

Issue 1 • Summer 2012

CathCom

Reach

Especially

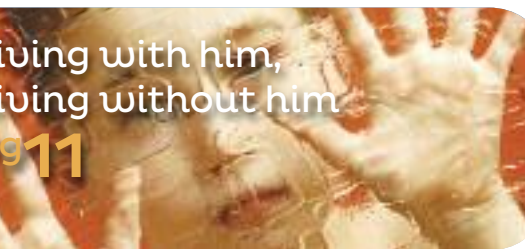
for You

A new Newspaper – to help you find space for the bigger things in life.

INSIDE Explain God!! Can You? pg8



INSIDE Living with him, Living without him pg11



INSIDE Digging for a smile pg6



As parents we all have very busy lives; school runs, making meals, washing, cleaning, shopping, helping with homework, resolving arguments, earning a living – the list is endless! Time is always in short supply.

Tired at the end of the day it is not unusual to relax in front of something easy that demands no thought or brain-power. Our good intentions of helping a charity or doing something as a family disappear as we collapse onto the sofa! So... why do we do it?

That's easy – we do it for our children.

In our busy lives there are so many conversations with our friends or our partner that are interrupted or left hanging and we rarely get the opportunity to find space to think about the bigger things – not a children's party which is looming, but those big questions which we think about – but we rarely get the opportunity to ask let alone hear the answer.

Whether we think of ourselves as religious or not, having

a child at a Catholic school inevitably raises some of these big questions. Some of the questions we need answers to because we all dread the day when we're asked to help with homework that we don't have a clue about. But some of those questions are profound thoughts or burning issues that cause something to stir within us. They are questions that we can't Google, instead they need time, thought and reflection.

We hope that this Paper will encourage you to raise some of these questions and provide

that 'something else' which is different from the rest of the day.

For our part we will try to encourage and support you and provide the answers to your questions or point you in the direction of where you can get more information. We want this paper to be for everyone, regardless of whether you are a Church-goer or not. It is not meant to preach, it's certainly not there to judge.

The Paper is here to help you find space for the bigger things in life!



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Dear Head Teacher

Inside please find the children's newspaper. We would like them to name it and design a logo, so we are inviting all your primary school children to enter a competition to come up with the logo for their own newspaper, so now is the time to get them thinking .

The competition details will be

announced in the next edition where we will explain when and where to send all the entries and of course we will give out the prize details. Just as a taster there will be a launch party. !!

We are looking forward to seeing entries so good luck to all.





Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

Unconditional Parental Love

Once I met a woman who had worked for years in fashion and modelling. Unsurprisingly, she was strikingly attractive. She was accompanied by her teenage daughter who, by contrast, was rather unremarkable to look at, maybe even a plain Jane. After spending time with them, I began to sense that the mother, whose life had largely revolved around her appearance, seemed to look down on her daughter, perhaps unconsciously, because of her average appearance. Her daughter seemed aware of this lack of maternal acceptance, and seemed troubled and uncomfortable as she tried to compensate and please her mum in other ways.

The girl's situation was a strong reminder to me of how important it is for every child to experience unconditional acceptance from their parents if they are to grow and mature in a healthy way. **Unconditional love profoundly and beautifully molds us as human beings.**

A growing number of parents in our society, however, no longer seem to hold to this key notion of unconditionally accepting their own children. If parents are told by doctors that their children might be born with physical or mental disabilities, many parents today will reject them and even yield to the temptation to end their lives through direct abortion.

I was recently discussing the Special Olympics with the father of a boy who has Down syndrome, and he remarked that when he takes his son to the local chapter, there seem to be reduced numbers of new children participating each year. He wondered if this could be due to the expanded targeting of Down syndrome children through prenatal testing and abortion.

Most unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome, in fact, are never allowed to be born. Data from the United Kingdom indicate that between 1989 and 2006 approximately 92% of women chose to terminate a pregnancy with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, while in the U.S., several published studies suggest the figure may be somewhere between 87% and 98%. **A great many Down syndrome children, indeed, never see the light of day.**

In the face of this harsh data, the importance of explicitly repudiating the eugenic mindset that has taken hold in our society cannot be overstated. No child is perfect, but every child is precious. We need to act as a people "set apart" in our attitude to the begetting of children who may be disabled. Historically, Catholics have always stood apart in this way.

Practically, this means overturning our culturally-conditioned attitudes towards "imperfect" children, and accepting every child without preconditions. We must push back against the almost ubiquitous pressure that counsels us to ensure that our children are born without defects.

Bioethicist Luke Gormally argues it this way: "In part these pressures are the natural temptation to avoid the burdens of care for the handicapped... In part, however, they are the pressures of cultural attitudes, assimilated by many Christians, towards the child."

He continues: "For many it has become merely quaint to think of

each child as a unique gift of God; children are more like planned acquisitions in our culture, acquisitions which should fit into our expectations about how our lives should go, about the ease and enjoyments that should characterise our lifestyle. A child who might threaten our ease may, if he or she is viewed as an acquisition, be thought of as a replaceable acquisition. And indeed genetic counsellors will tell parents: you can terminate this pregnancy and try again for a 'normal child.'"

A husband and wife are called to give themselves to each other completely and unreservedly, and to accept each other unconditionally in the marital embrace. Every child of theirs, whether entering the world with a handicap or not, is an expression and fruit of themselves and their acceptance of each other. To reject their own progeny because of a disability is to reject each other on some level. To deny life to their own flesh and blood is also to reject an infinite gift from the Giver of gifts, and to arrogate to themselves a ruthless power over life.

Meanwhile, the unconditional acceptance of a child as a gift of God flows from the true and unconditional acceptance of each other as husband and wife, even with all their spousal faults and defects.

As Gormally concludes, "Truly unreserved self-giving carries with it a commitment to unreserved acceptance of the fruit of that self-giving. The dignity of the child is only adequately recognised in the acceptance and cherishing of him just as he is."

We do well continually to realign our thinking, so we can come to see how our children, whether "perfect" or not, are treasures and never possessions; they are gifts, and never acquisitions. They are blessings to be safeguarded and nurtured in the embrace of unconditional parental acceptance.



Come to the Table

We are at that time of the year when families and parishes will be gathering to accompany our children to their First Holy Communion. I am sure for many of us this evokes strong and fond memories. It is a time for family and for memories. Maybe for others it all seems a bit unfamiliar and mysterious, hopefully this reflection on the sacrament we will be celebrating with our children will situate this wonderful moment in the familiarity of our lives.

The Jewish people know the importance of coming together to dine. Much of their prayer life is situated in the gathering of family, friends and strangers for a meal. To share a great truth about God, Jesus chose the meal to celebrate the gift of himself for his friends and those who love him.

When we come to Mass it reflects what is important in our own homes. There is a structure to the Mass that, when we take time to reflect upon it, is very familiar. When we gather as families we take time to welcome and be welcomed. We (if you're anything like my family) seek forgiveness for those missed calls and opportunities; we speak and share what is happening in our lives. That is how we begin our celebration of the Mass - with a welcome, a concern for one another's welfare and a moment of regret for those things that have been done or left undone. In the Mass we call this the 'Penitential Rite.' Then we share our story. We tell of those moments of pride and humour. We speak of those happenings and words that have sustained us in the time since we were last together. In the Mass, we call this the liturgy of the Word. Then we

share wisdom. We ponder those stories that we have shared and how closely they relate to one another. This is the homily. We share our hopes, dreams and concerns - the prayers of the faithful.

Then we share what we have brought with us. Amongst my family and friends, to save one person the burden a whole meal, we often each bring something to contribute to our feast. This is the fruit of our hands. In the Mass we call that the 'Preparation of the Gifts.' We ask that all we are and all we do be blessed and made holy. Then we feast. Around our family table we break bread and share our daily lives. When generations gather old stories are told. Often we repeat those stories whenever we gather - the stories of sacrifice and love that provided and nourished people in hard times. The remembrances of those who have died but whose memories are still fresh. Around our family table life is celebrated and affirmed. Around the Altar this reality is more profound. We remember a love that was sacrificed on a cross, which overwhelmed death with love much stronger than we can imagine and a love that feeds us and nourishes us.

Food is a great moment of gathering. I love food and I love preparing food for my community and friends. A meal is an opportunity for real intimacy and friendship. Jesus was a genius when it came to such gatherings. He was about making people feel that they were the honoured guest at the feast. Each was welcome and important. Each was a special guest and they deserved the best that love could give.

Bringing those we love to Holy Communion is the greatest gift we can share. Jesus says to each one of us - This is my body, this is my blood - for you. This is all of me for you. What a priceless gift.

At the end of the meal, when our hungers and thirsts have been satisfied, we leave pondering the blessings we have received.



Waiting with hope and expectation for the next opportunity to gather around the table and to share of its abundance with those whom we will meet in the meanwhile.

When we celebrate Mass together we make the ordinariness of what we do and who we are holy and somehow this can have an effect on our lives and how we are as human

being and as human beings in the complexity of our relationships.

May this joyful time be a blessing to your children and all of your families and may the Mass be as an important part of your lives as the daily bread you share around your family table.

Fr Damian

Don't abandon them

In Sudan, families in their thousands are fleeing violence and persecution as conflict engulfs key regions - including the Nuba Mountains.

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I do not want information about Aid to the Church in Need

Dear Reader

Welcome to CathCom Reach, a new national Catholic newspaper specially produced by CathCom for:

- Parents and teachers of children in primary school
- Primary school children themselves.

The Paper which is 16 pages in length will, initially, be produced 4 times a year. Twelve of the pages will be devoted to adult readership and four pages dedicated to the children. Distributed to all Catholic Primary Schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland the Paper will have a circulation of over half a million copies. The Paper seeks to inform and explain aspects of the Catholic Faith. We will publish articles on the Catholic Faith, education, parenting, health and well being and the environment as well as covering current news. We want to actively engage with parents, children and teachers and we therefore welcome your ideas for developing the Paper. If you would like to contribute stories for the Paper or if you have any comments or questions you would like to raise with us please email the editor@CathComReach.com

Whilst we would like to be able to report on the wide range of activities that take place in school this will not be possible and therefore schools should continue to send contributions concerning their local activities to their own diocesan papers.

With best wishes
Edwina Gillett, Editor

Pressures on Young People

Young people are now growing up in a world of unprecedented pressure and we have witnessed the impact of school and home pressures on young people.

Some of these pressures have a negative impact on young people and a recent Relate report found that in an average class of 30 young people:

- 10 will have witnessed their parents separate
- 8 will have experienced physical violence, sexual abuse or neglect
- 1 will have experienced the death of a parent, and;
- 7 will have reported to have been bullied.

It will come as no surprise that any of these pressures can contribute to the development of mental health problems in young people.

Childhood and teenage years are when mental health is developed and patterns are set for the future.



Some useful websites:

- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.cypmhc.org.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.selfharm.org.uk
- www.hope-health-recovery.org.uk

Estimates vary, but research suggests that 20% of children have a mental health problem in any given year (Lifetime Impacts: Childhood and Adolescent Mental Health, Understanding the Lifetime Impacts, Mental Health Foundation, 2005) and only a quarter of these receive the help and support that they need.

It is important that young people learn how to cope with their mental health issues as early as possible as a child with good mental health is much more likely to have good mental health as an adult, and to be able to fulfil their potential.

Contact us

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Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is a central and essential element of our Catholic faith. As Catholics, we believe that human life and human dignity are inherently sacred. As such, we have an enduring duty of commitment to the poor and to the most vulnerable.

Catholic Social Teaching is the way we, as Catholics, live out God's greatest commandment:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

Catholic Social Teaching calls all of us to reach out and build personal relationships with those in most need of mercy and justice. It also calls us to inspire and defend the sacred dignity of the human person, while also promoting the common good.

There are Ten Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching and we will take a closer look at each in future editions.



The Present

Imagine there is a Bank that credits your account each morning with £86,400. It carries no balance from day to day.

Every evening the Bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do?

Draw out every penny of course!

Each of us has such a Bank - its name is TIME. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft.

Every day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you failed to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the 'tomorrow'. You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success.

The clock is running. Make the most of TODAY.

To realise the value of a year, ask a student who failed to pass an exam.

To realise the value of a month, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realise the value of a week, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realise the value of an hour, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realise the value of a minute, ask the person who just missed the train.

To realise the value of a second, ask the person who just avoided an accident.

To realise the value of a millisecond, ask the athlete who won a Silver Medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have - and treasure it more if you have shared it with someone special, special enough to share your time.

Remember that time waits for no-one.

Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery.
Today is a gift - that's why it's called THE PRESENT!

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Sandown Park, Esher 14 - 17 May

Get Digging!



The pleasure from gardening can be immense. From watching tiny seeds sprout and grow into blossoming flowers and vegetables to enjoying the myriad of colours generated from the different species of shrubs and trees. Even the humble lawn can provide a restful vision of green.

But gardening is a lot of hard work you might say. And yes this can be true as you get your garden or allotment going or back in hand after neglecting it for a while due to work or life in general diverting our attention.

However, gardening can be great fun for all the family young and old alike. Everyone for instance could be given their own small patch to look after – what better way to encourage children to take an interest in the earth and what it can produce. All growth, whether human or vegetable, requires food, water and love to get the best results.

Children of any age can be attracted to gardening provided that they have tools and equipment suitable for their age and appropriate supervision. Its' best not worry too much about how dirty the kids might get – they will probably have more fun the dirtier they get!

Getting started

- Talk together about your garden, if you haven't got a garden think about what might be possible with tubs and window boxes or what can be grown in-doors
- Decide together what you would like to grow

- Ensure that you have all the right tools
- Start planting and nurturing
- Reap what you sow
- Keep children interested by praising them for the results or explaining why something has not grown as well as it should
- Enjoy your gardening

Summer Tips

- Make sure you keep your plants and vegetables well watered, use the composted waste from the kitchen and lawn mowing to feed your plant
- Help to support your plants with stakes as necessary
- Start sowing of vegetable seeds for harvesting in the autumn
- Mow the lawn but not too closely, carefully dig out the weeds from the lawn, try not to damage the grass next to them and then re-sow with fresh grass seed to improve your lawn
- Remember you reap what you sow, the more attention at the beginning will give you better results at the end

If you can quietly take a step back without anyone seeing, take a look at your family working together in harmony and this may put a smile on your face. When you have a moment of quiet reflection, re-read this article and replace the words plants and gardening tips with your children and family and it may put a smile in your heart.

What's in your Man Drawer?

In homes all around the world, there is a place where “may be useful one day” and “just in case” items are stored. Bits of string, old batteries, broken watches, the odd screwdriver, fuses, electrical leads and other such items lie in wait to be rediscovered. This sacred place is more commonly known as ‘the man drawer’. (Made famous by Michael McIntyre)

According to Cello MRUK, “Britons are hoarding nearly 80 million unused gadgets”.

All of these items could be recycled, reducing the amount of e-waste being sent to landfill sites and in turn helping to decrease toxic substances damaging the environment.

So we are challenging you to clean out your ‘man drawer’, and recycle those worn out objects into shiny new useful things!

Old irons, toasters, battery watches, hair straighteners, mp3 players and odd electrical wires

are just some of the items that can be recycled.

Also, don't forget about those old batteries. Each year we throw away about 600 million batteries. Laid end to end these batteries would reach from the UK to Australia and back again.



www.recycle-more.co.uk will provide any school interested with a free battery recycling service. This would also include provision of the necessary collection box(es) Contact us at info@valpak.co.uk or call 08450 682572 for more information.





We haven't got a name or a logo for your Paper yet so we need your help, have a look on Page 2 and see if can start to think about some ideas



Before Jesus ascended into Heaven he told his friends that he would send them the gift of the Holy Spirit. They waited and prayed and when the Holy Spirit came to them at Pentecost they were filled with excitement and love. They also felt brave and strong. They were now ready to go out and spread the Good News.

Dear Jesus,
Fill my life, Holy Spirit of God, with joy and love and hope. Live in me so I can show others how much you love them. Amen.

Think about...
some ways you can tell people about Jesus:

- by talking about Him
- by being good and setting a good example to those around us
- by making friends and not falling out
- by thinking about and doing things for others

Can you think of any more ways?
Why don't you write them down in the box below:



Pentecost Wordsearch

- PENTECOST
- APOSTLES
- HOLY SPIRIT
- POWER
- LOVE
- JOY
- PEACE
- WIND
- FLAME

How many can you find?

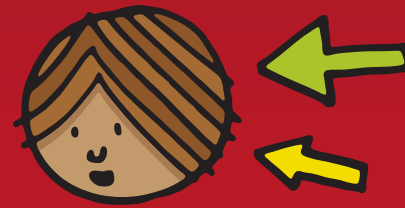


H O L Y S P I R I T
 A P P E C F W R A X
 J U E H S L B F P N
 F I A N G A D O O M
 Z J C B T M W L S H
 T A E Z Q E I W T R
 P M R D R D C J L Y
 G S N P L O K O E N
 O I V E T C V Y S K
 W Y U X L O V E Q T



God Save Our Gracious Queen

On 6 February 1952 the modern Elizabethan age commenced. And this year Queen Elizabeth II celebrates 60 years on the throne, her Diamond Jubilee. The only other Monarch to achieve this momentous jubilee was Queen Victoria in 1897.



When her father became King in 1937 Princess Margaret, the Queen's younger sister (aged 6), asked Elizabeth "Does that mean you're going to become Queen?" Elizabeth (aged 11) replied "Yes, I suppose it does".

By 1940, at the age of 14, and the country amidst the horrors of World War II Elizabeth had made her first radio broadcast addressing child evacuees saying to them "We know, every one of us, that in the end all will be well".

Princess Elizabeth married Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten in 1947 and on the morning of their wedding he became known as the Duke of Edinburgh.

Queen Elizabeth II is Head of State of the United Kingdom and of 15 Commonwealth Countries.

"My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong. But I shall not have the strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me".



Dear Children

Welcome to your very own catholic newspaper. But it hasn't got a name yet! Can you help?

In the next edition we will run a competition to find a name for the paper and a logo.

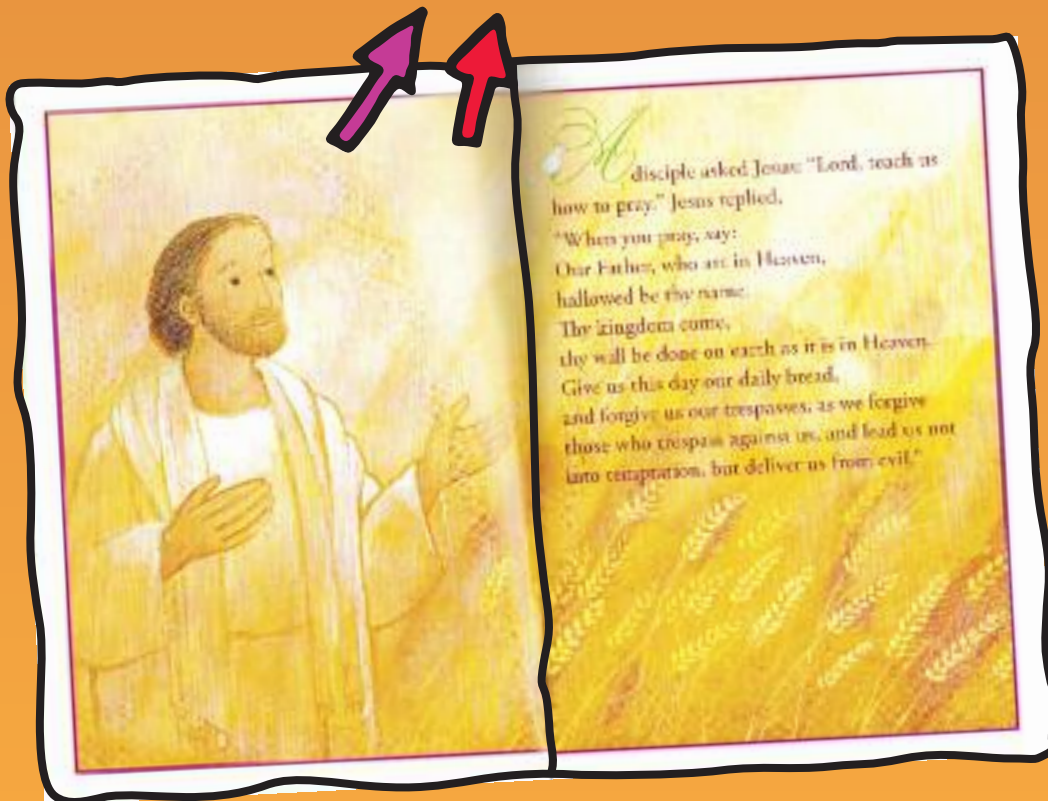
The winning name and logo will then be used in your paper from issue 3 later on this year 2012.

So now's the time to start thinking about some ideas, and practising on some drawings.

Look out for the Competition in the next edition when we will tell you where to send your entry and what the prizes will be.

We are looking forward to seeing your entries, so good luck to you all.

Praying the Our Father



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

When we say this prayer we are speaking to our Father in heaven. He knows each one of us and wants us to love Him and those around us.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We ask our Father in heaven to help us to live as He would want us to.

Give us this day our daily bread.

We all need food and water to live but lots of children around the world suffer dreadful famine. We pray that we will always be prepared to share what we have with others.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

We say sorry to God for the times we have misbehaved and ask Him to help us to make up with anyone we have fallen out with

And lead us not into temptation.

We ask God to help us to be good and the help to say No if we are tempted to do something that we know is wrong

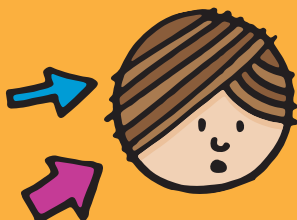
But deliver us from evil.

We ask God to always protect us from anything that is bad and to help us grow in His love for us.

Amen

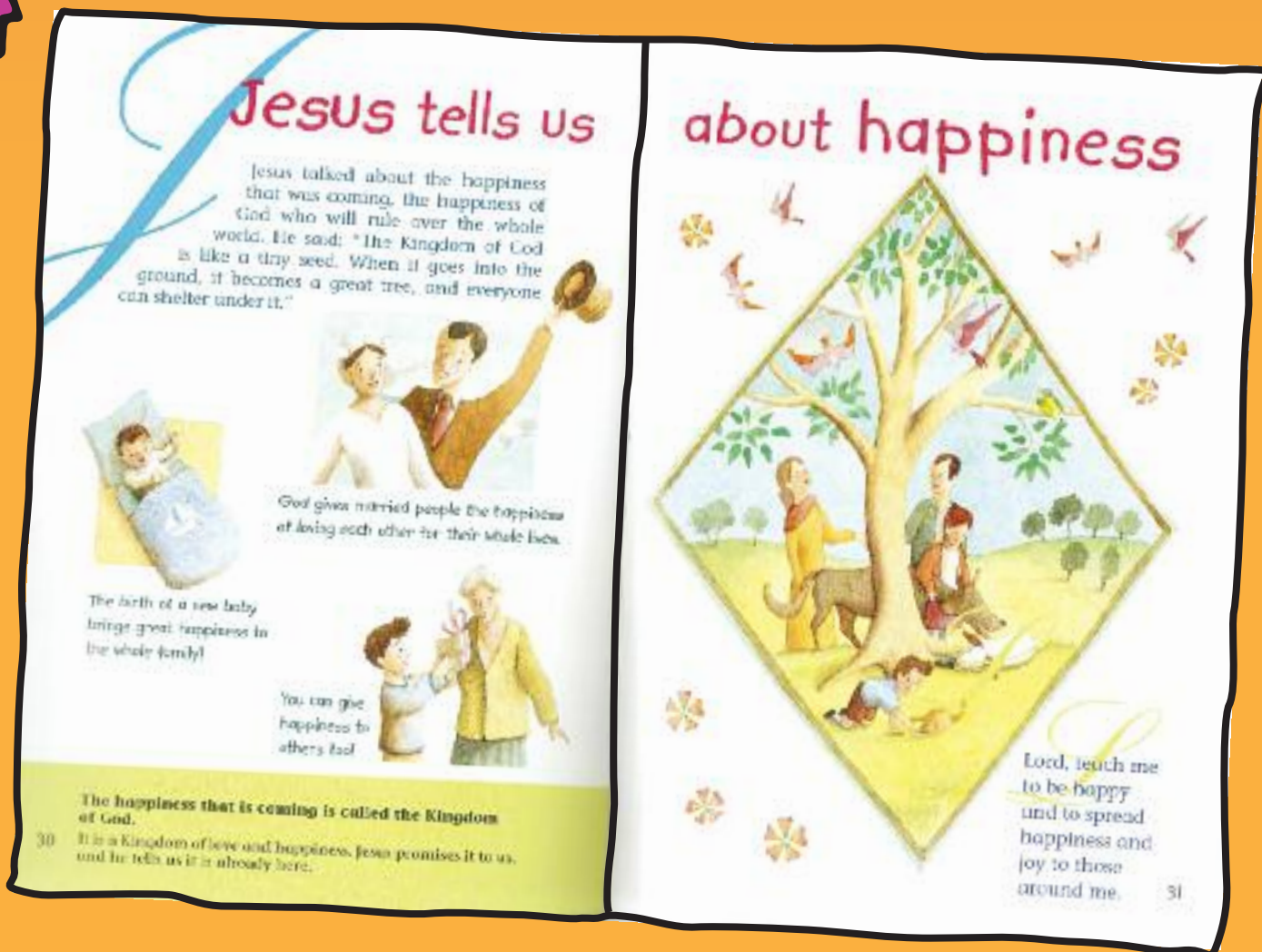
Courtesy of The Beautiful Story of the Bible by Maïte Roche.

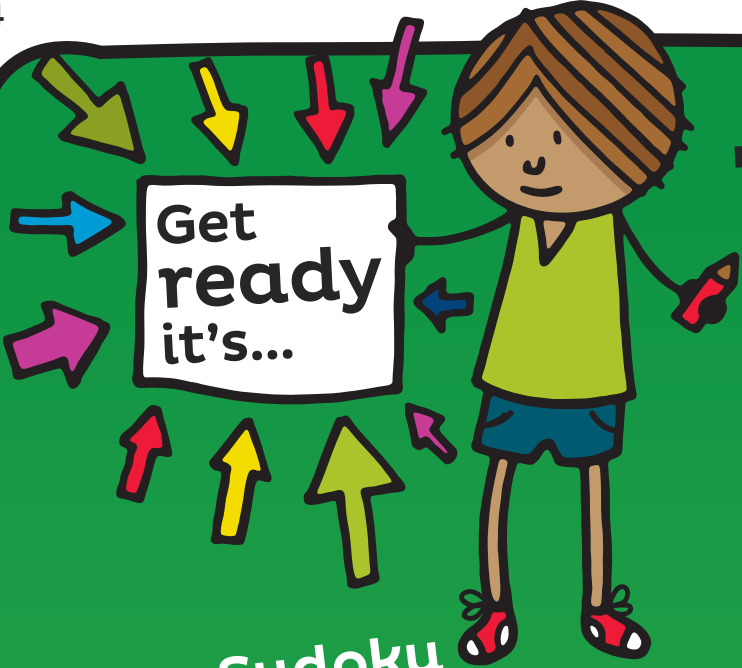
Available from the Catholic Truth Society



Courtesy of Getting to know God by Christine Pedotti.

Available from the Catholic Truth Society

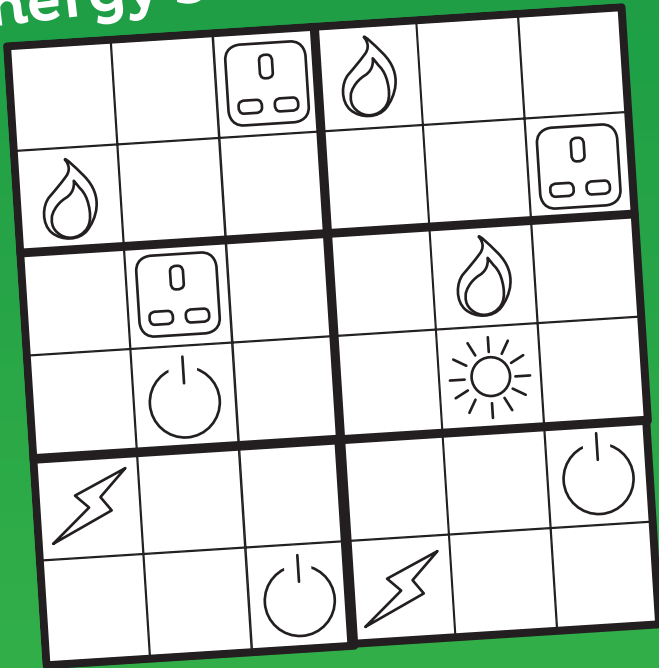




Teaser Time

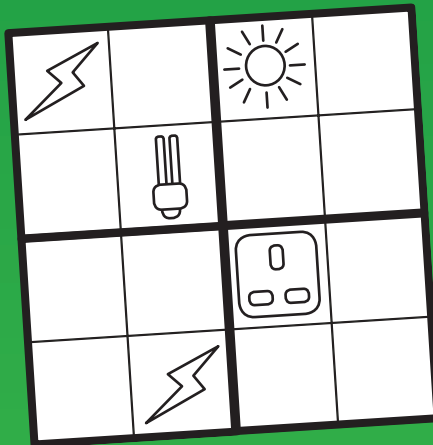


Energy Sudoku



Have a go at our Energy Sudoku using symbols instead of numbers. Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the same symbols but only once in each.

Don't guess - use logic!



1. What part of your body has the most rhythm?
2. What did the beach say when the tide came in?
3. How do rabbits fly?
4. Forward I am heavy, backwards I am not. What am I?
5. What object has keys that open no locks, space but no room, and you can enter but not go in?
6. What can run but never walks; Has a mouth but never talks; Has a head but never weeps; Has a bed but never sleeps?

Wordsearch

See how many of the following energy words you can find. Words can be forwards, backwards, up, down and even diagonal!

- Light Bulb
- Save
- Energy
- Turn Off
- Resource
- Heat
- Unplug
- Switch
- Stand By
- Oil
- Gas
- Start
- Earth
- Power
- Circuit
- Battery
- Fuel
- Solar
- Waste



Answers: 1. Eardrums 2. Long time no sea 3. By hareplane! 4. TONI When spelled backwards it does become NOT 5. A keyboard 6. A river

Catholic Parents in Scotland respond to the Call

The Holy Father reminded us during his homily at the Chrism Mass that we are before a "growing religious illiteracy found in the midst of our sophisticated society. The foundations of faith, which at one time every child knew, are now known less and less. But if we are to live and love our faith, if we are to love God and to hear him aright, we need to know what God has said to us – our minds and hearts must be touched by his word." (Pope Benedict XVI Homily Chrism Mass 2012)

Catechesis, and above all that of Christian initiation, has the great task of overcoming religious illiteracy, teaching "what God has said to us"! Without allowing ourselves to be paralysed by unending methodological questions!

The Diocese of Argyll and the Isles formally launched THIS IS OUR

FAITH in a service held in St Columba's Cathedral Oban on Thursday 7th June 2012. Pupils from schools gathered in the Cathedral with teachers, parents, priests and representatives from across the Diocese to mark this significant occasion when the Diocese formally accepted the new religious education syllabus from the Scottish Catholic Education Service Recognising the important role of parents as first educators of their children, the Church has always encouraged them to take responsibility for educating and forming their children in accord with their beliefs.

"Catholic tradition teaches that God has bestowed on the family its own specific and unique educational mission. . . The educational task of the family and that of the school complement one another in many concrete areas." (Congregation for Catholic Education)



The Church, in expecting Catholic schools to develop as communities of faith and learning, encourages teachers to work closely with parents in support of their children's learning.

The Church regards the parish as a vital link in contributing to the partnership of home, school and Church in forming children in faith. This partnership can include preparing children to receive the sacraments, providing relationships education and supporting liturgical celebrations.

The Scottish Catholic Education Commission (SCES) has launched the First Catholic Assembly of Parents.

In launching this initiative a spokesperson for the SCES said "Parents have a vital role to play in Catholic schools. They are the first and should be the best teachers of

their children and have the job of helping their children to become all that they are born to be. So schools need parents to support them in educating children and young people."

The Catholic Education Commission invites all those parents with an interest in Catholic Education in Scotland to gather at the First Catholic Assembly of Parents so that they can learn from each other, encourage each other and build support for the future. The Assembly is scheduled to take place on Saturday 25th August at the Xavier Centre in Carfin, North Lanarkshire, beginning at 2pm and finishing with vigil Mass celebrated by Bishop Devine. Cardinal O'Brien will give the keynote address. There will be opportunities during the afternoon for people to exchange ideas and a mixture of useful information available.

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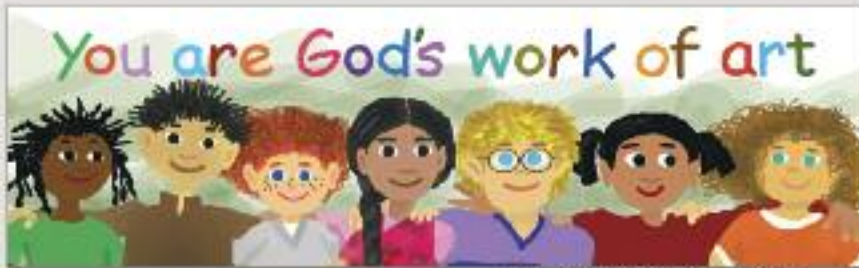
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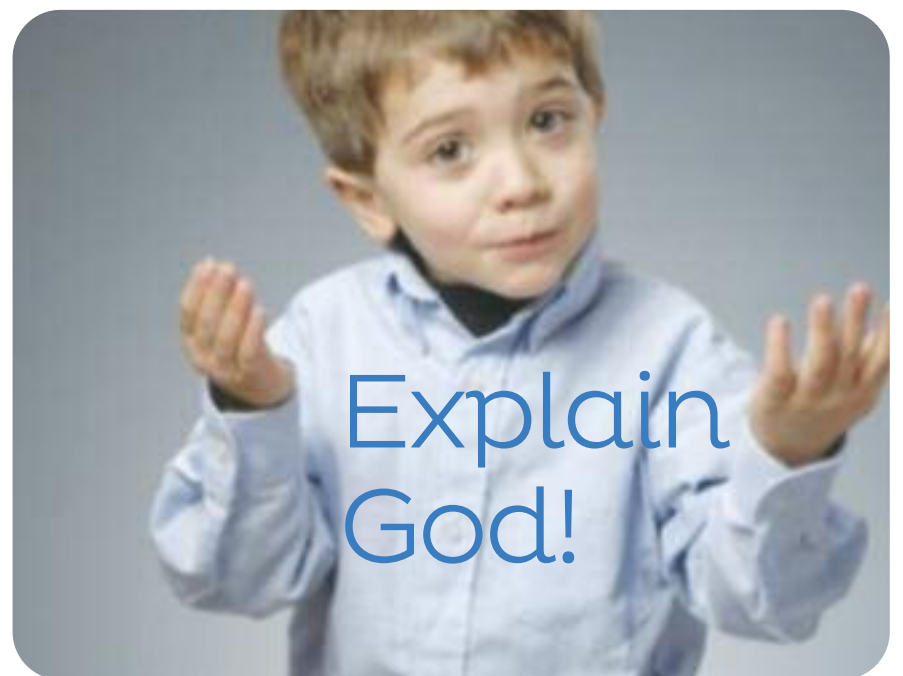


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Explain God!

Written by an 8-year-old, named Danny Dutton. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God.' Could any of us have done as well?

EXPLANATION OF GOD:

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

'God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mum and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his Father, and he

told his Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.'

'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.'

'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!'

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And, besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But... you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.'

And...that's why I believe in God.'

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Get into the Swim of Things

In light of the report from the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) which reveals a third of children in Britain cannot swim by the time they leave primary school; here are five simple, yet fun games from Speedo® which you can play with your children to help teach them how to swim and to feel confident and happy in the water.

1. Skittles

Parents, you're the target in this task. As the 'skittle', stand five metres from your child in the water and cheer them on as they take it in turns to walk, skip, hop, jump or paddle through the water to 'bowl' you over (drop to your knees if it's shallow!) Encourage them to use their arms to propel through the water, using floating aids to help with buoyancy. For the 'big strike' they must kick their legs to paddle through the water to hit the target. As their confidence grows try the game again, but travelling backwards, or even sideways through the water. To vary the game, use a waterball as a different type of target.

2. Starry Sky

This is a safe technique, which teaches children how to float on water. Support your child with floating aids as they stretch out horizontally on the water, like a big star in the night sky. Once floating, encourage them to lift their head and chest, and using their arms, change to a standing position. When they feel confident, help them to float on their front with their face submerged, before rotating to a standing position once again.

3. Frog Hopping

Teach your child to jump like a frog into the water - knees bent, back straight and with confidence. For the first few tries, use floating aids and hold their hand as they learn the technique. The 'frog' starts with toes gripping the edge of the pool looking forward; then jumps away from the side, landing on their feet with bent knees. Kids love this activity, so always remember to check the pool depth first.

4. Surfboards

Surf's up! This technique is important to learn as the 'push and glide' is the foundation of all swimming strokes. Staying straight like a surfboard, your little 'dude' pushes off from the side of the pool, gliding on their back through the water. Try to keep hips and head close to the surface and stretch the arms ahead or to the sides. Until your child feels confident going it alone, use floating aids to help with buoyancy.

5. Treasure Island

It's time to get their feet off the floor! In this task you're a treasure island. Stand five metres away from your child in the water and encourage them to paddle towards you, using their arms and feet to kick and push through the water. Using goggles to help them keep their face partly submerged as they paddle, and help them to dodge floating treasure (e.g. waterballs). Use floating aids to give extra support while they develop their technique.

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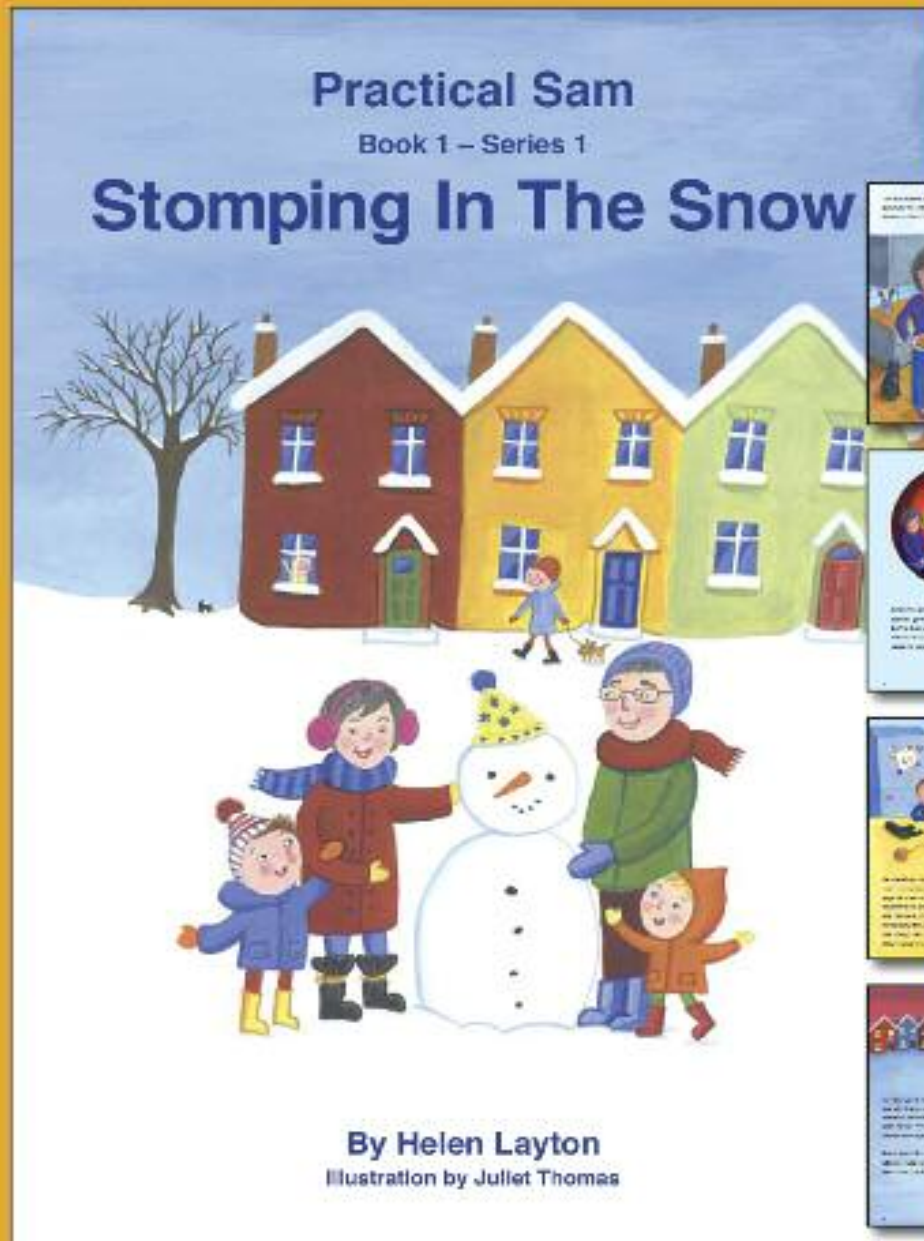
Sam opened his eyes.

As the sunshine crept through the curtains, Sam knew it was going to be another practical day.



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I still remember the day Matthew left, although at the time, I didn't know it was forever. I was a timid 11 year-old, and I dreaded coming home from school or soccer practice every evening, because behind the white doors of our seemingly perfect home was my severely autistic brother, and in my eyes, he existed just to ruin my life.

Living with Him, Living without Him

My brother was diagnosed at four. At the time, little was known about autism. Some condemned the environment, others vaccines, and others placed the blame on mothers, saying they had not loved their children enough. I grew up amidst his antics, crazy outbursts, and completely abnormal behaviour, all of which were normal to me.

As a child, I loved having him as my brother. Matthew never teased, played with me all the time, and truly loved me. As I grew up, my feelings about him turned into embarrassment. He would scream in public, make a scene at the store, and strip down naked any time we went near a body of water. He put the class guinea pig in the toilet, jumped from our roof into the neighbour's pool and always ran away on the Fourth of July.

Countless shoes were thrown out of bus windows, legs broken and re-broken, rooms trashed, school projects smashed, and innumerable teachers bitten. But he never once hurt me. I like to think he cared about me, even if the best way he could show it was by simply not harming me.

As Matthew aged, he developed muscles without ever hitting the gym, and he got taller. His outbursts became less vocal and more physical. I couldn't have friends over; it was too risky. He broke windows, threw TVs, and even broke his bed in half jumping on it.

Living with him was emotionally draining for my parents, who always had to take him somewhere – whether to school, an afterschool program, or a fast-food restaurant at 4 a.m. – to satisfy his need to get out of the house. Matthew rarely slept through the night. He would creep out of his room, so it had to be locked from the outside.

The day Matthew left for his extended stay in the hospital was not his first time there. He had spent weeks there while his medicine was being adjusted and he was too violent to be at home, but this time was different. The days soon turned to weeks and then months. Five months to be exact. Five long months of my brother living in a locked hospital room, his door guarded day and night. Sure, they were kind to him, but there's nothing worse than imagining your brother

alone every night while you are home with your family. I know I had nothing to do with it, but somehow, being the "normal" sibling made me feel guilty. My life is so much easier than his and so much more rewarding.

Unlike him, I can share my emotions with ease, express myself correctly, and show others how I feel. We will never really know what's going on in his mind, whether he's happy. I have never had a real conversation with him, don't know his favourite food, what he wants to do with his life, or how it feels to be autistic. He'll never take me for a ride in his first car, watch a movie with me, or help me survive high school. Even though Matthew will always be my older brother, I have grown up with him as my younger brother, always making sure he stayed out of trouble, being his helper and protector.

Matthew now lives in a group home with other autistic teens. He's been there for three years. I know this is best for him, and most of the time I'm fine, but there are days when I miss him so much I cry and cry. Sometimes Matthew comes for a visit, but my friends are dubious that I

actually have a brother. It's as though his life has taken a separate path and we're growing further apart. It hurts. Not a day passes that I don't think about him and what life would have been like if he had been "normal."

I don't regret that Matthew is my brother. I used to think it was unfair, but that was selfish of me. I know that the only person it is unfair to is Matthew, and I am grateful to have been blessed with such a wonderful brother. He may not have taught me how to get through high school or where to hang out on weekends, but he taught me patience, unconditional love and trust. Living with my brother was a challenge that strengthened me as a person, and living without him has become a test of my love. Matthew, I love you so much.

This personal article was written by Hannah Kay aged 14 who lives with her parents Alexander and Lois. Hannah wrote the piece and submitted it to Teen Ink, a website magazine written by teens since 1989, without her parent's knowledge.



Above the Noise of the World

The Lord is whispering to you, Do you hear Him? Above the noise of the world, Above the laughter of your friends, Listen! Open your heart to receive The Word! Open your heart to receive The Lord.

The Lord is waiting for you, In your busy life, He waits patiently every minute, For you to turn to Him, He gave his life to save you, Suffered and died on a cross for you, With total unconditional love for you.

The Lord is walking with you, Every moment He is there, For so long you have not known Him, or felt His presence, But He was and is always with you, Turn to Him now, not just in suffering or Pain, But also in happiness and joy, He waits to share your life,

How He loves you! So much, more than you can ever imagine, Leave the noise of the world behind, Wait for the silence and The Lord.

A follower of Jesus

Is the Jar Full?



A teacher stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he picked up a very large and empty jam jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks, rocks about 2" in width.

The teacher then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The teacher then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He then asked once more if the jar was full. This time the students were sure and they eagerly shouted "YES!"

The teacher then produced two cans of beer from under the table and proceeded to pour the drinks into the jar which filled the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the teacher, "I want you to understand that this jar represents your life.

The rocks are the important things - your family, your friends, things that, if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the other things that matter like your home and your school.

The sand is everything else, the small stuff like shopping, your ipod and your computer

"If you put the sand into the jar first," the teacher said "there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you".

Pay attention to the things that can bring you true happiness.

Find the time to do things as a family, talk together, eat together and, listen to one another. There will always be time to upload the latest release on your ipod.

"Take care of the rocks first - the things that really matter. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and asked what the beer represented. The teacher smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room to share a beer with your family and friends"

The moral of this story is: **Find space for the bigger things in life.**