely hard to decide what would not be a silly gift to buy.

He spent a whole day thinking about it all until he came to make a list of possible things that he could buy for three dollars: a new model plane, a light for his bike, another Hot Wheels car to add to his collection or a baseball.

On Thursday morning as they walked to school, Becky asked Eric if he had made up his mind about his gift and she added that she was glad that they were not shopping on that day because she had a sore throat. Unfortunately Becky's throat got worse by the afternoon and the next day, Friday, her mom said that she was too sick to go to school and that she would not be able to go shopping with Eric as planned.

So Eric headed for the shops on his own; he had made up his mind that he wanted to add another Hot Wheels car to his collection. But as he was hunting for the right car in this big new store, he found something else that he just had to have. It was a giant-sized poster of a gorilla with a sign that said "Nobody is going to push me around". In his mind, he could already see the exact place for his poster in his room and he thought that would be a good motto that would impress his classmates when they came to visit. As he returned home, he found out that Becky's condition had worsened and the doctor had been called to check on her.

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When Eric went into the room he found that she was very upset and teary because she now had to stay in bed longer until her fever subsided and that she would not be able to go to the pet zoo with her friend Maureen on Sunday as she had planned.

With a quick good-bye, Eric turned around and ran out of the house, back to the shop with his recently-bought poster in his hand. He explained to the store manager that he wanted to return the poster and exchange it for something that would cheer up his sick sister. He chose a little bowl and two gold fish which he carried home very carefully.

Becky was delighted to receive the gold fish though she felt bad that Eric had used up his birthday money for her. However he assured her that her happiness and her smiles were all that mattered.

A few days later, Uncle Don arrived and he was surprised to hear the story of the two goldfish. He was very pleased to see that Eric had met the challenge and had chosen the perfect gift for Becky so thoughtfully. He asked Eric to take him to the same store where he had bought the fish and there he bought Eric some more Hot Wheels car for his collection.

As Eric was beaming with gratitude and joy for this unexpected birthday present, the store manager gave him a tube containing another poster. This one had a large and happy elephant eating a huge peanut with the words: "Good deeds always bring giant-sized happiness to others".

Reference

Peckham, K. (1982). *The Never-to-Be-Forgotten Birthday*. Retrieved from : <http://guidemagazine.org/stories/3897-the-never-to-be-forgotten-birthday>

Be Ready Puppet Ministry

LINDA MEI LIN KOH

Biblical Principle

AND LET US CONSIDER ONE
ANOTHER IN ORDER TO STIR UP
LOVE AND GOOD WORKS.
HEBREWS 10:24

“Is there something we can do for our community?” asked a group of youngsters age 10-12 from the Tacoma Central Church in Washington State.

“Yah, what can we do for the community? We’re just a bunch of kids,” echoed the teens together.

“There must be something we can do for many of these overweight kids, pastor?” asked the group with enthusiasm.

“Well, maybe we could use puppets to teach about good health and the importance of living a healthy lifestyle,” suggested Pastor Brent Kimura.

“That’s a great idea! We are for it. Let’s pray and ask God to lead us,” the teenagers suggested.

They prayed for several weeks and they felt God was leading them into this ministry. Soon they got someone who taught them how to make those large-sized puppets. They made puppets

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to represent the elderly, children, teenagers, doctors, nurses, and many more. It was not as easy as they thought, but it was fun just dressing these puppet characters.

“Kids, our first show is going to be...” announced Pastor Brent excitedly one evening.

“Wait, wait, Pastor, let me guess,” begged one of the teens.

“Forget it, let’s hear it from Pastor Brent,” retorted another.

“Yes, young people, we are going to perform at the community fair! Isn’t that great?” exclaimed Pastor Brent.

“Let’s practice our parts well,” reminded Pastor Brent, “and don’t forget, we need to practice what we preach.” Echoed the pastor.

“Yah, we need to practice healthful living if we want to teach others to be healthy, right, Pastor?” exclaimed one of the group members.

“Okay, don’t eat between meals, no sweet stuff, drink plenty of water...” yelled one of the teens.

“Okay, okay, enough of this. Let’s be serious. If we love Jesus, we will live the way He wants us to. Besides, our bodies are the temples of God,” reminded another teen.

“What should we call our ourselves?” asked Pastor Brent thoughtfully.

“I know what! How about calling ourselves the **Be Ready Puppet Ministry Team**,” suggested one of the team members.

“If we want to teach others how to get ready to go and live with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom, then our job is to help others get ready to live healthily here on earth first,” said one of the girls.

“I like that name. Okay, let’s call ourselves the **Be Ready Puppet Ministry Team**,” Pastor Brent said affirming.

Soon the puppet team was involved in many outreach programs. They did health shows in schools, community fairs, camp meetings, children’s church, and others. They also shared Jesus’ stories with many children in the local churches and in the community.

The young people themselves had a chance to testify of how this ministry had impacted their own lives. They not only taught other young people about living healthily, but they themselves became convinced of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and started to practice healthful habits.

Some months later as the young people were resting after their performance, they got into a serious conversation.

“Guess what? I seem to have more energy these days when I sleep enough at night,” said one of them excitedly.

“Me, too. I feel I can think better and remember more since I started riding my bike two to three times a week,” another exclaimed,

“My mom started to restrict my television and internet hours, and I have to exercise outdoors,” he added thoughtfully.

“I eat less of all these MacDonald’s and French fries,” replied one of the girls.

“That’s wonderful, young people,” exclaimed Pastor Brent as his face lit up, “I’m so glad that when you are ministering to other kids and young people, you are also transforming your lives by living a healthy lifestyle,” smiled the young pastor.

“I didn’t realize how this involvement has changed me, too,” explained one of the boys, “My mom said that she noticed me drinking lots of water and less pop soda,” he continued with a smile beaming all over his face.

“Great! Let’s stay healthy as we help others to be healthy!” Pastor Brent reminded the group.

“Okay, some good news! Are you ready for this?” beamed Pastor Brent with a twinkle in his eye.

“We are going to San Antonio in July!” shouted Pastor Brent.

The whole group surrounded the young pastor as they hugged him and hugged each other tightly, yelling gleefully. Yes, their dream to go and perform somewhere at the GC Session in San Antonio finally materialized. They had prayed for weeks and months for a window of opportunity. It finally came! God answered their prayer. They were invited to perform their health puppet shows at the GC Children’s Ministries booth. How exciting that they had been given another opportunity to get others ready for heaven!

You Can't Put it Back

PAMELA CONSUEGRA

Biblical Principle

“...DON'T USE YOUR ANGER AS FUEL FOR REVENGE. AND DON'T STAY ANGRY. DON'T GO TO BED ANGRY. DON'T GIVE THE DEVIL THAT KIND OF FOOHOLD IN YOUR LIFE.”
EPHESIANS 4:26, 27
(MESSAGE BIBLE)

“Look what I did. I made a mess and now I can't fix it. It is impossible to put the toothpaste back in the tube once it came out. You know, boys and girls, it's the same thing with angry words. They come out of our mouth easily but we can't put them back. We cannot put them back in our mouths any easier than we can put the toothpaste back in the tube.”

The Bible says, “...*don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.*”

“Let's remember to only use kind words because angry words hurt others and we can't put them back once they are said. Let's pray to Jesus and ask Him to help us only say kind words.”

You may close with prayer and then ask for a child volunteer to pray also.

“Good morning, boys and girls. Today, I have something to show you. It's a tube of toothpaste. And, I'm going to have so much fun by squeezing this out.” Demonstrate how easy it is to squeeze the toothpaste out the tube by squeezing some into a small bowl. Ask for a volunteer to squeeze some out. Give several children an opportunity to squeeze some toothpaste into the bowl.

“Now, that was fun. Look at all that toothpaste. But, now we need to fix it. We have to put it all back inside the tube.” Try to put it back in the tube yourself using the spoon. “Oh, no, I am having a lot of trouble. Who wants to help me?” Allow several children to try. Of course it will be impossible.

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Missionary For Heaven

LINDA MEI LIN KOH

Biblical Principle

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES
OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM
IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF
THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
MATTHEW 28: 19,20

"I'm happy today, I'm happy today, in Jesus Christ, I'm happy today," sang Mateus Soares of Brazil. Yes, eight-year old Mateus was excited to know Jesus and to love Him. His little heart was so full of joy that he wanted to share Jesus with others in his neighborhood so that they can go to heaven with him.

"Papa, I want to start a Bible study class, can I?" Mateus begged his father. "Do you know how, Sonny?" asked his father doubtfully.

"I can learn and I know Jesus will help me. I want all my friends and neighbors to go to heaven to meet Jesus," replied Mateus with his face beaming.

"Okay, let's try it. We'll ask the pastor to help you with some tips," said father encouragingly.

Mateus prayed about his plan and then started visiting his neighbors and friends.

"How are you, Pedro?" Mateus greeted his neighbor with a big smile and shook his hand firmly.

"Do you believe in Jesus? Do you know He is coming back soon to take us to live with him in heaven?"

"I am inviting you to join my Bible study group every Wednesday night. Please come," said Mateus with a big smile on his face.

He went from door to door inviting his neighbors and schoolmates to his Bible study group. On the first night only a few neighbors came; some came just out of curiosity. But soon it grew to more than ten individuals as they learn about Jesus and his plan of salvation. Mateus was earnest in teaching his neighbors about the heavenly home. He wanted everyone to go to heaven and live with Jesus forever!

God used Mateus amazingly. Soon his Bible study group began to grow and before long he led ten neighbors and friends to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Yes, Mateus and his group continued to sing, "I will wear a crown in my Father's house, in my Father's house, in my Father's house..."

Mateus ran his Bible study group for three years. But before long he realized that all the new members did not have a church to worship in. This made him sad.

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“Pastor Johnson, why don’t we build a church for all our members to worship together every Sabbath?” asked Mateus passionately.

“Wow, that is a great plan! But where do we get the money? I don’t think our conference can help us very much,” answered the pastor with a doubtful look.

“God will help us, I know,” echoed Mateus confidently.

“But I am willing to help raise the money,” suggested the enthusiastic boy, “maybe our members can all help out,” he added.

When not in school, Mateus went about raising funds for the new church they were going to build. Pretty soon, the members got together with Pastor Johnson to help build the church. After school, Mateus would rush to the church site to help lay some bricks and mortar.

It was not an easy road for Mateus and the others. At times, they felt discouraged, but nothing could dampen the spirit of this little boy.

“Pastor, can we pray to Jesus for more cement?” asked Mateus earnestly.

“Yes, let’s fast and pray that God will find us a way to finish our task,” Pastor Johnson suggested.

Mateus prayed earnestly. Every member fasted and prayed for several days, asking God to intervene and provide. Many sacrificed to give more to help finish their church. God did not fail His people.

After many months, the church was finally finished. There was much rejoicing and praise on the day of the church dedication. Many shed tears of joy and gratitude for what God had done for them, and especially for sending a little boy with a big dream of preparing his neighbors and friends for heaven.

Mateus continued to work among his classmates, sharing the wonderful news of Jesus’ soon return and the joy of living with Him in heaven. He prepared many friends who have now been baptized into the church. Nothing could stop a boy’s desire to get involved in preparing others for the heavenly kingdom!

Bullying Is not Right

LITIANA TURNER

Biblical Principle

DO NOT LET ANY UNWHOLESOME TALK
COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTHS, BUT ONLY
WHAT IS HELPFUL FOR BUILDING OTHERS UP
ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS, THAT IT MAY
BENEFIT THOSE WHO LISTEN.
EPEHSIANS 4:29 NIV

Olive was super excited because she was going to be starting big school in the morning. Her Mamma had spent the last few weeks telling her how wonderful it was going to be. They had even practised spending a whole day doing school activities and other tasks around the house, to see if Olive could stay up all day without a nap in the afternoon.

To celebrate her transition to big school Mamma had bought Olive a new lunch box, it was bright orange with balloons on it. Olive couldn't wait to go to school and use her brand new lunch box.

Early the next morning before anyone was awake in the house, Olive was up. She snuck into her parent's room to check if it was time to get ready for school, but Papa said to her... "Olive sweetheart, you go back to bed and we'll wake you up when it's time to go to school". It didn't seem too long before she heard her Papa calling

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for her to wake up as it was now time to get ready for school.

Arriving at school, Mamma and Olive went to meet with Miss Amelia, Olive's Grade 1 teacher. There were lots of mums and dads bringing their children for their first day of Primary school. It was everything Olive had hoped for, lots of children, a reading mat, even a sand box outside in the playground, Olive just knew that school was going to be great fun. Mamma sat with Olive for a little while and then Miss Amelia began to thank all the parents for coming to drop off their children at school however it was now time for them all to leave.

When her Mamma left, Olive felt the warmth of the sun streaming in through the glass window. Miss Amelia had given her a desk that was close to the window, so Olive could look outside at the trees and the sand box. In the desk next to her was a girl called Patricia. Olive smiled at Patricia and whispered "Hello" but Patricia did not even smile back instead she poked her tongue out at Olive.

Olive was a little surprised by what Patricia had done, because her Mamma had always told her it was very bad manners to poke your tongue out at people. So Olive tried to say hello to Patricia again, but this time she offered her hand like Mamma and Papa had shown her when you meet someone new. Patricia took her hand and squeezed it really hard, she squeezed it so hard that Olive's eyes welled up and two giant tears rolled down her cheeks.

Suddenly big school was not fun anymore, Olive felt all alone and her hand hurt where Patricia had squeezed it. It was only her first day of school and already Olive just wanted it to be over. Mamma had told her that if there was any problems to ask Miss Amelia for help. Olive didn't know what to do, she really wanted to be friends with Patricia but she was not being at all nice.

Miss Amelia called the class together and said to them that it was now lunchtime and everyone had to bring their lunch boxes out. Olive went to her bag and brought out her brand new lunch box. Seeing the bright orange colour and the balloons made Olive smile and she quickly took her seat under the shade of a nearby tree. Olive ate as much as she could but could not finish her lunch because she was looking forward to playing in the sand box. When the eating time had finished everyone in Grade 1 could return their lunch boxes to their school bags before they had a few minutes of play.

Olive eagerly packed up her lunchbox and then raced back to the sand box. When she arrived at the sand box, Patricia was already there and she said to Olive, "You cannot come in here" Olive asked, "Why not?" and Patricia said, "because I said so!" Olive was very unhappy. All the excitement and joy of being in big school was evaporating and Olive felt like she did not belong.

At home, that evening Mamma and Papa had made Olive's favourite dinner to celebrate her first day in Grade 1, however, Olive just played with her food. Papa asked, "Olive is everything alright?" Olive did not say anything to her Papa. So Mamma tried, "Olive tell Papa and I about your first day at school sweetheart", Olive began to talk about her first day at school and when she got to the part where Patricia poked her tongue out and then how she squeezed her hand really hard, tears started to fall down Olive's cheeks. Mamma and Papa looked at each other and then they looked at Olive, quickly they left their chairs and came together to give Olive a big hug. Papa pulled Olive close and said to her, "So, you've had a hard day at school?" Olive just nodded her head miserably.

Mamma and Papa said to Olive well there are two ways we can help you to deal with this issue; firstly, Mamma and I could come with you to school tomorrow and speak with Miss Amelia about the situation or we could show you what you can do if Patricia or anybody does something that you are not comfortable with. So Papa and Mamma talked with Olive about what she should do and say if anyone was horrible towards her. Papa said "Olive when somebody does or says something you do not like you must say to them in a firm voice, "Stop it! I don't like what you are doing" then, you must walk away". Sometimes, you may meet people like Patricia who behave in inappropriate ways, if this should happen to you, please talk to an adult or let somebody you love and trust know.

Grandparents' Celebration Day

ROSEMAY CANGY

Biblical Principle

I AM REMINDED OF YOUR SINCERE FAITH, A FAITH THAT LIVED FIRST IN YOUR GRANDMOTHER LOIS AND YOUR MOTHER EUNICE AND NOW, I AM SURE, LIVES IN YOU.

2 TIMOTHY 1:5, NRSV

ONE GENERATION SHALL COMMEND YOUR WORKS TO ANOTHER AND SHALL DECLARE YOUR MIGHTY ACTS.

PSALM 145:4

ONLY TAKE CARE, AND KEEP YOUR SOUL DILIGENTLY, LEST YOU FORGET THE THINGS THAT YOUR EYES HAVE SEEN, AND LEST THEY DEPART FROM YOUR HEART ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE. MAKE THEM KNOWN TO YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

DEUTERONOMY 4:9

Why have a Grandparents Celebration Day at your local church?

Grandparents hold a unique place in the lives of children. They have invaluable

knowledge through their life experiences and they are the link to the family's past and future. Grandparents are often the keepers of the family's stories. They are in a position to teach the children about their family heritage but more importantly, their experiences with God's saving grace, their walk with Him and His answers to their prayers are a sacred legacy that they can pass on to the younger family members. God desires to see the coming together of generations in a loving relationship that involves the sharing of God's love and His plans for our lives.

Grandparents' day planning

Prepare your congregation by announcing beforehand when you will have a Grandparents' Celebration Day.

Ideas for Grandparents' day

- Invite grandparents and grandchildren to come to the front. (Also invite the elders in your church who stand as grandparents).
- Introduce this special moment by reading Deuteronomy 4:9 and sharing what the Bible says about the old and young generations and God's desire to see them come together to learn more about Him.

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- Prior to this day, ask one grandparent to share one favorite story about their faith journey with God or stories from their childhood.
- Interview two or three grandparents and ask them questions about an answered prayer. Practice the interview process before the day.
- In the weeks leading to Grandparents Day, do a video recording as you ask grandchildren this question “Why is a grandparent special”? Have children of all ages respond to this question and compile a video that you can show on this day.
- Purchase a gift for each grandparent in your church such as a flower or a book mark that grandchildren can hand out to them.

In closing, invite an older grand child to read the following prayer:

GOD OF ALL GENERATIONS:
 WE THANK YOU TODAY FOR THOSE WHO
 ARE GRANDPARENTS/ELDERS.
 WE ESPECIALLY THANK YOU FOR THOSE
 WHO ARE GRANDPARENTS TO US —
 THOSE WHO ARE GRANDPARENTS BY BLOOD
 RELATIONSHIPS, AND
 THOSE UNRELATED BUT OLDER THAN WE
 WHO GENEROUSLY SHARE
 THEIR LOVE AND WISDOM,
 THEIR TIME AND TRADITIONS
 SO THAT WE HAVE ROOTS, STORIES, AND HOPE.
 WE BLESS YOU FOR THE GIFT OF
 GRANDPARENTS,
 AND WE ASK YOUR BLESSING ON THEM,
 THAT THEIR DAYS MAY BE FILLED
 WITH DELIGHT IN THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.
 MAY THEIR GIVING AND GRACE TOWARD
 YOUNGER GENERATIONS
 BRING FULFILLMENT TO THEM
 AND MAY THEY BE A BLESSING
 TO ALL THEY LOVE AND CALL
 GRANDCHILDREN,
 THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, OUR LORD.
 AMEN.¹

¹ Discipleship Ministries. Retrieved from <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/grandparents-day-worship-resources>

I know I am Somebody

LITIANA TURNER

Biblical Principle

I WILL PRAISE YOU, FOR I AM FEARFULLY
AND WONDERFULLY MADE;
MARVELOUS ARE YOUR WORKS,
AND THAT MY SOUL KNOWS VERY WELL.
PSALMS 139: 14

Mr. Campbell was the best librarian in the school. He knew all the kids names and even better than this, Mr. Campbell knew from the lists he'd get from the teacher's when all the major assignments would be due. He worked with Mrs. Lehn to make the library environment, comfortable and inviting so that even if you didn't visit the library often, whenever you walked in, you'd feel welcomed.

It was the middle of the year and in June it is Winter in the Southern Hemisphere so the library was decorated like a Winter Wonderland. Mr. Campbell and Mrs. Lehn had outdone themselves, there were the most beautiful pictures of mountain ranges from around the world, the snow-capped and lily-white, Swiss Alps, the gorgeous glacial Mt. Cook of Aotearoa also known as New Zealand, the Dolomites in Italy and even Australia's very own Mt. Kosciusko was up on the wall. Nestled amongst all of these pictures was a solitary pencil drawing of a chubby faced toddler, whose hands cupped his face as his elbows rested

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on the table in front of him. Below his picture was the caption, "I know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk"!!

Arieta had arrived from Fiji (a tropical island in the Pacific Ocean) in the previous year and she was still finding the Winter months in Australia to be quite cold, because she was new to the high school it was also quite challenging to make new friends. Everyone else seemed to fit easily into friendship groups because they either caught the train to school together or they lived on the same side of town. Arieta unfortunately was new, she came from the poorer side of town and did not really know anyone at the school, she wore second hand shoes and her uniform had seen better days, she was shy and looked different to everyone else. However the one thing that Arieta loved to do more than anything else was to read. So Arieta would spend many lunchtimes reading in the library. Her favourite books were in the fiction section of the library and she began spending many hours pouring over the novels she found there.

One day, Mr. Campbell came to Arieta while she was in the library and he asked her why she didn't go out and spend more time outdoors playing hand ball at lunchtime. Arieta said to Mr. Campbell, "Sir I don't know anyone and I don't fit in, everyone in this school either has blue or green eyes. Their hair if it is not blonde, will be light brown or straight, they are all of European

descent, whereas I have brown eyes, dark skin and an afro on my head and I come from a tiny pacific island called Fiji. I am a nobody"! and besides Arieta added, "I love to read and in these books I can discover a whole new world". Mr. Campbell smiled kindly at Arieta and said to her, "Please come with me to the front of the library, I have something to show you".

Mr. Campbell took Arieta to the wall with all the pictures of the snow capped mountains from around the world. He pointed out the Swiss Alps, the Dolomites and Mt. Cook, he even showed Arieta how small Australia's Mt. Kosciusko was in comparison to all the other

mountains and then he told her something she would never forget.

"Arieta", Mr. Campbell said, "just because the Australian mountain is small in comparison to the Swiss Alps and Italy's Dolomites, it does not make it less beautiful. These iconic places in the world, these mountains are beautiful because of the fact that they are unique to their country.

You are a Fijian and your afro hair and mahogany skin colour makes you special because you represent and come from a beautiful nation, God does not make junk and you were handcrafted by a loving God".

Answered Prayer for Mr. Top

DAWN JACOBSON-VENN

Biblical Principle

“WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE, I CALLED
TO THE LORD, AND HE ANSWERED ME.”
PSALM 120:1, ICB

Props: A bag of tops/shirts

Mr. Top lives in Bangkok, Thailand with his family and his business was not doing well. Do you know what kind of business Mr. Top runs? He sells shirts. (Take the shirts out of bag and show to the children) That's why he named his business Mr. Top. His house was full of shirts, which he took to the market and sold to earn enough money to feed his family. But what happens when no one buys Mr. Top's shirts? (Allow time for children to respond)

When Mr. Top's sales continued to go down, he became very discouraged. If he could not earn enough money, he would not be able to feed his family. This is why Mr. Top became very sad.

Right about this time, the Thailand Adventist Mission bought a building right in Mr. Top's neighborhood. Pastor Sudakar, a Bible teacher who also taught English classes, moved into the mission's building. He then began offering Bible classes and English classes

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to the community. They also began to have Sabbath worship at their little center in the mission building.

One day as Pastor Sudakar was visiting people in the neighborhood when he knocked on Mr. Top's door. Pastor Sudakar invited Mr. Top to church and asked him if he could pray for him and his family. Mr. Top was a Buddhist and he did NOT want Pastor Sudakar to pray for him. In fact, he wanted Pastor Sudakar to leave his home. He wanted nothing to do with Christians. Pastor Sudakar left, but he continued to pray for Mr. Top as he returned home.

That night, Mr. Top had a dream about his visitor that day. In his dream he saw Pastor Sudakar, and the little church which he pastored, surrounded by light. In his dream he also saw that he was surrounded by darkness. Mr. Top became scared because he did not want to be surrounded by darkness. The next morning, he went to see Pastor Sudakar and told him about the dream. He explained that he wanted to know more about his church, and now he wanted Pastor Sudakar to pray for him so that he could be surrounded by the light like he saw in his dream. Pastor Sudakar prayed with Mr. Top and he left feeling at peace and happier than he had felt in a long time.

When Mr. Top went to the market the next day to sell his shirts, guess what happened? He

sold one shirt, then two, then five, then 10. By the end of the day, all the shirts that Mr. Top had brought to the market were sold. Mr. Top was ecstatic! He had sold more than enough shirts to earn the money needed to feed his family and care for them. As soon as he could, Mr. Top went to see Pastor Sudakar to tell him how God had answered Pastor Sudakar's prayer.

Through that experience Mr. Top learned an important truth—God wants to bless us in unimaginable ways. He wants to provide for our every need and fill us with His love, but sometimes we get in the way because we do not trust in Him, listen to Him, or we do not ask Him to help us. Mr. Top did not even know Jesus, but He recognized how the God of the universe answered the prayer of Pastor Sudakar. He saw how Jesus blessed him and worked in

his life. Because of this, he wanted to get to know Jesus for himself!

Mr. Top did get to know Jesus. In fact, he accepted Jesus as his Savior and Lord. He is now a baptized member of the little church near his home in Bangkok, Thailand. He has not missed attending church ever since the first time that Pastor Sudakar prayed for him. He continues to sell his shirts and every day falls more and more in love with the only God who can answer prayers. He now tells everyone about God.

You too can pray for someone who doesn't know Jesus, just like Pastor Sudakar prayed for Mr. Top. When you do, watch God change their life through the power of His love.

A Sunbeam For Jesus

LINDA MEI LIN KOH

Biblical Principle

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST
BECAUSE HE GIVES ME STRENGTH."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Props: Small zip-lock bag of white flour or powdered sugar

Fourteen-year-old Carlos lived in Cuba. One day he was leaving school through the front gate when he caught sight of Juan, Diego, and Sofie ducking stealthily under the bushes behind the school. This was the third time that he had seen these three friends hiding in the bushes behind the school.

What are they up to? Carlos thought to himself. *I hope they don't get in trouble!*

This time around, Carlos was too curious to simply walk away. He had to see what his friends were up to. He quietly followed them from a distance, creeping closer and closer to with every step. To his dismay, he saw Juan, Diego, and Sofie dipping the fingers into a white powdery substance and putting it in the mouths. (Hold up bag of white flour or powdered sugar.) Sometimes they even put the substance in their nose. This looked like the drugs Carlos had sometimes seen on TV.

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"What are you guys tasting?" he asked rather boldly. "You know it's against school rules to try drugs, right?!"

"It's not that bad," said Diego. "It just feels like you're floating," Sofie quickly added. Then Diego chimed in with a twinkle in his eye, "How about trying some?"

"Don't be a chicken, Carlos," echoed Sofie, "Everyone is doing this!"

"Do you know you can get hooked on these drugs," explained Carlos vehemently. "Why waste your life getting hooked on drugs when you can quit and have a better life?"

"Quit? I don't think so," Juan added.

"Jesus can help you," Carlos retorted.

"Who is this Jesus you're talking about? Is he some kind of doctor? Are you sure he's that powerful?" Sofia scoffed doubtfully.

"Oh, He's that powerful alright. He'll help you quit, but what He really wants is for you to live forever in heaven with him one day. Jesus loves you all and wants you to live with Him in heaven," Carlos answered confidently!

"Would you guys come to a special meet-up this Friday night at my church? It's a really cool group of people and it's all about finding out who Jesus is," Carlos said excitedly.

“Well . . . we’ll come just this once to see about this Jesus guy you’re boasting about,” echoed the three friends simultaneously, laughing and sneering at Carlos.

To their surprise, Juan, Diego, and Sofie came to their first Friday night meeting. They liked it so much that kept coming and studying the Bible with the other friends they made at the church. The three friends asked many questions as they learned about Jesus and the love of God. Of course, it didn’t hurt that there was always plenty of good food to eat there.

“Can I pray with you guys?” asked Carlos when he met his friends each day during lunch time at school. “You can always ask Jesus to help you say no to the temptation of taking drugs,” Carlos assured his friends.

Juan had more bad days than the other two, but each time he prayed earnestly and trusted in Jesus to save him and change him. Diego and

Sofie had their share of struggles too, but they slowly stopped using harmful drugs.

“Hey, our church is having a big series of meetings next month,” announced Carlos excitedly. “You guys are invited, okay?”

“Sure, we’ll be there,” they said excitedly

At the end of two weeks of evangelistic meetings, Juan, Diego, and Sofie accepted Jesus as their Special Friend and were baptized. Tears of joy filled their hearts that Sabbath in the baptismal pool as they called Carlos to the front to be with them.

“Thank you, Carlos, for never giving up on us. You were the one who for introduced us to Jesus. We can say no to Satan, who wanted us hooked on drugs for life. But Jesus changed our lives,” said the three friends joyfully.

“Carlos, you are a bright sunbeam for Jesus!” said the pastor, “Thanks for shining for Jesus!”

A Boy Named “W”

SAUSTIN SAMPSON MFUNE

Bible Principles

“THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CAMPS
AROUND THOSE WHO FEAR GOD, AND HE
SAVES THEM.”

PSALMS 34:7, NCV

“I CALL TO YOU, GOD, AND YOU ANSWER
ME. LISTEN TO ME NOW. HEAR WHAT I SAY.”

PSALMS 17:6, NCV

Ellen White quote:

“NO MAN IS SAFE FOR A DAY OR AN HOUR
WITHOUT PRAYER.”

WHITE, GREAT CONTROVERSY P. 530

Prop: Rubber/Toy Snake

It is not certain how many people know his real name, but most simply call him “W.” “W” is thirteen years old. His family really loves to pray. “W’s” family prays for everything. Every morning before going to school, no matter how busy the family’s schedule, everyone gathers in the living room for worship and prayer. Each evening before going to bed the family gathers in the same place to worship God and close their day in prayer. But that’s not all. Everyone prays before meals and before driving off on a trip. W’s family prays all the time, it seems.

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But prayer is not all that this family does. They also read from the Bible and other Christian story books. Reading these books has helped “W” learn many great stories about the love of God and His care for people. In the Bible “W” learned how Daniel and his three friends prayed for the meaning of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream when the king could not even remember his own dream. W read how Jesus prayed early in the morning and all throughout his day.

Not far from “W’s” home there is a little river. Scattered along this river are weeds, some sugar cane trees, and several vegetable trees. “W” has many friends who live across the little river. He loves visiting his friends and he is always excited when they come to see him. When the boys come they hop onto several big stones which serve as a bridge across the river. The boys get a kick out of balancing on the rocks as they cross.

During one rainy season, the vegetation around the river was vibrant green and beautiful. One evening “W” went with a friend to help him get across the river safely. “W’s” father had left for a faraway trip and he would not be back for seven days. After escorting his friend, “W” headed for home. He whistled and smiled as he approached the little river. Though the sun had set, there was enough twilight for “W” to see his way. As he walked toward the river, he could hear frogs praising their Lord, but the frogs suddenly grew silent as he neared the river. This wasn’t too surprising. Frogs get quiet when they hear other noises.

“W” stepped onto the first stone in the river, but as he prepared to reach his leg over to the second stone, he had the strange feeling that he was in danger. Have you ever felt that way? “W” felt as if a million ants were moving all over his skin. He began to feel a strange kind of heat in his body. Goose bumps rose on his arms and legs. The hair on his body seemed to stiffen as a strange feeling ran up and down his spine. His heart began to beat against his ribs, but “W” didn’t know why his body was reacting so violently to a danger he had not yet seen—that was until he looked at the waters flowing around the rocks near his feet.

When he focused, his eyes saw another pair of eyes looking back at him—and they were changing colors. At first, he did not know what to make of what he was seeing, but when he looked carefully he discovered the eyes belonged to a humongous snake. It was a python! Its head was raised up and the rest of its long body was coiled around the stone on which he was about to step. “W” froze in his tracks. He saw the dazzling and beautiful eyes of the huge snake moving closer and closer toward him. As it did he lost all the strength in his body and his voice disappeared. He felt as if his lungs were getting smaller and he could not breathe. He tried to move his legs but nothing happened. All he could do was stand there and watch. He was paralyzed.

In that moment of terror, a thought came to “W”—*pray*. “W” does not remember what happened next. He cannot even remember whether he did indeed pray or not, but after the thought crossed his mind, he saw the eyes of python suddenly stop and begin moving away from him. Like a movie, the eyes receded in slow

motion. The snake’s head then slowly lowered as the python uncoiled itself and slithered off into the cornfield beside the river.

From nowhere “W’s” strength returned. He took off like a bullet as he headed for home. When he got there he swung the front door open almost knocking down one of his relatives who was in the house. He collapsed on a chair and asked his auntie and everybody in the room to open the windows because he could hardly breathe. Confused, his family all began opening the windows. But then almost just as suddenly, he told them to close the windows

“I . . . I was . . . crossing . . . river,” “W” gasped, trying desperately get the story out. “There was a big snake there. He slithered off. I know he’s coming to get me. CLOSE THE WINDOWS!” he yelled. “W” was so frantic that his terrified family closed the windows, just as he had asked.

After catching his breath, “W” told them the rest of the story. When he finished, he phoned his father and told him as well. After listening to the story, the father’s voice filled with emotion. He was proud that his son had thought of praying when he felt threatened. He had always wanted “W” to know that he could depend on Jesus in any situation. “W’s” father concluded by telling him that he can always depend on Jesus. He, his earthly father, may be away, but Jesus would be with him at all times. “W’s” father prayed with him, thanking Jesus for protecting him and saving his life.

After speaking to his father, “W” and everyone in the house knelt down and thanked Jesus for saving “W’s” life.