

**The  
Feel Better  
Book**

**by Olive Redmond**

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For this book I want to thank my son Fraser who has patiently assisted me for 3 years in getting 5 books printed. I write, research and type it all, and then Fraser goes through each book, page by page, setting all the headings and paragraphs in the correct format for printing.

The first book was a collection of poems, recipes and stories, especially the Little Donkey story of the last week of Jesus Christ at Easter. The second book was about marriage and bringing up children, and covered a woman's physical life from teenage to mature years. The third was my own life story in England and New Zealand. The fourth was the life stories of several other people including my husband David, my parents, grandparents and other ancestors.

This book has been titled The Feel Better Book because it is a collection of uplifting stories and jokes that I have enjoyed and I hope others will too.

In the family I grew up in we all went to the Baptist church with my mother because that was nearer than the Anglican church my father went to. There was never any difficulty about different beliefs and in my teens I often went to the Congregational church my friends attended. When I trained as a nurse in London I went with friends to the Catholic or Methodist church. When David and I got married we decided to find a church we both liked going to and settled on the Presbyterian church so I had a very varied religious background. However, when we were invited to go to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we felt that was the church we wanted to bring up our children in, and have been members of for 50 years.

I am grateful for all I have learned there and for so many people who help to make this world a better place.

Olive Redmond July 2021

## ***Funny stories***

### ***A dropped thimble***

One day, when a seamstress was sewing while sitting close to a river, her thimble fell into the river. When she cried out, an angel appeared and asked, 'My dear child, why are you crying?' The seamstress replied that her thimble had fallen into the water and that she needed it to help her husband in making a living for their family. The angel dipped his hand into the water and pulled up a golden thimble set with sapphires. 'Is this your thimble?' the angel asked. The seamstress replied, 'No.' The angel again dipped into the river. He held out a golden thimble studded with rubies. 'Is this your thimble?' the angel asked. Again, the seamstress replied, 'No.' The angel reached down again and came up with a leather thimble. 'Is this your thimble?' the angel asked. The seamstress replied, 'Yes.' The angel was pleased with the woman's honesty and gave her all three thimbles to keep, and the seamstress went home happy.

Some years later, the seamstress was walking with her husband along the riverbank, and her husband fell into the river and disappeared under the water. When she cried out, the angel again appeared and asked her, 'Why are you crying?' 'Oh angel, my husband has fallen into the river!' The angel went down into the water and came up with a good looking famous film star. 'Is this your husband?' the angel asked. 'Yes,' cried the seamstress. The angel was furious. 'You lied! That is not true!' The seamstress replied, 'Oh, forgive me, please angel. It is a misunderstanding. You see, if I had said 'no' to the good looking famous film star, you would have come up with another famous film star. Then if I said 'no' to him, you would have come up with my husband. Had I then said 'yes,' you would have given me all three.

Angel, I'm not in the best of health and would not be able to take care of all three husbands, so THAT'S why I said 'yes' to the good looking famous film star.

And so the angel let her keep him.

### *Airplane rides*

A long time ago when planes were a great novelty, Fred and his wife Edna went to the annual state fair. Every year Fred would say, "Edna, I'd like to ride in that there airplane." And every year Edna would say, "I know, Fred, but that there airplane ride costs fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars." One year Fred and Edna went to the fair and Fred said, "Edna, I'm 80 years old. If I don't ride that there airplane this year, I may never get another chance." Edna replied, "Fred, that there airplane ride costs fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars." The pilot overheard them and said, "Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take you both up for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say one word, I won't charge you anything at all, but if you say one word, then it's fifty dollars." Fred and Edna agreed they could keep absolutely quiet, and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of twists and turns, rolls and dives, but not a word was heard. He did all his tricks over again, but still not a word. They landed and the pilot turned to Fred. "Wow, I did everything I could think of to get you to yell out, but you didn't." Fred replied, "Well, I was gonna say something when Edna fell out, but fifty dollars is fifty dollars."

### *Bag of money*

An elderly couple were celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary. The couple had married as childhood sweethearts and had moved back to their old neighbourhood

after they retired. One day they walked back to their old school. It was not locked, so they entered, and found the old desk they'd shared, where Andy had carved "I love you Sally." On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armoured car as it drove past them, practically landing at their feet! Sally quickly picked it up, but not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars! Andy said, "We've got to give it back." Sally said, "Finders keepers." She put the money back in the bag and hid it upstairs in their attic.

The next day, two FBI security men were canvassing the neighbourhood looking for the money and knocked on the door. "Pardon me, but did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armoured car yesterday?"

Sally said, "No." Andy said, "She's lying. She hid it up in the attic."

Sally said, "Don't believe him, he's getting senile."

The agents turned to Andy and began to question him. One said, "Tell us the story from the beginning."

Andy said, "Well, it's like this. When Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday . . ."

The first FBI guy turned to his partner and said, "We're outta here," and they left.

### *Bathtub test*

During a visit to my doctor, I asked, "How do you determine whether or not an older person should be put in an old age home?" "Well," the doctor said, "We fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the person to empty the bathtub." "Oh, I understand," I said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it is bigger than the

spoon or the teacup."

"No," said the doctor. "A normal person would pull out the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

### *Biker took his drink*

There I was sitting at the bar staring at my drink when a large, trouble-making biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one swig. "Well, whatcha' gonna do about it?" he asks, menacingly, as I burst into tears. "Come on, man," the biker says, "I didn't think you'd CRY. I can't stand to see a man crying." "This is the worst day of my life," I say. "I'm a complete failure. I was late to a meeting and my boss fired me. When I went to the parking lot, I found my car had been stolen and I don't have any insurance. I left my wallet in the cab I took home. I found my wife with another man ... and then my dog bit me. So I came to this bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all. I buy a drink, I drop a poison capsule in and sit here watching the poison dissolve, and then you show up and drink the whole thing!"

"But, that's enough about me, how are you?"

### *Changing dates from BC to AD*

This is particularly reminiscent of concerns in the change from 1999 to 2000.

Dear Cassius,

This change from BC to AD is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having been working happily downwards forever, now we have to start

thinking upwards. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left it to us to sort it all out at this last minute. I spoke to Pilate the other evening. He was livid that Julius hadn't done something about it when he was sorting out the calendar. He said he could see why Brutus turned nasty. We called in Consultus, but he simply said that continuing downwards using minus BC won't work and as usual charged a fortune for doing nothing useful. Surely we will not have to throw out all our hardware and start again? Macrohard will make yet another fortune out of this I suppose. The money lenders are paranoid of course! They have been told that all usury rates will invert and they will have to pay their clients to take out loans. It's an ill wind. As for myself, I just can't see the sand in an hourglass flowing upwards. We have heard that there are three wise men in the East who have been working on the problem, but unfortunately they won't arrive until it's all over. I have also heard that there are plans to stable all horses at midnight at the turn of the year as there are fears that they will stop and try to run backwards, causing immense damage to chariots and possible loss of life. Some say the world will cease to exist at the moment of transition. Anyway, we are still continuing to work on this irritating problem. I will stick-mail a parchment to you if anything further develops. If you have any ideas please let me know.

Plutonium

### *Compensation case*

Farmer Joe decided his injuries from the accident were serious enough to take the trucking company, which was responsible for the accident, to court. In court, the trucking company's fancy lawyer was questioning the farmer. "Joe, didn't you say, at the scene of the accident, I'm fine?" questioned the lawyer. Farmer Joe responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule

Bessie into the ....." "I didn't ask for any details," the lawyer interrupted, "Just answer the question. Did you or did you not say, at the scene of the accident, I'm fine!" Farmer Joe said, "Well I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I was driving down the road." The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Judge, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question." By this time the Judge was fairly interested in Farmer Joe's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favourite mule Bessie." Joe thanked the Judge and proceeded, "Well as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favourite mule, into the trailer and was driving her down the highway when this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and didn't want to move. However, I could hear poor old Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape just by her groans. Suddenly a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning so he went over to her. After he looked at her he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road with his gun in his hand and looked at me. He said, "Your mule was in such bad shape I had to shoot her. How are you feeling?"

### *Cups of tea*

A woman wanted to go to a meeting one day but had a 2 year old to look after. Her husband said he would stay home and look after their daughter. The woman felt sure he would be watching sport on TV and not keep his attention on the little girl, but her husband assured his wife all would be well so off she went to her meeting. The husband checked his little girl

was happily playing in her bedroom with her dolls and giving them a tea party with her little tea set. She asked if her Daddy would like a cup of tea and he said he would love that. He went and sat watching TV until his little girl brought him a tiny cup of water. He drank it down and told her it was a lovely cup of tea. A few minutes later the little girl appeared with another tiny cup of water and her Daddy drank it and said it was a lovely cup of tea. This went on for the next hour with the little girl carefully carrying little cups of water and her father admiring it as he drank it. Soon the mother returned from her meeting and was surprised to see how well her husband had coped without missing his sport on TV. He said it was no trouble as their little girl was happily occupied bringing him cups of water and him telling her it was a lovely cup of tea. The mother thought for a few seconds, then she upset his world for him. She said, "You do realise, don't you, that she is only 2 years old and the only water she can reach is down the toilet!"

### *Chocolate ice cream*

One day I had lunch with some friends. Jim, a short, balding golfer type about 80 years old, came along with them, all in all, a pleasant bunch. When the menus were presented, we ordered salads, sandwiches, and soups, except for Jim who said, "Ice cream, please. Two scoops of chocolate ice cream." I wasn't sure my ears heard right, and the others were aghast. "Along with heated apple pie," Jim added, completely unabashed. We tried to act quite nonchalant, as if people did this all the time, but when our orders were brought out, I didn't enjoy mine. I couldn't take my eyes off Jim as his pie and ice cream went down. The other guys couldn't believe it. They ate their lunches silently and grinned. The next time I went out to eat, I called and invited Jim. I lunched on white meat tuna. He ordered a parfait. I smiled. He asked if he amused me. I answered, "Yes, you do, but also you confuse

me. How come you order rich desserts, while I feel I must be sensible? He laughed and said, I'm tasting all that is possible. I try to eat the food I need, and do the things I should, but life's so short, my friend, I hate missing out on something good. This year I realized how old I was. He grinned. I haven't been this old before. So, before I die, I've got to try those things that for years I had ignored. I haven't smelled all the flowers yet. There are too many trout streams I haven't fished. There's more fudge sundaes to wolf down and kites to be flown overhead. There are too many golf courses I haven't played.

I've not laughed at all the jokes.

I've missed a lot of sports events and potato chips and cokes.

I want to wade again in water and feel ocean spray on my face.

I want to sit in a country church and thank God for His grace.

I want peanut butter every day spread on my morning toast.

I want un-timed long distance calls to the folks I love the most.

I haven't cried at all the movies yet, or walked in the morning rain.

I need to feel the wind on my face. I want to be in love again.

So, if I choose to have dessert, instead of having dinner,

Then should I die before night fall, I'd say I died a winner,

Because I missed out on nothing. I filled my heart's desire.

I had that final chocolate mousse before my life expired.

With that, I called the waitress over. "I've changed my mind," I said. "I want what he is having, but please add some more whipped cream!" Be mindful that happiness isn't based on

possessions, power, or prestige, but on relationships with people we like and respect. Remember that while money talks, chocolate ice cream sings!

### *Elderly speed king*

A senior citizen drove his brand new car out of the car showroom. Taking off down the motorway, he floored it to 150 k, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left. "Amazing!" he thought as he flew down the motorway, enjoying pushing the pedal to the floor even more. Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a police car behind him, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. "I can get away from him - no problem!" thought the elderly gent as he floored it to 170, then 180, then 200k. Suddenly, he thought, "What on earth am I doing? I'm too old for this nonsense!" So he pulled over to the side of the road and waited for the police car to catch up with him. Pulling in behind him, the police officer walked up to the driver's side of the car, looked at his watch and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 10 minutes. Today is Friday and I'm taking off for the weekend. I don't want to fill in any long forms for your speeding. If you can give me a reason why you were speeding that I've never heard before, I'll let you go." The man looked very seriously at the policeman and replied, "Years ago, my wife ran off with a policeman. I thought you were bringing her back." "Have a good day, Sir," said the policeman, and he left.

### *Hawaiian salute*

The other day I went up to a local Christian bookstore and saw a bumper sticker for my car that said, Honk if you love Jesus. I was feeling particularly happy that day because I had just come from a thrilling choir performance, followed by a wonderful prayer meeting, so I bought the sticker and put it

on my bumper. I was stopped at a red light at a busy intersection, just lost in thought about the Lord and how good He is and I didn't notice that the light had changed. It is a good thing someone else loves Jesus because if he hadn't honked, I'd never have noticed. I found that LOTS of people love Jesus. Why, while I was sitting there, the guy behind started honking like crazy, and then he leaned out of his window and screamed, "For the love of God, GO! GO!" What an exuberant cheerleader he was for Jesus. Everyone started honking! I leaned out of my window and started waving and smiling at all these loving people. I even honked my horn a few times to share in the love. There must have been a man from some hot country back there because I heard him yelling something about a sunny beach.

I saw another guy waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air. When I asked my teenage grandson in the back seat what that meant, he smiled and said that it was probably a Hawaiian good luck sign or something. Well, I've never met anyone from Hawaii, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back. My grandson burst out laughing. Why, even he was enjoying this religious experience. A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and started walking towards me. I bet they wanted to pray or ask what church I attended, but this is when I noticed the light had changed. So, I waved happily to all my sisters and brothers, and drove on through the intersection. I noticed I was the only car that got through the intersection before the light changed again and I felt kind of sad that I had to leave them after all the love we had shared, so I slowed the car down, leaned out of the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign one last time as I drove away. Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!

## *Hotel bill*

An elderly lady decided to give herself a big treat for her special birthday by staying overnight in one of London's most expensive hotels. When she checked out the next morning, the desk clerk handed her a bill for £250. She exploded and demanded to know why the charge was so high. "It's a nice hotel but the rooms certainly aren't worth £250 for just an overnight stop without even breakfast." The clerk told her that £250 is the 'standard rate' so she insisted on speaking to the manager. The manager appeared and, forewarned by the desk clerk, announced, "The hotel has an olympic-sized pool and a huge conference centre which are available for use."

"But I didn't use them," she said.

"Well, they are here, and you could have," explained the manager. He went on to tell her that she could also have seen one of the in-hotel shows for which the hotel is famous. "We have the best entertainers from all over the country performing here," the manager said.

"But I didn't go to any of those shows," she said.

"Well, we have them, and you could have," the manager replied. No matter what amenity the manager mentioned, she replied, "But I didn't use it!" The manager was unmoved, so she decided to pay, wrote a cheque and gave it to the manager. The manager was surprised when he looked at the cheque. "But madam, this cheque is made out for only £50."

"That's correct," she replied, "I charged you £200 for sleeping with me."

"But I didn't!" exclaimed the very surprised manager.

"Well, that's too bad," she said, "I was here, and you could have."



## *Call centre enquiries*

These are actual enquiries that were recorded in a call centre

Caller: Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?

Operator: I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand who you are talking about.

Caller: On page 1 of the user guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the printer from the wall socket and telephone jack before cleaning. So can you give me the number for Jack?'

Operator: The jack means the telephone plug on the wall.

Caller: If I register my car in France, and then take it to England, do I have to change the steering wheel to the other side of the car?

Caller: Where is the town of Woven in Scotland?

Operator: Woven? Are you sure that's the place?

Caller: Yes. That's what it says on the jacket label, Woven in Scotland.

## *Obedient wife*

A man who had worked hard all his life, had saved all of his money, but was a real miser when it came to spending it. Just before he died he made his wife promise him that when he died, she would put all his money into the casket with him. Soon he died and was laid out in the casket. His wife was sitting beside it, dressed in black, with her best friend sitting next to her. When they finished the ceremony, and just before the undertaker got ready to close the casket, the wife said, Wait just a moment! She had a small metal box with her which she put in the casket. Then the undertaker locked the casket down and they rolled it away. Her friend said, I know you were not fool enough to put all that money in there with your husband, so what happened? The loyal wife replied, Listen, I'm a good wife and I cannot go back on

my word. I promised him that I was going to put his money in the casket with him. Her friend was amazed and asked, You mean to tell me you put all that money in the casket with him? I sure did, said the wife. I got it all together, put it into my account, and I wrote him a cheque. If he can cash it, then he can spend it.

## *Legal Matters*

These are real answers people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and printed by court reporters.

ATTORNEY: How was your first marriage terminated?

WITNESS: By death.

ATTORNEY: And by whose death was it terminated?

WITNESS: Take a guess.

ATTORNEY: Doctor, isn't it true that if a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

WITNESS: Did you actually pass the law exam?

ATTORNEY: Can you describe the individual?

WITNESS: He was about medium height and had a beard

ATTORNEY: Was this a male or a female?

WITNESS: Unless the circus was in town I'm going with male.

ATTORNEY: She had three children, right?

WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: How many were boys?

WITNESS: None.

ATTORNEY: Were there any girls?

WITNESS: Your Honour, I think I need a different lawyer. Can I get a new lawyer?

ATTORNEY: Were you present when your photo was taken?

WITNESS: Are you kidding me?

ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

WITNESS: All of them. Live people put up too much of a fight.

ATTORNEY: How old is your son, the one living with you?

WITNESS: Thirty-eight, thirty-five, I can't remember which.

ATTORNEY: How long has he lived with you?

WITNESS: Forty-five years.

ATTORNEY: Is your appearance here this morning due to a notice I sent to your lawyer?

WITNESS: No, this is how I always dress when I go to work.

ATTORNEY: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

WITNESS: The autopsy started around 8:30 pm

ATTORNEY: And the man was dead at the time?

WITNESS: If not, he was by the time I finished.

ATTORNEY: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?

WITNESS: No..

ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.

## *Mammograms*

Many women are afraid of their first breast x-ray mammogram but there's no need to worry. Just take a few minutes each day for a week before the xray to do the following exercises, so you will be totally prepared, and you can do this right in your own home!

Exercise 1:

Open your refrigerator door and insert one breast between the door and the main box. Have one of your friends gradually close the door shut. Hold that position for five seconds, while you hold your breath.

Exercise 2:

Go to your garage at midnight when the cement floor is freezing cold. Remove your clothes to the waist and lie on the floor with one breast wedged against the garage wall until your breast is sufficiently flattened and chilled. Turn over and repeat for the other breast.

Exercise 3:

Put two small metal trays in the fridge overnight. Strip to the waist. Invite a stranger into the room. Press the metal trays against one of your breasts, squashing the trays together as hard as you can.

Now you have nothing at all to worry about when you go for your mammogram!

And just another thought: Did you ever notice how many of women's problems start with men?

MENstrual cramps, MENopause, and when we have real problems they suggest a HISterectomy and for that you have to go to a GUYnecologist!

## *Manners*

Little Emma returned from the birthday party and her mother asked: "Did you say 'Thank you'?" "Well, no," replied the little girl. "You see, the girl ahead of me thanked her and the mother said, "Don't mention it," so I didn't.

## *Manure*

A farmer was driving along the road with a load of cow manure. A little boy, playing in front of his house, saw him and called, "What've you got in your truck?" "Cow manure," the farmer replied. "What are you going to do with it?" asked the little boy. "Put it on my strawberries," answered the farmer. "You ought to live here," the little boy advised him. "We put sugar and cream on ours."

## *Pet fish*

A man was stopped by the fish-and-game-warden just as he was leaving a large lake which was well known for its great fishing. The man had with him two buckets of fish. The warden asked the man: "Do you have a license to catch all those fish?" "The man replied to the warden: "No, sir. These are my pet fish." "Pet fish?" the warden replied. "Yes, sir. Every night I take these fish down to the lake and let them swim around. After a while, I whistle and they jump back into their buckets, and I take them back home again." "That's a bunch of hogwash! Fish can't do that!" was the outburst from the warden. The man looked at the warden for a moment, and then said: "Here, I'll show you. It really works." "OK I've got to see this!" The warden was curious now. The man poured the two buckets of fish into the lake and stood and waited. After several minutes, the warden turned to the

man and said, 'Well?' "Well, what?" the man responded. "When are you going to call them back?" the warden prompted. "Call who back?" the man asked. "The fish!" the warden said. "What fish?" the man asked innocently.

## *Prawns*

Far away in warm tropical waters two prawns were swimming around in the sea. One was called Justin and the other was called Christian. The prawns were constantly being harassed and threatened by sharks that inhabited the area. Finally one day Justin said to Christian, "I'm fed up with being a prawn, I wish I were a shark, and then I wouldn't have any worries about being eaten." A large mysterious Cod fish appeared and said, "Your wish is granted." Lo and behold, Justin turned into a shark. Horrified, Christian immediately swam away, afraid of being eaten by his old mate.

Time passed and Justin found life as a shark boring and lonely. All his old mates simply swam away whenever he came close to them. Justin didn't realize that his new menacing appearance was the cause of his sad plight. While swimming alone one day he saw the Cod again and thought perhaps the mysterious fish could change him back into a prawn. He approached the cod and begged to be changed back, and, lo and behold, he found himself turned back into a prawn. With tears of joy in his tiny little eyes Justin swam back to his prawn friends. Looking around the gathering at the reef he realized he couldn't see his old pal. "Where's Christian?" he asked. They replied, "He's at home, still scared that his best friend changed sides to the enemy and became a shark." Eager to put things right again Justin set off to Christian's home. He banged on the door and shouted, "It's me, Justin, your old friend, come out and see me again." Christian replied, "No way, you'll eat me. You're a shark now, the enemy, and I will not be tricked into being your dinner."

Justin cried back "No, I'm not. That was the old me. I've changed ... I've found Cod. I'm a Prawn again Christian".

## *Trying out the Tazer*

A guy who purchased his lovely wife a pocket Taser for their anniversary told this story of what happened. He bought the pocket taser as protection for her against muggers. He said, Last weekend I saw something at Larry's Pistol & Pawn Shop that sparked my interest. The occasion was our 15th anniversary and I was looking for a little something extra for my wife Julie. What I came across was a 100,000-volt, pocket/purse-sized Tazer. The effects of the Taser were supposed to be short lived, with no long term adverse effect on your assailant, allowing her adequate time to retreat to safety.

Long story short, I bought the device and brought it home. I loaded two AAA batteries in the thing and pushed the button. Nothing! I was disappointed. I learned, however, that if I pushed the button and pressed it against a metal surface at the same time, I'd get the blue arc of electricity darting back and forth between the prongs. Awesome! Unfortunately, I have yet to explain to Julie what that burn spot is on the face of her microwave. Okay, so I was home alone with this new toy, thinking to myself that it couldn't be all that strong with only two AAA batteries, right? There I sat in my recliner armchair, my cat Gracie looking on intently, trusting little soul, while I was reading the directions and thinking that I really needed to try this thing out on a flesh and blood moving target. I must admit I thought about zapping Gracie, for a fraction of a second, and then thought better of it. She is such a sweet cat. But, if I was going to give this thing to my wife to protect herself against a mugger, I did want some assurance that it would work as advertised.

So, there I sat in a pair of shorts and a tank top with my

reading glasses perched delicately on the bridge of my nose, directions in one hand, and Taser in another. The directions said that:

A one-second burst would shock and disorient your assailant;

A two-second burst was supposed to cause muscle spasms and a major loss of bodily control;

A three-second burst would purportedly make your assailant flop on the ground like a fish out of water.

Any burst longer than three seconds would be wasting the batteries.

All the while I'm looking at this little device measuring only about 10 centimetres long, less than 2 centimetres in circumference, loaded with two itsy, bitsy AAA batteries, and thinking to myself that no way was it strong enough to do any damage to anyone. What happened next is almost beyond description, but I'll do my best.

I'm sitting there alone, Gracie looking on with her head cocked to one side, as if to say, 'Don't do it, stupid. I reasoned that a one second burst from such a tiny little thing couldn't hurt all that bad. I decided to give myself a one second burst just for the heck of it. I touched the prongs to the skin on my thigh, pushed the button, and ...

WOW! OH NO! OH NO! OH NO! ... !!!

I'm pretty sure Hulk Hogan ran in through the side door, picked me up in the recliner, then body slammed us both on the carpet, over and over and over again. I vaguely recall waking up on my side in the fetal position, with tears in my eyes, body soaking wet, testicles nowhere to be found, with my left arm tucked under my body in the oddest position, and tingling in my legs! The cat was making screeching sounds I had never heard before, clinging to a picture frame

hanging above the fireplace, obviously in an attempt to avoid getting slammed by my body flopping all over the living room.

Note: If you ever feel tempted to 'mug' yourself with a Taser, one note of caution: There is NO such thing as a one second burst when you zap yourself! You will not let go of that thing until it is dislodged from your hand by a violent thrashing about on the floor! A three second burst would be considered conservative!

A minute or so later - I can't be sure, as time was a relative thing at that point, I collected my wits, what little I had left, sat up and surveyed the landscape. My bent reading glasses were on the mantle of the fireplace. The recliner chair was upside down and 2 metres or so from where it originally was. My arms and right thigh were still twitching. My face felt like it had been injected with a dental pain killer, and my bottom lip weighed as much as the armchair. I had no control over the drooling. Apparently I had messed in my shorts, but was too numb to know for sure, and my sense of smell was gone. I saw a faint smoke cloud above my head, which I believe came from my hair. I'm still looking for my testicles and I'm offering a significant reward for their safe return!

PS: My wife can't stop laughing about my experience, loved the gift and now regularly threatens me with it!

If You Think Education is Difficult, Try Ignorance!

## *Garden snakes*

Australian Green Tree Snakes can be dangerous. Here's why. A couple in Townsville, in the north of Australia, had a lot of potted plants. During a recent cold winter, cold for Townsville that is, the wife was bringing some of the valued tender plants indoors to protect them from the cold night. It

turned out that a little green tree snake was hidden in one of the plants. When it had warmed up, it moved out of the plant and the wife saw it go under the couch. She let out a very loud scream.

The husband, who was taking a shower, ran out into the living room naked to see what the problem was. She told him there was a snake under the couch. He got down on the floor on his hands and knees to look for it. About that time the family dog came in and cold-nosed him on the behind. He thought the snake had bitten him, so he screamed and fell over on the floor. His wife thought he had had a heart attack, so she covered him up, told him to lie still and called an ambulance. The paramedics rushed in, would not listen to his protests, loaded him on the stretcher, and started carrying him out. About that time, the snake came out from under the couch and the paramedic saw it and dropped his end of the stretcher. That's when the man broke his leg and why he is still in the hospital.

The wife still had the problem of the snake in the house, so she called on a neighbour who volunteered to capture the snake. He armed himself with a rolled-up newspaper and began poking under the couch. Soon he decided it was gone and told the woman, who sat down on the couch in relief. But while relaxing, her hand dangled in between the cushions, where she felt the snake wriggling around. She screamed and fainted. The snake rushed back under the couch.

The neighbour, seeing her lying there unconscious, tried to use CPR to revive her. The neighbour's wife, who had just returned from shopping at the supermarket, saw her husband's mouth on the woman's mouth and slammed her husband in the back of the head with a bag of canned goods, knocking him out and cutting his scalp to a point where it needed stitches. The noise woke the woman from her dead faint and she saw her neighbour lying on the floor with his wife bending over him, so she assumed that the snake had bitten him. She went to the kitchen and got a small bottle of

whiskey, and began pouring it down the man's throat to revive him. By now, the police had arrived. They saw the unconscious man, smelled the whiskey, and assumed that a drunken fight had occurred. They were about to arrest them all, when the women tried to explain how it all happened over a little garden snake! The police called an ambulance, which took away the neighbour and his sobbing wife.

Now, the little snake again crawled out from under the couch and one of the policemen drew his gun and fired at it. He missed the snake and hit the leg of the end table. The table fell over, the lamp on it shattered and, as the bulb broke, it started a fire in the curtains. The other policeman tried to beat out the flames, and fell through the window into the yard on top of the family dog who, being startled, jumped out and raced into the street, where an on-coming car swerved to avoid it and smashed into the parked police car. Meanwhile, neighbours saw the burning curtains and called in the fire brigade. The firemen had started raising the fire ladder when they were still halfway down the street. The rising ladder tore out the overhead wires, put out the power, and disconnected the telephones in a ten-square city block area, but they did get the house fire out.

Time passed. The snake was caught and both men were discharged from the hospital, the house was repaired, the dog came home, the police acquired a new car and all was right with their world. A while later the husband and wife were watching TV and the weatherman announced a cold snap for that night. The wife asked her husband if he thought they should bring in their plants for the night, and that's when the man gave up!

### *The traffic warden*

Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting. Well, for example, the other day,

my wife Mary and I went into town and visited a shop. We were only in there for about 5 minutes. When we came out, there was a traffic warden writing out a parking ticket. We went up to him and I said, 'Come on, man, how about giving a senior citizen a break?' He ignored us and continued writing the ticket. I called him a dumb ass. He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn-out tires. So Mary called him another rude name. He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket. This went on for about 20 minutes. The more we verbally harassed him, the more tickets he wrote. Just then our bus arrived, and we got on it and went home. We try to have a little fun each day now that we're retired. It's important at our age.

## ***Older people short items***

### ***Thoughts for life***

1. Prayer is not a spare wheel that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a steering wheel that directs the right path throughout.
2. A car's windscreen is large and the rear view mirror is small, because our past is not as important as our future. So, look ahead and move on.
3. Friendship is like a book. It takes a few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.
4. All things in life are temporary. If it's going well, enjoy them; they will not last forever. If it's going wrong, don't worry; they can't last long either.
5. Old friends are gold. New friends are diamonds. If you find a diamond, don't forget the gold, because to hold a diamond, you always need a base of gold.
6. When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them. When you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you.
7. When God solves your problems, you have faith in His abilities; when God doesn't solve your problems, He has faith in your abilities.
8. A blind person asked: "Can there be anything worse than losing your eyesight?" The reply was: "Yes, losing your vision!"

9. Often when we lose hope and think this is the end, God smiles and says, "Relax, it's just a bend, not the end."

10. Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles, it takes away today's peace.

### ***Life lessons from a 90 year old***

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short, enjoy it.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and family will.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Stay true to yourself.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't mess up the future.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.

15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye, but don't worry, God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful. Clutter weighs you down in many ways.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to be happy. But it's all up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Light the good candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over-prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every "disaster" with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.

33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative of dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd soon grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. Accept what you already have, not what you wish you had.
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.

### *Gentle Lessons of Life*

A penny saved is obviously the result of a government oversight.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

He who hesitates is probably doing the right thing.



The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat have become really good friends.

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a new replacement for it.

Did you ever notice: The Roman Numerals for forty (40) are 'XL.'

If you think there is some good in everybody, you obviously haven't met 'everybody'.

If you can smile when things go wrong, you must have someone else in mind to blame.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so that he can tell when he's 'really' in trouble.

There's always a lot to be thankful for if you take time to look for it. For example, how nice it is that wrinkles don't hurt.

Eventually you reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Some people try to turn back their life's odometers. Not me, I want people to know 'why' I look this way. I've traveled a long, long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is comfortable.

## *The New Alphabet for older people*

A is for apple, and B is for boat,

That used to be right, but now it won't float!

Age before beauty is what we once said,

But let us be more realistic instead.

A's for arthritis;

B's for bad back,

C is for chest pains, perhaps car-di-ac?

D is for dental decay and decline,

E is for eyesight, can't read that top line!

F is for farting and fluid retention,

G is for gut droop, which I'd rather not mention.

H for high blood pressure, I'd rather it low;

I for incisions with scars you can show.

J is for joints, out of socket, won't mend,

K is for knees that will crack when they bend.

L's for libido, what happened to sex?

M is for memory, I forget what comes next.

N is neuralgia, in nerves way down low;

O is for osteo, bones that don't grow!

P for prescriptions, I have quite a few,

just give me a pill and I'll be good as new!

Q is for queasy, is it fatal or flu?

R is for reflux, one meal turns to two.

S is for sleepless nights, counting my fears,

T is for Tinnitus; bells in my ears!

U is for urinary; troubles with flow;

V is for vertigo, that's 'dizzy,' you know.

W for worry, about what's going round?

X is for X ray, and what might be found.

Y for another year I'm left here behind,

Z is for zest I still have in my mind!

I've survived all the symptoms, my body's deployed,

And I'm keeping twenty-six doctors employed!

### *Short funny comments on growing older*

Age is merely the number of years the world has been enjoying you.

When I was a kid I wanted to be older - but arthritis, can't see, can't hear, can't bend over, can't sleep ... This stuff is not what I expected.

Think success and be successful, Think positive and you'll succeed, Think old and you'll be old, Think young and you'll be a delusional old fart!

If you haven't grown up by age 50 - you don't have to.

If things get better with age then I must be getting close to bloomin' magnificent!

My parents had an old square black and white TV. I remember because I was the remote!

At the age of 65 my Grandma started walking 3 miles a day. She's 92 now and we have no idea where she is!

I have reached the age where my brain goes from, "You probably shouldn't do that" to "Who cares! Let's see what happens!"

The idea is to die young ..... as late as possible!

I hate it when I see an old person and then realise we went to high school together!

The full realisation of getting older is when you realise your little daughter is now a grandmother.

### *Quotes about grandparents*

True love is not Romeo and Juliet but a grandma and a grandad happily growing old together

Grandmas are mums with grey frosting on their hair. ~ Author Unknown

What a bargain grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million dollars' worth of pleasure. ~ Gene Perret

Grandmothers are just 'antique' little girls.

Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. ~ Welsh Proverb

Never have children, only grandchildren. ~ Gore Vidal

A grandmother is a babysitter who watches the kids instead of the television. ~ Author Unknown

Becoming a grandmother is wonderful. One moment you're just a mother. The next you are all-wise and a valuable antique. ~ Pam Brown

Grandchildren don't stay young forever, which is good because grandfathers have only so many horsey rides in them. ~ Gene Perret

When grandparents enter the door, discipline flies out the window. ~ Ogden Nash

Grandma always made you feel she had been waiting to see just you all day and now her day was complete. ~ Marcy DeMaree

Grandmas never run out of hugs or cookies.

Grandmas hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever. ~ Author Unknown

If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I'd have had them first. ~ Lois Wyse

My grandkids believe I'm the oldest thing in the world. And after two or three hours with them, I believe it, too. ~ Gene Perret

If becoming a grandmother was only a matter of choice, I should advise every one of you straight away to become one. There is no fun for old people like it! ~ Hannah Whithall Smith

It's such a grand thing to be a mother of a mother - that's why the world calls her a grandmother. ~ Author Unknown

Grandchildren are God's way of compensating us for growing old. ~ Mary H. Waldrip

You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. ~ Proverb

An hour with your grandchildren can make you feel young again. Anything longer than that, and you start to age quickly. ~ Gene Perret

The best baby-sitters, of course, are the baby's grandparents. You feel completely comfortable entrusting your baby to them for long periods, which is why some grandparents flee across the country. ~ Dave Barry

I wish I had the energy that my grandchildren have - if only for self-defense. ~ Gene Perret

Grandmother-grandchild relationships are simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love. ~ Author Unknown

Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children. ~ Alex Haley

Grandmother - a wonderful mother with lots of practice. ~ Author Unknown

A grandparent is old on the outside but young on the inside. ~ Author Unknown

One of the most powerful hand-clasps is that of a new grandbaby around the finger of a grandfather. ~ Joy Hargrove

It's amazing how grandparents seem so young once you become one. ~ Author Unknown

If your baby is 'beautiful and perfect, never cries or fusses, sleeps on schedule and burps on demand, an angel all the time,' you're the grandma. ~ Teresa Bloomingdale

Grandchildren don't make a man feel old; it's the knowledge

that he's married to a grandmother. ~ Norman Collie

Grandparents are similar to a piece of string - handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of their grandchildren. ~ Author Unknown

What is it about grandparents that is so lovely? I'd like to say that grandparents are God's gifts to children. And if they can but see, hear and feel what these people have to give, they can mature at a fast rate. ~ Bill Cosby

I am going to retire and live off my savings - what I'll do the second day, I have no idea!

The 3 stages of life:

1. You don't want to sleep but you have to
2. You want to sleep but you can't
3. You don't want to sleep but you drop off all the time

Nobody can help everybody ... But everybody can help somebody!

As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

### *The Golden Years?*

I cannot see  
I cannot pee  
My memory shrinks  
My hearing stinks  
No sense of smell  
I look like hell  
My body's drooping  
Have trouble pooping  
The Golden years  
Are now in sight  
My only thought is,

Well ... Yeah Right!  
The Golden Years  
Have come at last!  
The Golden Years  
Can kiss my ass!

Author Unknown

### *The Green thing*

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the older woman that she should bring her own shopping bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment. The woman apologized and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days." The young woman cashier responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

She was right, our generation didn't have the 'green thing' in its day. Back then, we returned glass milk bottles, pop bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same glass bottles over and over. So they really were recycled. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every shop and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But the cashier was right. We didn't have the green thing in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw-away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind and fresh air really did dry our clothes back in our early days.

Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that cashier is right. We didn't have the green thing back in our day.

Back then, we had one TV, or radio, in the house, not a TV in every room, and the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of a small country. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the post, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. We didn't have the green thing back then.

We drank water from a fountain or a tap when we were thirsty instead of demanding a plastic bottle flown in from another country. We accepted that a lot of food was seasonal and didn't expect to have it flown thousands of air miles around the world. We actually cooked food that didn't come out of a packet, tin or plastic wrap and we could even wash our own vegetables and chop our own salad. But we didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then, people took the tram or a bus, and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their parents into a 24-hour taxi service. We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint. But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the green thing back then?

## *When I'm an old lady*

When I'm an old lady, I'll live with each kid,  
And bring so much happiness just as they did.  
I want to pay back all the joy they've provided.  
Returning each deed! Oh, they'll be so excited!  
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll write on the walls with reds, whites, and blues,  
And bounce on the furniture ... wearing my shoes.  
I'll drink from the carton and then leave it out.  
I'll stuff all the toilets and oh, how they'll shout!  
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they're on the phone and just out of reach,  
I'll get into things like sugar and bleach.  
Oh, they'll snap their fingers and then shake their head,  
And when that is done, I'll hide under the bed.  
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

When they cook dinner and call me to eat,  
I'll not eat my green beans or salad or meat.  
I'll gag on rice pudding, spill milk on the table,  
And when they get angry, I'll run ... if I'm able!  
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

I'll sit close to the TV, through the channels I'll click  
I'll cross both my eyes just to see if they stick.  
I'll take off my socks and throw one away,  
And play in the mud 'til the end of the day!  
When I'm an old lady and live with my kids.

And later in bed, I'll lay back and sigh,  
I'll thank God in prayer and then close my eyes.  
My kids will look down with a smile slowly creeping,  
And say with a groan, She's so sweet when she's sleeping!

by Joanne Bailey Baxter by permission from her son David

## ***Military comments***

The Chief of Staff of the US Air Force decided to personally recruit some pilots and he saw two young twins. He looked at the first young man and asked: "Son, what skills can you bring to the Air Force?" The young man looks at him and says: "I'm a pilot!" The General gets all excited, turns to his aide and says: "Get him in today, all the paperwork done, everything, do it!" The aide hustles the young man off. The General looks at the second young man and asks: "What skills do you bring to the Air Force?" The young man says: "I chop wood!" "Son," the general replies: "We don't need wood choppers in the Air Force, what do you know how to do?" "I chop wood!" "Young man," huffs the general, "You are not listening to me, we don't need wood choppers, this is the 20th century!" "Well," the young man says, "You hired my brother!" "Of course we did," says the general, "He's a pilot!" The young man rolls his eyes and says: "So what! I have to chop it before he can pile it!"

What month do all troops hate? ... March

How different military branches use stars:

The Army sleeps under the stars

The Navy navigates by the stars

And the Air Force choose hotels by the stars

Two new sailors were talking about assignments they would like to get.

Sailor 1: "Someday I'd like to ride on a submarine."

Sailor 2: "Not me! I wouldn't set foot on any ship that sinks on purpose."

I tried out for the Marines but fell just short of their requirements ... So they put me in the Navy since I was a submarine.

Army rules: If it moves, salute it. If it doesn't move, pick it up. If you can't pick it up, paint it.

Air Force Pilot to a Sailor: "You're telling me that you're in the Navy but can't swim?"

Sailor: "You're in the Air Force. Can you fly?"

I'll lose my job in the Navy unless I make some drastic changes ... I have to take a course in anchor management.

At one Army base, the annual trip to the rifle range had been cancelled for the second year in a row, but the semi-annual physical fitness test was still on as planned. One soldier mused: "Does it bother anyone else that the Army doesn't seem to care how well we can shoot, but they are extremely interested in how fast we can run?"

A famous Admiral and an equally famous General were fishing together when a sudden storm hit. When it died down both renowned warriors were struggling helplessly in the water. The Admiral floundered his way back to the boat and pulled himself painfully in. Then he fished out the General, using an oar. Catching his breath, he puffed: "Please don't say a word about this to anyone. If the Navy found out I can't swim I'd be disgraced." "Don't worry," the general said. "Your secret is safe. I'd hate to have my men find out I can't walk on water."

The company commander and the sergeant were in the field. As they went to bed for the night, the sergeant said: "Sir, look up into the sky and tell me what you see?" The commander said: "I see millions of stars." Sergeant: "And what does that tell you, sir?" "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Sergeant?" Sergeant: "Well sir, it tells me that somebody stole our tent."

## ***Special needs child***

### ***Heaven's Very Special Little Boy***

A meeting was held quite far from Earth  
It was time again for another birth  
Said the angels to the Lord above  
This special child will need much love

His progress may be very slow  
Accomplishment he may not show  
And he'll require some extra care  
From all the folk he meets down there

He may not run or laugh or play  
His thoughts may seem quite far away  
So many times he will be labelled  
'Different,' 'helpless' and disabled

So, let's be careful where he's sent  
We want his life to be content  
Please, Lord, find the parents who  
Will do a special job for you

They may not realize right away  
The leading role they are asked to play  
But with this child sent from above  
Comes stronger faith, and richer love

And soon they'll know the privilege given  
In caring for their gift from heaven  
Their precious charge, so meek and mild  
Is heaven's very special child

### ***Heaven's Very Special Little Girl***

A meeting was held quite far from Earth  
It was time again for another birth  
Said the angels to the Lord above  
This special child will need much love

Her progress may be very slow  
Accomplishment she may not show  
And she'll require some extra care  
From all the folk she meets down there

She may not run or laugh or play  
Her thoughts may seem quite far away  
So many times she will be labelled  
'Different,' 'helpless' and disabled

So, let's be careful where she's sent  
We want her life to be content  
Please, Lord, find the parents who  
Will do a special job for you

They may not realize right away  
The leading role they are asked to play  
But with this child sent from above  
Comes stronger faith, and richer love

And soon they'll know the privilege given  
In caring for their gift from heaven  
Their precious charge, so meek and mild  
Is heaven's very special child

Author unknown

I am not a Down syndrome child  
I am a child who happens to have Down syndrome  
I am a person first

## *A Special Needs Child*

My face may be different  
But my feelings the same  
I laugh and I cry  
And I take pride in my gains  
I was sent here among you  
To teach you to love  
As God in the heavens  
Looks down from above  
To Him I'm no different  
His love knows no bounds  
It's those here among you  
In cities and towns  
That judge me by standards  
That man has imparted  
But this family I've chosen  
Will help me get started  
For I'm one of the children  
So special and few  
That came here to learn  
The same lessons as you  
That love is acceptance  
It must come from the heart  
We all have the same purpose  
Though not the same start  
The Lord gave me life  
To live and embrace  
And I'll do it as you do  
But at my own pace

Author Unknown

Some people call it  
Down syndrome  
But those who know  
Call it  
Down right great

## *A Friend Like Me*

Please don't be afraid of me  
I want to be your friend.  
And if you get to know me  
Your rigid thoughts might bend

Thoughts that I am different  
From others that you know,  
I really am no different  
And this I'd like to show

I live and breathe and laugh and cry  
I love to play and learn,  
I sometimes do things differently  
Which can cause some concern

You see, some say I'm special  
I guess this much is true,  
But if you were to ask me  
I'd say you're special too

We're all a little different  
No two are just the same,  
It's really something wonderful  
That way there is no blame

When things don't go just perfectly  
And others get confused,  
And say things like "poor child"  
And other terms they use

It's okay if you look at me  
And might not understand,  
It's okay if you touch my arm  
And even hold my hand



My life has many obstacles  
Much more than you could know,  
But that's not what I dwell on  
I'm me, that's all, and so ...

Please don't be afraid of me  
I want you just to see,  
How truly great and wonderful  
A friend like me can be

Author unknown

Not only is a child  
The baby of his parents  
But he is a child of God  
God knows where he is  
And what he needs  
God knows how he is  
And how to help him  
More importantly  
God knows who he is  
And what he is to achieve

*From the Church Primary children's  
songbook*

Every star is different  
And so is every child  
Some are bright and happy  
And some are meek and mild  
Everyone is needed  
For just what he can do  
You're the only person  
Who ever can be you

## ***Spiritual power quotes***

God never sends you into a situation alone  
God goes before you  
He stands beside you  
He walks behind you  
Whatever situation you have right now  
Be confident  
God is with you

When we pray  
God hears more than we say  
Answers more than we ask  
Gives more than we imagine  
In His own time and  
In His own way

Every day God thinks of you  
Every hour God looks after you  
Every minute God cares for you  
Because  
Every second He loves you

Only God can turn  
A mess into a message  
A test into a testimony  
A trial into a triumph  
A victim into a victory

When you have a problem  
Don't go to the phone  
Go to the throne

Broken things can become  
Blessed things if  
You let God do the mending

Every set-back  
Is a set-up  
For a come-back  
God wants to bring you out  
Better than you were before

Peace is not about  
Having all the answers  
It's about knowing  
The One who does

God's answer No  
Is not a rejection  
But a redirection

When God pushes you  
To the edge of difficulty  
Trust Him  
Because  
Either He will catch you  
When you fall  
Or  
He will teach you  
How to fly

Faith is like Wifi  
It's invisible but it has the power  
To connect you to what you need

Every day we have a choice  
We can let doubt beat us up  
Or  
We can let faith build us up

Sometimes God lets you  
Hit rock bottom  
So you will discover  
He is the rock  
At the bottom

Consider the fact that  
God closed that door  
Because He knew  
You were worth so much more

God is  
Never blind to your tears  
Never deaf to your prayers  
Never silent to your pain  
He sees, He hears and  
He will deliver you

Let your love for God  
Change the world  
But never let the world  
Change your love for God

Joseph waited 13 years  
Abraham waited 25 years  
Moses waited 40 years  
Jesus waited 30 years  
If God is making you wait  
You're in good company

Forgiving others  
Does not excuse  
Their behaviour  
Forgiveness prevents  
Their behaviour  
Destroying your heart

I pray  
Not wish  
Because I have God  
Not a Genie

God has your best interest at heart  
When a door closes you don't know  
What God is saving you from

Don't cling to a mistake  
Just because you spent  
A long time making it

Don't be afraid to fail  
Be afraid not to try

Don't ruin a good today  
By thinking about  
A bad yesterday

God will always bring  
The right people  
Into your life but  
You have to let  
The wrong people  
Walk away

God help me to focus on truth  
Instead of on the trial  
Help me give thanks  
Instead of giving in to fear  
Help me to choose joy  
Instead of anger  
Help me to trust in your power  
Instead of my own plan

For God has not given us  
The spirit of fear  
But of power and of love  
And of a sound mind  
- 2 Timothy 1:7

If you want to be happy  
You have to be happy on purpose  
When you wake up you can't just wait  
To see what kind of day you'll have  
You have to decide  
What kind of day you'll have

God doesn't give us  
What we can handle  
God helps us handle  
What we are given

Anything under  
God's control  
Is never  
Out of control

Every day may not be good  
But there is something good  
In every day

It is a great comfort  
To see a billion stars  
Held steady by a God  
Who knows what He is doing

Repentance  
Does not mean anything  
If you keep doing  
What you are sorry for

Follow your heart  
But take your brain with you

Never let a bad situation  
Bring out the worst in you  
Be strong and choose  
To be positive

Your beliefs don't  
Make you a better person  
Your behaviour does

When you change the way  
You look at things  
The things you look at  
Change

Let it hurt  
Let it bleed  
Let it heal  
And let it go

You can't start the next  
chapter of your life  
If you keep re-reading  
The last one

Stop focusing on  
How stressed you are  
And remember  
How blessed you are

Forget it enough  
To get over it  
Remember it enough  
So it doesn't happen again

You can't change what's  
Going on around you  
Until  
You change what's  
Going on within you

Don't compare the inside of your life  
With the outside of somebody else's life

Yesterday is gone,  
Tomorrow has not yet come,  
We have only today  
Let us begin  
- Mother Teresa

Do good, better, best,  
And never let it rest,  
Until your good is better  
And your better's best

You must learn to walk to the edge of the light,  
And perhaps a few steps into the darkness,  
And you will find that the light will appear  
And move ahead of you  
- Harold B Lee

We make a living by what we get  
But we make a life by what we give  
- Winston Churchill

The word listen contains the same letters  
As the word silent  
- Alfred Brendel

Life is fragile,  
Handle with prayer  
- Harold B. Lee

Stay in college  
Get the knowledge  
Work hard in all you do,  
If they can make penicillin out of mouldy bread,  
They can sure make something out of you.  
- Muhammad Ali

Service to others  
Is the rent you pay  
For your room here on earth.  
- Muhammad Ali

What you are thinking  
Is what you are becoming  
- Muhammad Ali

It's the repetition of affirmations  
That leads to belief,  
And once that belief becomes a deep conviction,  
Things begin to happen  
- Muhammad Ali

Don't count the days,  
Make the days count  
- Muhammad Ali

If my mind can conceive it,  
If my heart can believe it  
Then I can achieve it  
- Muhammad Ali

God picks up a nobody  
To become a somebody  
In front of everybody  
Without consulting anybody

When someone hurts you  
Let them know  
Then let it go

Samson slew 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass  
Every day thousands of relationships are ruined with the  
same weapon

God loves you too much to let you go on being what you are  
Because He sees what you can become.  
- Neal A. Maxwell

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going to

Don't let your ice cream melt  
While you are counting someone else's sprinkles

You will never 'find' time for anything  
You have to make it

There is a right-angle to every problem  
The try-angle

Do you have the courage  
To bring forth the treasures  
That are hidden within you?

Faith sees the invisible  
Believes the unbelievable  
And receives the impossible  
- Written by Corrie Ten Boom

Man says, Show me and I'll trust you,  
God says, Trust me and I'll show you

You don't have to be perfect to be amazing

Don't let fears about what you don't know  
Unravel the faith you have in things you do know

We don't marry perfection  
We marry potential

My father did not teach me how to live,  
He lived and let me watch how to do it

If you want to, there is a way  
If you don't want to, there is an excuse

The most important job a father has  
Is to turn the hearts of his children  
Towards Heavenly Father

The Holy Ghost speaks to our spirit,  
Satan speaks to our body

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going to

To live charity we must be  
Willing to be inconvenienced

**True**  
**Helpful**  
**Inspirational**  
**Necessary**  
**Kind**

Meekness is power under control

I sought to find the will of God  
And climbed the highest steeple  
But God declared,  
Go down again,  
It is among the people

Be someone  
Who makes everyone  
Feel like somebody

Nobody made a greater mistake  
Than he who did nothing  
Because he could only do a little  
- Edmund Burke

You'll never become who you were meant to be  
If you blame others for who you are now

There are mansions in heaven  
But God is not preparing the mansions for us  
He is preparing us for the mansions

God touches people to finish His work  
But God's work puts the finishing touches to people

Being happy doesn't mean everything is perfect  
But that you have decided to look beyond the imperfections

Faith is a noun, a gift based on personal righteousness  
Trust is a verb, something you choose to do  
Trust sustains faith during difficult times  
The reason we don't have strong faith  
Is because we don't trust God  
The great task of life  
Is to learn the will of God and do it

Nothing hurts more  
than being rejected  
by the one person  
you thought would never hurt you

I understand now that I am not a mess  
but a deeply-feeling person in a messy world  
I explain that when someone asks me why I cry so often  
It is for the same reason that I laugh so often  
It's because I am paying attention

We don't realise who we are  
because our memory of who we were  
has been erased at birth  
But Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ  
know who we always have been  
It is Jesus Christ who takes us  
from where we are  
to what we can achieve  
and where we need to be

This is my day of opportunity  
I shall not waste it  
- Thomas S. Monson

Your value doesn't decrease  
Due to someone's inability  
To see your worth

The object of prayer  
is not to change the will of God,  
but to secure for ourselves  
and for others  
blessings that God  
is already willing to grant,  
but that are made conditional  
on our asking for them

A baby  
Makes love stronger  
Days shorter  
Nights longer  
Savings smaller  
And a home happier

Anything that moves us away from God is sin

Let me love you  
A little more  
Before you're not  
Little any more

For I am of worth  
Of infinite worth  
My Saviour, Redeemer, loves me  
Yes, I am of worth  
Of infinite worth  
I'll be all He wants me to be  
I will praise Him  
I will serve Him  
I will grow in His love  
And fulfill my divine destiny  
- Janice Kapp Perry

No one understands  
how tiring it is  
to act OK and be strong  
when in reality  
you are close to  
giving up

Live simply  
Love generously  
Care deeply  
Speak kindly  
Leave the rest to God

The temptation to quit  
will be greatest  
just before  
you are about to  
succeed

Every person we will ever meet has infinite worth

## *10 Ways to Love*

Listen without interrupting  
Speak without accusing  
Give without sparing  
Pray without ceasing  
Answer without arguing  
Share without pretending  
Enjoy without complaint  
Trust without wavering  
Forgive without punishing  
Promise without forgetting

## *Courage*

You don't realise how strong you are until being strong is all you have left.

Being brave is faith in action.

Faith and fear cannot exist in the same place at the same time.

God's plan for me might be different from my plan for me. It is not always easier but it is always better.

Women of faith understand not only who they are, but Whose they are.

## Religious jokes

Members of the Presbyterian church were attending a conference in Scotland. After a couple of days of sitting on hard pews, a group decided to go for a walk in the countryside. Soon they approached a rickety old bridge over a river. They were so busy talking they missed the Keep Off the Bridge sign. A villager saw them step on to the dangerous bridge and yelled for them to stop. "Good afternoon," one of the ministers responded. "We're here from the Presbyterian convention." "I dinna care what religion you are," came the reply. "But if ye go much farther, ye'll end up in the river and ye'll all be Baptists!" The next day, after more heavy rain all night, the bridge was completely washed away. Two of the church ministers thought they would warn motorists of the danger. They stood by the side of a road holding up a sign that read "The end is near! Turn around now before it's too late!" A passing driver yelled, "You religious guys are nuts!" and sped past them. From around the curve, they heard screeching tires — then a big splash. One minister turned to the other and said, "Do you think we should just put up a sign that says 'Bridge Out' instead?"

"Whatever is wrong?" the pastor asked a young man who was looking very discouraged. "I need you to pray for my hearing," said the young man. The pastor put his hands on his friend's ears and prayed. When he was done, he asked, "So how's your hearing?" "I don't know," said the young man. "It isn't until next Tuesday."

A priest, a minister, and a rabbi want to see who's best at his job. So each one goes into the woods, finds a bear, and attempts to convert it. Later, they all get together. The priest begins: "When I found the bear, I read to him from the catechism and sprinkled him with holy water. Next week will be his first Communion." "I found a bear by the stream," says

the minister, "And preached God's holy Word. The bear was so mesmerized that he let me baptize him." They both look down at the rabbi, who is lying on a bed, his whole body in a plaster cast. "Looking back," he says, "Maybe I shouldn't have started with the circumcision."

Based on the song from Mary Poppins - Supercalifragilistic Expialidocious:

Gandhi, the famous Indian guru, gave up all his worldly goods to concentrate on meditation and finding God's will. He walked barefoot everywhere, ate very little, and often fasted, leaving him thin and with very bad breath. Thus he is often thought of as a super callused, fragile mystic, plagued with halitosis.

A young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to help the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church by hand. He notices, however, that all of the monks are copying from copies, not from the original manuscript. So, the new monk goes to the head abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up! In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies. The head monk says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son." He goes down into the dark cellars underneath the monastery where the original manuscripts are held in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years. Hours go by and nobody sees the old abbot. So, the young monk gets worried and goes down to look for him. He sees him banging his head against the wall and wailing. "We missed the R ! We missed the R ! We missed the R !" He is crying uncontrollably. The young monk asks the old abbot, "What's wrong, father?" With a choking voice, the old abbot replies, "We missed out the R. The word was ... CELEBRATE!"

So I called up the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Dali Lama, and he sent me a large goat with a long neck. Turns out I'd



got the phone number wrong and instead had phoned dial-a-llama.

A man dies and goes to heaven and the angel meets him at the pearly gates. The angel says, "Here's how it works. You need 100 points to get into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in." "Okay," the man says, "I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart." "That's wonderful," says the angel, "That's worth three points!" "Three points, is that all?" he says. "Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithes and service." "Terrific!" says the angel, "that's certainly worth a point." "Only one point? Wow! How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans." "Fantastic, that's good for two more points," says the angel. "Only two points!" the man cries, "At this rate the only way I'll get into heaven is by the grace of God!" "Yes," said the angel, "Come on in!"

A famous celebrity, known more for her looks than her intelligence, was sent on her way to Heaven. Upon arrival, a concerned angel met her at the Pearly Gates. 'I'm sorry, 'The angel said; 'But Heaven is suffering from an overload of goodly souls and we have been forced to put up an Entrance Exam for new arrivals to ease the burden of Heavenly Arrivals.' 'That's all right' said the celebrity, 'What does the Entrance Exam consist of?' 'Just three questions' said the angel. 'Which are?' asked the celebrity. 'The first is,' said the angel, 'Which two days of the week start with the letter 'T'. 'The second is 'How many seconds are there in a year?' The third is 'What was the name of the swag-man in Waltzing Matilda?' Now,' said the angel, 'Go away and think about those questions and when I call upon you, I shall expect you to have those answers for me.' The following morning, the angel called upon the celebrity and asked her 'Which two days of the week start with the letter T?' The celebrity said, 'Today and Tomorrow.' The angel pondered this answer for

some time, and decided that indeed the answer can be applied to the question. 'Well then, here is the 2nd question, 'How many seconds in a year?' The celebrity replied, 'Twelve!' 'Only twelve?' exclaimed the angel, 'How did you arrive at that figure?' 'Easy,' said the celebrity, 'There's the second of January, the second of February, right through to the second of December, giving a total of twelve seconds.' the angel considered this answer and returned to the celebrity. 'I'll allow the answer to stand, but you need to get the third question absolutely correct to be allowed into Heaven. Can you tell me the answer to the name of the swagman in Waltzing Matilda?' The celebrity replied; 'Of the three questions, I found this the easiest to answer.' 'Really!' exclaimed the angel, 'And what is the answer?' 'It's Andy.' 'Andy?' Yes, Andy,' said the celebrity. This totally floored the angel, and he asked 'How on earth did you arrive at that answer?' 'Easy' said the celebrity, 'Andy sat, Andy watched, Andy waited till his billy boiled.' So the celebrity entered Heaven.

A mother was teaching her 3 year old daughter the Lord's prayer. For several evenings at bedtime she repeated it after her mother. One night she said she was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the end, "Lead us not into temptation" she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail, Amen".

My sister's dog had been deaf and blind for years. When she started to suffer painful tumors, it was time to put her down. As I explained this to my seven-year-old son, he asked if Jazzy would go to heaven. I said I thought she would, and that in dog heaven, she would be healthy again and able to do her favorite thing, chasing squirrels. Jacob thought about that for a minute, then said, "So dog heaven must be the same as squirrel hell."

A young family belonged to a small country church. On Communion day, deacons would pass around the bread and juice, as the little boy called it. One Sunday, they attended a

church out of town that was more formal. What their church called bread and juice, this one referred to as the elements, a word the little boy didn't understand. As Communion began, the pastor said, "If the deacons will come forward, the elements will pass among us." The little boy was suddenly excited but his family didn't know why. Then he leaned toward his mother, whispering something that caused her to burst out laughing. With all eyes on them, she took him by the hand and made a hasty exit. All the way to the car, he protested. "Mum, we're going to miss the circus. The pastor said the elephants were going to pass among us!"

A man is talking to God. The man asks God how much a million years is to him. God says that it's a second. Then the man asks how much a million dollars is to God. God says it's a penny. So the man asked, "God can I have a penny?" And God replied, "Just a second."

A preacher was asking for contributions to the church's programme to buy food for the needy. The town gambler, who also owned the saloon and several other shady operations, offered the preacher \$500. "You can't take that," a scandalized deacon told the preacher. "That's the devil's money." "Well, brother," said the preacher, cheerfully accepting the gift, "In that case, the devil has had his hands on it long enough. Now let's see what the Lord will do with it."

A young boy was coming home from church one Sunday morning with his mother. His mother noticed he had a serious look on his face. "What's on your mind?" she asked. "Is it true what the preacher said about us all coming from dust and turning back to dust when we die?" "Why, Yes, it is," she said. "Why do you ask?" "Well, when we get home," he answered, "You'd better look under my bed, because someone's either coming or going!"

A distinguished minister and two elders from his congregation attended an out-of-town meeting that did not

finish until rather late. They decided to have something to eat before going home, but unfortunately, the only spot open was a seedy bar-and-grill with a questionable reputation. After being served, one of the elders asked the minister to say grace. "I'd rather not," the minister said. "I don't want the Lord to know I'm in here."

A taxi driver and a church minister died and are waiting in line to get into heaven. The angel at the door consults his list and says to the taxi driver, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter Heaven." The angel next greets the minister saying, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter Heaven." "Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a taxi driver, and he got a silken robe and golden staff while I got a cotton robe and wooden staff. How can this be?" "Up here, we work by results," says the angel. "While you preached, people slept; while he drove, people prayed."

The temporary Sunday School teacher was struggling to open a combination lock on the supply cabinet. She had been told the combination, but couldn't quite remember it. Finally she went to the pastor's study and asked for help. The pastor came into the room and began to turn the dial. After the first two numbers he paused and stared blankly for a moment. Finally he looked serenely heavenward and his lips moved silently. Then he looked back at the lock, and quickly turned to the final number, and opened the lock. The teacher was amazed. "I'm in awe at your faith, pastor," she said. "It's really nothing," he answered. "The number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling."

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

A. Ruthless

A minister told his congregation, "Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Mark 17." The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Mark 17.

Every hand went up. The minister smiled and said, "Mark has only sixteen chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying."

Doug was leaving church after Christmas services when Father McCarthy took him aside. "Douglas, my son," he said, "It's time you joined the Army of the Lord. We need to see you every Sunday." "I'm already in the Army of the Lord, Father," Doug replied. "Then why do we only see you on Christmas and Easter?" Doug looked to the right and to the left, and then leaned over to whisper in Father McCarthy's ear. "I'm in the Secret Service."

The pastor of my church hates to plead for money. But when the church funds were running low, he had no choice. "There's good news and there's bad news," he told the congregation. "The good news is that we have more than enough money for all the current and future needs of the parish. The bad news is, it's still in your pockets."

My boyfriend was working in the souvenir shop at Canterbury Cathedral in Kent, England. One afternoon he was talking with an attendant who worked in the cathedral when they were approached by two tourists. "Are you a monk?" one of the women asked. "No," the attendant explained, "I wear this robe as part of my job, but I'm not a member of any religious order." "Then where are the monks?" asked the woman. The man replied, "Oh, there haven't been any monks here since 1415." Hearing this, the woman looked at her digital watch and announced to her friend, "Betty, it's 3 o'clock we missed the monks."

We were celebrating the anniversary of the first Primary meeting held in 1878. The stake Primary presidency and the bishop were in attendance. Our Primary president gathered the children together and gave a short talk hoping to impress upon the children the importance of the day. She said how glad she was to see our special visitors and asked the children, "Does anyone know what the bishop does?" There

was silence. But finally, one little boy answered gravely, "He's the one you can move diagonally."

A mother was telling her three boys the story of the Nativity and how the Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the infant Jesus. Clearly giving it a lot of thought, her six-year-old observed, "Mum, a Wise Woman would have brought diapers and baby food."

Walking through the forest, an atheist hears a rustling in the bushes. Turning, he sees a massive grizzly charging towards him! He runs as fast as he can but trips over a tree stump and falls. As the bear raises a huge paw to strike, the atheist screams: "God! Help me!" Time stands still. The bear becomes immobile, the forest is silent, and the river stops running. Then the atheist hears a powerful voice: "You have denied my existence for years, taught others I don't exist and credited my creation of the world to a cosmic accident. Why should I help you?" "It would be hypocritical to ask you to show mercy on me," the atheist agrees. "But perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?" At that, the noise of the forest resumes, the river runs, and the bear drops to its knees, brings its paws together, and says, "Lord, for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful."

Two missionary elders arrived, new in town. They wanted to mail letters to their families back home. They stopped a young boy on a bike and asked him where the post office was. The boy gave them directions, and the elders thanked him. "If you come to church on Sunday," the elders said, "We'll tell you how to get to heaven." "I don't think I'll be there," the boy said, "You don't even know your way to the post office."

Giving a sermon one Sunday, I heard two teenage girls in the back giggling and disturbing people. I interrupted my sermon and announced sternly, "There are two of you here who have not heard a word I've said." That quieted them down. When the service was over, I went to greet people at the front door. Three adults apologized for going to sleep in

church, promising it would never happen again.

As part of his talk at a banquet, our minister told some jokes and a few funny stories. Since he planned to use the same anecdotes at a meeting the next day, he asked reporters covering the event not to include them in their articles. Reading the paper the following morning, he noticed that one well-meaning reporter had ended his story about the banquet with the observation "The minister told a number of stories but they are unprintable."

The teacher in our Bible class asked a woman to read from the Book of Numbers about the Israelites wandering in the desert. "The Lord heard you when you wailed, 'If only we had meat to eat!' " she began. "Now the Lord will give you meat. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, or ten or twenty days, but for a month — until you loathe it." When the woman finished, she paused, looked up, and said, "Hey, isn't that the Atkins diet?"

At a round-table discussion by various religious leaders they tried to answer the question "When does life start?" "At conception," said the Catholic priest. "No, no," said the Presbyterian minister. "It begins at birth." "It's in between," said the Baptist. "Life begins at 12 weeks when the fetus develops a functional heartbeat." "I disagree with all of you," said the rabbi. "Life begins when your last child leaves home and takes the dog with him."

We accompanied our son and his fiancée when they met with her priest to sign some pre-wedding ceremony papers. While filling out the form, our son read aloud a few questions. When he got to the last one, which read "Are you entering this marriage at your own will?" he looked over at his fiancée. "Put down 'Yes,'" she said.

A young parish minister about to deliver his first sermon asked a retired minister for advice on how to capture the congregation's attention. "Start with an opening line that's certain to grab them," the older man said. "For example:

'Some of the best years of my life were spent in the arms of a woman who was not my wife.' "He smiled at the younger man's shocked expression before adding, "She was my mother." The next Sunday the young clergyman nervously clutched the pulpit rail in front of the congregation. Finally he said, "Some of the best years of my life were spent in the arms of a woman." He was pleased at the instant reaction of surprise — then became panic-stricken. "But for the life of me, I can't remember who she was!"

A man left home for a holiday down south. His wife was on a business trip and planned to fly down to meet him the next day. When the man arrived he emailed his wife to let her know he had arrived, but mis-typed her address. Instead, his message went to the inbox of a woman whose husband had just passed away. When the grieving widow opened her email, she read the message, screamed, and passed out cold. The woman's daughter rushed into the room and found this note on the computer screen. "My darling wife: Just checked in. Everything is prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to being with you again. Your loving husband. P.S. Sure is hot down here!"

During a Sunday service, the pastor asked the congregation for their requests for special prayers. We heard the usual requests to pray for sick people and the acknowledgments for those who helped when a parishioner died. The somber mood was broken when the last suggestion was heard. A woman stood up and said, "My granddaughter turned 17 this week and received her driver's license. Let us pray for everyone."

My wife and I arrived late to a crowded religious convention where there was standing room only. We noticed some people got up to leave, and after they hadn't returned for several minutes, we took their seats. The woman next to us insisted that the chairs were taken. I assured her that we'd be glad to move if the people came back. Moments later we sang a hymn, and at its conclusion the music director asked all of

us to turn to our neighbours and say that we loved them. The woman at my side faced me and said, "I love you, but those seats are still taken."

Moses was walking down the street when he bumped into George W. Bush. "Hello," Bush said. "Nice weather we're having, huh?" Moses took one look at the President, turned, and ran in the other direction. The next day Moses was walking down the same street and there was Bush. Again he tried to initiate a conversation. Again Moses turned and ran away. Bush was tired of this bizarre treatment, so the next time Moses ran away from him, Bush followed. When he caught up, he asked Moses what was wrong. Moses said, "The last time I talked to a bush I spent 40 years in the desert."

A new bishop was visiting the homes of his church members to introduce himself. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was at home, but no answer came to his repeated knocks at the door. He waited in the garden for several minutes but then took out a visiting card and wrote 'Revelations 3:20' on the back of it and stuck it in the door. In church the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned to him. Added to it was this message, "Sorry I was not available when you called as I was in the shower - Genesis 3:10" Reaching for his Bible to check out the verses, he broke up in laughter. Revelations 3:20 begins 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' Genesis 3:10 reads, 'I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked.'

A monastery decided to start a fish and chips store. When the store opened, a client came in, and asked one of the clerics, "Are you the fish fryer?" "Oh, no," the cleric answered, "I'm the chip monk"

A man was driving to work when a truck ran a stop sign, hit his car broadside, and knocked him unconscious. He was fortunate it happened right outside a Shell service station and the people working there pulled him from the wreck,

called an ambulance and revived him. He began a terrific struggle and had to be tranquilized by the medics. Later, when he was calm, they asked him why he struggled so much. He said, "I remember the impact, then nothing. I woke up on a concrete slab in front of a huge, flashing red 'Shell' sign ... but somebody was standing in front of the 'S'!"

A burglar breaks into a house. He starts shining his light around looking for valuables. Some nice things catch his eye, and as he reaches for them, he hears, "Jesus is watching you." Startled, the burglar looks for the speaker. Seeing no one, he keeps putting things in his bag, again, he hears, "Jesus is watching you." This time, he sees a parrot. "Who are you?" the burglar asks. "Moses," the bird replied. "Who in the world would name a bird Moses?" the burglar laughed. "I dunno," Moses answered, "I guess the same kind of people that would name a vicious Rottweiler Jesus."

The pastor asks his congregation, "What would you like people to say when you're in your casket?" One congregant says, "I'd like them to say I was a fine family man." Another says, "I'd like them to say I helped people." The third responds, "I'd like them to say, 'Look! I think he's moving!'"

A nine-year-old boy was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday School. "Well, Mum, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, he had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then he radioed headquarters for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved."

"Now, is that really what your teacher taught you it says in the Bible?" his Mother asked.

"Well, no, Mum, but, if I told it the way the teacher did, you'd never believe it!"

A college student was in a philosophy class, where there was a class discussion about whether or not God exists. The

professor had the following logic: "Has anyone in this class heard God?" Nobody spoke. "Has anyone in this class touched God?" Again, nobody spoke. "Has anyone in this class seen God?" When nobody spoke for the third time, he simply stated, "Then there is no God."

The student did not like the sound of this at all, and asked for permission to speak. The professor granted it, and the student stood up and asked the following questions of his classmates: "Has anyone in this class heard our professor's brain?" Silence. "Has anyone in this class touched our professor's brain?" Absolute silence. "Has anyone in this class seen our professor's brain?" When nobody in the class dared to speak, the student concluded, "Then, according to our professor's logic, it must be true that our professor has no brain!" The student received an "A" in the class.

If anyone needs an ark, I happen to Noah guy.

A preacher trained his horse to go when he said, "Praise the Lord," and to stop when he said, "Amen." The preacher mounted the horse, said, "Praise the Lord" and went for a ride. When he wanted to stop for lunch, he said, "Amen." He took off again, saying, "Praise the Lord." The horse started going toward the edge of a cliff. The preacher got excited and said, "Whoa!" Then he remembered and said, "Amen," and the horse stopped at the edge of the cliff. The preacher was so relieved and grateful that he looked up to heaven and said, "Praise the Lord!"

A church minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. Then he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. Forgive us our trespasses." When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note "I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."

One Sunday a pastor told his congregation that the church needed some extra money for the building fund and asked the congregation to prayerfully consider giving a little extra in the offering plate. He said that whoever gave the most money would be able to pick out three hymns. After the offering plates were passed, the pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had placed a \$1,000 bill in the offering. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to personally thank the person who placed the money in the plate. A very quiet, elderly lady all the way at the back of the chapel shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. Slowly she made her way to the pastor. He told her how wonderful it was that she gave so much and in thanksgiving asked her to pick out three hymns. Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three handsomest men in the building and said, "I'll take him and him and him."

When I went to a Christian school, I walked into the cafeteria and there on the table was a plate of fruit. Next to it was a sign that said "Take only one. God is watching." Next to the fruit was a plate of cookies, which had a sign next to it, written by a fellow student, that said "Take as many as you want. God is watching the fruit."

One day a zookeeper noticed that the orangutan was reading two books, the Bible and Darwin's Origin of the Species. In surprise he asked the ape, "Why are you reading both those books?" "Well," said the orangutan, "I just wanted to know if I was my brother's keeper or my keeper's brother."

A bishop was upset when his wife came home with an expensive new dress she had bought. "How could you do this!" he exclaimed. "I don't know," she wailed, "I was standing in the store looking at the dress. Then I found myself trying it on. It was like the Devil was whispering to me, 'Wow, you look great in that dress. You should buy it.'" "Well," the bishop persisted, "You know how to deal with

him! Just tell him, 'Get behind me, Satan!'" "I did," replied his wife, "But then he said, 'It looks great from back here, too!'"

### *Church bill-board messages*

Adam blamed Eve  
Eve blamed the snake  
and the snake didn't have a leg to stand on

Message from God-  
Keep using my name in vain  
and I'll make rush hour longer

There are some questions that can't be answered by Google

Honk if you love Jesus  
Text while driving if you want to meet Him

Read the Bible, it's user friendly, plus we offer tech support here on Sundays

Church parking only - Trespassers will be baptised

Get in touch with God by knee mail.

Seen in Canada in a metre of snow  
Whoever is praying for snow - please stop!

What is missing from Ch--ch?  
U R!

How do we make holy water?  
We boil the hell out of it!

The best vitamin for a Christian is B1

Try our Sundays - they are better than McDonald's!

Can't sleep? Try counting your blessings instead of sheep

You are not too bad to come in  
You are not too good to stay out

Still can't sleep? Instead of counting sheep, talk to the Shepherd

Try Jesus. If you don't like Him, the devil will always take you back.

Life is hard. After-life is harder.

Where will you be sitting in Eternity? Smoking or non-smoking?

This church has been under the same management for over 2,000 years

Aspire to inspire before you expire

### *Typing errors in Church notices*

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services. To be read with suitable reverence:

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.  
The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5 pm - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement Friday at 7 pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

The Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 pm. Please use the back door.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 pm at the local church hall. Please use the large double door at the side entrance.

The Bishop unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday:

'I Upped My Free-will Offering - Up Yours.'



## ***Technical stories***

A girl goes into a computer store and asks the clerk “Where do you keep the curtains for computers?” The clerk answers with a puzzled face, “Curtains for computers? You don’t need curtains for computers.” The girl’s eyes widen and she shakes her head as she answers “Oh yes I do! My computer has Windows 10!”

Q. What do you do when your computer freezes?  
A. Put it in the microwave to thaw.

Q. How is a computer like an air conditioner?  
A. When you open Windows it won't work.

### ***How it used to be***

A computer was something on TV,  
From a Science Fiction show of note,  
A window was something you hated to clean,  
And ram was the father of a goat.  
Meg was the name of my girlfriend,  
And gig was a job for the night,  
Now they all mean different things,  
And that really mega bytes.

An application was for employment,  
A program was a TV show,  
A cursor used profanity,  
A keyboard was a piano.  
Memory was something that you lost with age,  
A CD was a bank account,  
And if you had a 3-inch floppy, you hoped no-one found out.

Compress was something you did to the garbage,  
Not something you did to a file,  
And if you unzipped anything in public,  
You'd be in jail for quite a while.  
Log-on was adding wood to the fire,  
Hard drive was a long trip on the road,  
A mouse pad was where a mouse lived,  
And a backup happened to your commode.

Cut you did with a pocket knife,  
Paste you did with glue,  
A web was a spider's home,  
And a virus was the flu.  
I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper,  
And the memory in my head.  
I hear nobody's been killed in a computer crash,  
But when it happens they wish they were dead.

Author Unknown

### ***The Computer Swallowed Grandma***

Author unknown

The computer swallowed grandma  
Yes, honestly it's true  
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'  
And disappeared from view.  
It devoured her completely  
The thought just makes me squirm  
She must have caught a 'virus'  
Or been eaten by a 'worm.'  
I've searched through the 'recycle bin'  
And files of every kind  
I've even used the 'Internet'  
But nothing did I find.  
In desperation, I asked Jeeves

My searches to refine  
The reply from him was negative  
Not a thing was found 'online.'  
So if inside your 'Inbox'  
My Grandma you should see  
Please 'Copy,' 'Scan' and 'Paste' her  
And send her back to me!

### *Grandchild's Guide to Using Grandpa's Computer by Gene Ziegler*

This is only part of the original poem he wrote in 1994

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,  
and the bus is interrupted at a very last resort,  
and the access of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,  
then the socket packet pocket has an error to report.

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,  
and the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash,  
and your data is corrupted cause the index doesn't hash,  
then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna  
crash!

If the label on the cable on the table at your house,  
says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,  
but your packets want to tunnel to another protocol,  
that's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall.

And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss,  
so your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse;  
then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,  
'cuz sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang.

When the copy on your floppy's getting sloppy in the disk,  
and the macro code instructions cause unnecessary risk,  
then you'll have to flash the memory and you'll want to RAM

your ROM,  
and then turn off the computer and be sure to tell your Mom!

### *Internet Proverbs*

1. Home is where you hang your @.
2. The email of the species is more deadly than the mail.
3. A journey of a thousand sites begins with a single click.
4. You can't teach a new mouse old clicks.
5. Great groups from little icons grow.
6. Speak softly and carry a cellular phone.
7. C: is the root of all directories.
8. Don't put all your hypes in one home page.
9. Pentium wise; pen and paper foolish.
10. The modem is the message.
11. Too many clicks spoil the browse.
12. The geek shall inherit the earth.
13. A chat has nine lives.
14. Don't byte off more than you can view.
15. Fax is stranger than fiction.
16. What boots up must come down.
17. Windows will never cease.
18. Virtual reality is its own reward.
19. Modulation in all things.

20. A user and his leisure time are soon parted.
21. There's no place like home.com.
22. Know what to expect before you connect.
23. Oh, what a tangled website we weave when first we practice.
24. Speed thrills.
25. Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to use the Net and he won't bother you for weeks.

### *Spell Checker*

Author unknown

I halve a spelling checker,  
 It came with my pea see.  
 It plainly marks four my revue  
 Mistakes I dew knot sea.  
 Eye strike a quay and type award  
 And weight four it two say  
 Weather eye am wrong oar write  
 It shows me strait aweigh.  
 As son as a mist ache is maid  
 It nose bee fore two long  
 And eye can put the era rite  
 Its really ever wrong.  
 I've scent this massage threw it,  
 And I'm shore your pleased too no  
 Its letter prefect in every weigh;  
 My checker tolled me sew.

### *Flight Maintenance*

All aircraft operators use a system to handle complaints of faults reported by the crew together with a note of the remedial action taken. Here are some examples with cynical replies by ground staff.

P - indicates the nature of the fault  
 S - the action taken by ground staff

Here are the faults that were reported:

P: Left inside of main tyre almost needs replacement  
 S: Almost replaced left inside of main tyre

P: Test flight ok except auto-land very rough  
 S: Auto-land not installed in this aircraft

P: Something loose in cockpit  
 S: Something tightened in cockpit

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear  
 S: Evidence removed

P: DME volume unbelievably loud  
 S: DME volume set to more believable level

P: Autopilot in altitude mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent  
 S: Difficult to reproduce problem on the ground

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick  
 S: That's what they are there for

P: IFF inoperative  
 S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode

P: Suspected crack in windshield  
 S: Suspect you are right

P: Number three engine missing

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search

P: Aircraft handles funny

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right and be serious

P: Target radar hums

S: Target radar reprogrammed with lyrics

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer

S: Took hammer away from midget

P: Mouse in cockpit

S: Cat installed

P: Dead bugs on windshield

S: Live bugs on order.

## ***Thoughtful items***

### ***An Angel By Any Other Name***

Author unknown

Once upon a time there was a child ready to be born. The child asked God, "They tell me you are sending me to earth tomorrow, but how am I going to live there being so small and helpless?" God replied, "Among the many angels, I chose one for you. Your angel will be waiting for you and will take care of you." The child further inquired, "But tell me, here in heaven I don't have to do anything but sing and smile to be happy." God said, "Your angel will sing for you and will also smile for you every day, and you will feel your angel's love and be very happy." Again the child asked, "How am I going to be able to understand when people talk to me if I don't know the language?" God said, "Your angel will tell you the most beautiful and sweet words you will ever hear, and with much patience and care, your angel will teach you how to speak." The child said, "What am I going to do when I want to talk to You?" God said, "Your angel will place your hands together and will teach you how to pray." The child said, "I've heard that on Earth there are bad men. Who will protect me?" God said, "Your angel will defend you even if it means risking life itself." The child said, "But I will always be sad because I will not see You anymore." God said, "Your angel will always talk to you about Me and will teach you the way to come back to Me, although I will always be next to you."

At that moment it was calm and peaceful in heaven, but voices from Earth could be heard and the child hurriedly asked God, "If I am to leave now, please tell me my angel's name." God said, "Her name is not important. You will simply call her Mum."

## *Beliefs*

While facing doubts about my faith in 2014 after returning from England I decided to write down what I did know, before worrying about what I was not sure of.

### *Before birth*

1. Our life did not begin at birth nor will it end at death
2. We lived as a spirit before birth and will continue as a spirit after death
3. We were taught right from wrong before birth
4. Jesus Christ was chosen as our Saviour
5. Lucifer objected and persuaded others to join him
6. We chose to follow Jesus Christ
7. We needed somewhere to live with plenty of opportunities to make choices and gain experiences, so the earth was planned and organised for us to come to

### *After birth*

1. We came to earth as a baby with no physical memory of before birth but when we learned about Jesus Christ we knew it was right because our spirit recognises truth
2. Those spirits who were persuaded to follow Lucifer did not come to earth and gain a body, so they continue to be spirits
3. God gave us commandments which are clear so we know how He wants us to live, but it is always our choice to make and God will not take that away from us
4. When we keep God's commandments we feel happy and relaxed because our spirit is living as it did before birth and

as it was always meant to

5. When we do not keep God's commandments we feel irritable, make excuses, blame others and our spirit feels diminished
6. Lucifer, also named Satan, knew us before we came to earth and knows the best way to encourage us to make choices that will move us away from God and towards his way of thinking
7. Whatever we do that moves us away from God is transgression. When we knowingly do wrong that is sin

In the pre-earth life we saw that Heavenly Father was a god with a body and we wanted to be like that. We knew that to gain a body we had to come to earth and forget all we had ever known before. Jehovah, who was later known as Jesus, was a god but was a spirit and did not have a body. There were several gods. The rest of us were not gods. Even before Jehovah came to the earth as Heavenly Father's only physically-begotten son Jesus, He was special, more special than we were, and a very loving being. Lucifer, who was later known as Satan, was a wonderful spirit and was called the Son of the Morning, which we know from the Old Testament in the Bible, and he may have been a god too.

There was great debate about 2 ways of living on earth. Lucifer's plan was that we would live on earth for a certain amount of time but not have to make any choices that would stop us returning to Heavenly Father, so none of us would get lost on the way, and our return to Heavenly Father was absolutely sure. In that way we would all be eternally grateful to Lucifer because we had all returned safely to Heavenly Father and received eternal life. We would think he was marvellous and shower him with gratitude and glory. Jehovah's plan was a lot more risky. We would come to earth and have to make our own choices with no guarantee that we would make the best choice. We may well fail and not get back to Heavenly Father and never see our spirit friends

again. We would learn a great deal in this way but it was a terrible risk. There was such strong concern about the risks attached that many spirits could not face the enormous uncertainty and chose the no-risk-guaranteed plan of Lucifer. It led not only to debate and arguments, but to fighting and eventually war broke out when Heavenly Father chose Jehovah's plan over Lucifer's.

The earth was created, but a better world to use would be organised, from existing elements. This was done by Jehovah and other gods who later came to earth but all memory of having been gods was taken from them. One of the gods who had helped organise the earth as Michael, came to earth as Adam, with Eve. They were given choices to make and were influenced by Lucifer, who was known as Satan on earth. Satan influenced Adam and Eve to make a choice that was in direct opposition to what Heavenly Father had asked of them. Apparently it was the only way they could see that they would be able to learn and progress. Because they made this choice they could not stay in the presence of Heavenly Father so had to leave, taking their future posterity with them. We also have to make choices, and some may have terrible consequences that we don't find until later. We can choose the choice but cannot choose the consequences - and all you will hear for ever after is the quiet sound of Satan's laughter.

There are 3 important questions we must work out for ourselves; Why am I here on earth? Where am I going after I leave this life? Where did I come from before I came to earth? Sometimes we wonder if we know anything at all, or if we really believe what we thought we knew. When you are on a train and it goes through a tunnel and everything gets dark, you don't jump off, you trust the train driver and stay on the train. It is the same with faith. It is not easy but we have to persevere and trust and keep on trying and not give up.

Olive Redmond 2014

## *Cans*

Graeme Dingle grew up in the South Island of New Zealand with mountains all around. He became a famous mountaineer and was interviewed on TV. He was asked why he climbed mountains and replied, Because they are there. Many years later he was caught in a blizzard on a mountain for a week in an ice cave, and had to have part of his feet amputated because of frostbite. He taught himself to climb mountains again and was later interviewed and asked the same question about why he still climbed mountains. He replied, Because I can. I thought this was a good explanation for the aims I have in my own life - Because I can. There is a quote which people thought was attributed to theologian John Wesley, but apparently he never said it, and nobody knows who did. However, it is still an excellent maxim for life no matter who said it.

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

This has become my own way of thinking in practical terms. A few years ago my grandson who was 7 years old was crying and I asked whatever was the matter. He sobbed that a man had died. I asked who it was but he did not know. His school teacher had told him that there had been a flood and a man had tried to rescue some children but got swept away in the flood and died. My grandson was distraught about this happening. I comforted him and when he had settled I asked what he thought we could do about it. I said we could not go and visit the man's family because they lived on the other side of the world. We could give some money if a collection was made and we could pray for them to be comforted at this

tragic time but otherwise there was little we could do about the situation. However, there are people all around us who are in pain or lonely who we could try and help. We can't take away their pain, or change the sad things that have happened but we can let them know we are thinking of them and feel sorry they have these difficulties to go through. He could include children at school in his games so they would not feel left out. He could make some biscuits with well-washed hands and take them to someone and perhaps his visit would cheer them up. He could start looking at situations around him and see if there was something he could do to show he cares about people. This would continue on to help him become an adult who would also look for ways to make the world a better place.

Olive Redmond 2020

### *Change your life*

While reading in the Book of Mormon, I realised something. The verse that started it was in Helaman 5:12 where young Nephi and Lehi remember what their father Helaman said to them before he died. He told them to make Christ the foundation of their life, and to make it as strong as a rock, so that "when the devil shall send forth (all his destructive forces), it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built ... It reminded me of a similar verse in 2 Nephi 4:27.

"Why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy? ..... Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul."

I did not realise for about 20 years that my thyroid was not working properly, and some of the signs of this are

depression and constant tiredness. I had to battle with depression for many years. I learned from a survey that about 250,000 people in New Zealand are on antidepressants. That's a huge number of people. There are only 2 or 3 million adults in the country, and that means about 1 in 10 of them are on antidepressants, and that figure is, presumably, not including the people who use alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs to "make the world go away."

The way we see people is quite often the way they will react towards us. If we have a cynical, critical view then that is often the way we are treated too. If we are happy in ourselves, then other people will usually be happy to see us too. If we are not happy and want to change that, the change must come from within ourselves. Whenever we look outside ourselves wishing we had a happier life, then we are looking in the wrong direction. We cannot look at someone else's life thinking they've got it better than we have because we really do not know the inside of their life. Surveys show how many millions of people live with war, famine and poverty. If we have a home, food and clothes then our life is so much better than a huge percentage of the world population. We may long for fashionable items we see in magazines or shops but if we get them we need to ask ourselves if we are really any happier than before. Often we may then be scared of losing what we've got. Things can be lost in a matter of minutes in a bushfire, or earthquake or burglary.

We want to live on the top storey of the house with a wonderful view of life, not in the basement only looking in the gutter. However, to live up so high we need a strong house and that means building on a strong foundation. Remember the song we teach little children at church. The Wise Man built his house upon a rock, and the house on the rock stood firm. The Foolish Man built his house upon the sand and the rains came down, the floods came up, and the house on the sand went Crash!

Four qualities to bring into our lives are: humility,

forgiveness, understanding and love. Humility helps us realise that everyone else's life is as difficult as ours. Forgiveness is for yourself because someone else may not even know you have forgiven them, but you will feel relief by not having to carry that heavy load any more. Understanding comes as you see that what happens in your life gives experiences that you will learn from. Love is not a sentimental, emotional state, but looking at the world and its people as your own people, seeing the starving child as your child, seeing the hurt woman in tears as your mother or your sister, seeing the jobless man as your father or your brother.

Returning to what Helaman said, Christ is the Creator and the only foundation worth building your life on. He wants us to be a success in life - that's what we were sent to earth to learn to be. We were not sent here to be a failure. Sometimes people say, "Well I can't do any better. After all, I'm only human." My answer to that is, "Yes, but you weren't intended to stay that way!" This is not the place we were intended to stay in forever. We are meant to progress and climb right out of this place. As a doctor once said to me, "The Creator didn't put us on a stairway going nowhere." We have to make ourselves climb those stairs. Often it's a real struggle to drag one foot after another, but we have to make ourselves do it. I have applied this thought countless times over the years, "There are many ways to success, but nothing works unless you do." We will make mistakes as this life is only an apprenticeship for the real thing, but the good advice contained in Helaman 5:40-41 can be summed up as "repent and cry, then pray and try."

Olive Redmond 2000

## *Children*

As a nurse I worked for nearly 10 years with children and their families in a children's outpatients clinic at a large hospital. Many of the children had major problems such as

cerebral palsy, diabetes, asthma, leukaemia. They did not have to stay in hospital overnight but if their parents felt unsure when they got home they knew they could always phone me and I would find answers for them from the paediatricians. An extremely few children were born with an undetermined gender. It was difficult to tell if the baby was a boy or a girl. This caused huge anxiety for the parents. Imagine them telling their family and friends that the baby had been born. The first question people always ask is, Is it a boy or a girl? The parents did not know what to answer. It was nobody's fault. It just happened. It could not be changed but like many other unexpected situations in life it had to be lived with and adjusted to as the child grew up.

As children grow older there are many conditions that are discovered such as autism, bipolar, OCD and LGBTQ that you can't see and nobody asked to have, but must be lived with anyway. That's not to say that people cannot live very happy lives, but there is usually a great amount of stress, discouragement and depression that overshadows even the most positive outlook. If somebody has a plaster cast on their leg we know how to help them because it is physical but emotional pain cannot be seen. I recently listened to an intelligent man with two university degrees explain how many years he spent in needless misery hiding the fact that he was gay. He was sure he would be ostracised if people found out. For several years he tried to change himself to what he thought was normal. When he finally accepted that he could be happy as himself, he was amazed to find his friends and family thought so too. He has since spoken publicly to hundreds of people, and written books that have helped thousands more to have a greater understanding of the challenges of being gay. I think there are enough difficulties in life already without adding to them needlessly by the way people are treated. As part of the children's song says:

If you don't walk as most people do,  
Some people walk away from you,



But I won't! I won't!  
If you don't talk as most people do,  
Some people talk and laugh at you,  
But I won't! I won't!  
I'll walk with you. I'll talk with you.  
That's how I'll show my love for you.

We are told in the scriptures in Ether 12:27-28 that we will have weakness to remind us to turn to God for strength. The actual words are not weaknesses but weakness. Not weaknesses like bad habits or faults that we can try and change, but that we recognise our weakness as human beings and acknowledge our need for a power that is stronger than our own. Many people either give up and drift from one comforting consolation to another, or throw themselves into work, to cope with life's challenges and disasters. It is easy to think that we can control our unhappiness that way, that either problems will go away if we ignore them, or we will win if we work hard enough. We may seem to be successful for a while but in the end that weakness will still be there. We can only be happy when we finally realise we must stop expecting our lives to be the way we want them to, and allow God to make our weakness strong. For He can make more of our lives than we without Him ever could.

My husband was healthy all his life, eating the right foods, and exercising every day, but he developed bowel cancer at the age of 70 which progressed to lung cancer a year later, which he died from. How does someone who had never smoked in his life get lung cancer? We just don't know! There aren't convenient answers to all our questions. As a nurse I gave kindness and care to all my patients. Then one of our sons died as a baby. After that, when I helped parents who had a child with a terminal illness, or who had died, that care became more personal. The parents recognised, without my saying much, that I knew a little of how it was for them. It came from personal experience and was more valuable than information out of a book. It is hard to understand why some people have so many challenges in their lives, but from it all

they and their loved ones can emerge stronger, and pass on that strength to others who need it.

Two of my grandchildren in two different families have Down syndrome. Their parents absolutely love them and so do their big brothers. My grandsons have learned patience, kindness and encouragement in a way they may not have done without those babies. My friends between them have children with bipolar, OCD, autism, gay, lesbian, suicide and terminal cancer. We don't know why these things happen but they are a fact of life. We may pray fervently for changes to our situations and not see answers in the ways we hoped. We may wonder if our prayers ever go beyond the ceiling, and who is listening anyway? It is like the children's song, Heavenly Father, are you really there, and do you hear and answer every child's prayer? Jeffrey R. Holland taught, Some answers to prayer come now, some come soon, but some do not come until heaven. In the meantime we learn by experience to be more understanding, accepting and forgiving, and less judgmental.

We are all fighting a battle of one kind or another, usually one of the dreaded D's; death, disease, disability, depression, displacement. For many people in the world it is an actual physical war. I was born near London, England, during the most widespread, terrible war in the history of the human race, World War 2. My parents had to grab their little ones out of our cots in the middle of the night and run to the metal shelter in the garden because of the bombing. There have always been people doing bad things right throughout the world, and no matter how well we try to live, bad things happen to good people. Considering all the legal books that have been written and all the laws that governments and world leaders have made, it never seems to work for long before people are fighting again. Jesus Christ got it down to just three words, Love One Another!

Olive Redmond June 2021

## *Essentials of life*

A talk given by Rulon Craven, NZ Temple President, April 2000.

### 1. Walk to talk - Talk to edify.

Don't shout out to people - walk to where they are, and talk quietly. Talk in an encouraging, positive way.

Go for a walk with someone and talk about the scenery, family and friends, things you're grateful for.

### 2. Learn to listen - Listen to learn.

Listening is a skill that needs to be practised to be learned. When you listen with your heart as well as your ears, other people trust you with things of their heart. When you listen in depth, you are amazed at what you learn. Teenagers do not communicate till 11 or 12 at night - maybe because by then parents are too tired to argue.

### 3. Discipline your words - Speak your words with discipline.

There is usually too much criticism and not enough acknowledgement.

Remember people of all ages need to get 'straight A's'.

Acceptance, Approval, Affection, Attention, Achievement, Appreciation.

### 4. Communicate to understand - Understand before you communicate.

Quick judgements may bring contention. You may have to look closely at your own behaviour, instead of another's. Repentance may be needed. This idea may not be welcome. Remember - Repent and cry, then pray and try.

### 5. Seek to know - Know before you speak.

Read the scriptures and other inspirational books, pray and listen to people who have gained wisdom, so you can gather information before you speak to someone, especially about a problem. Then pray again - Pray before you say.

### 6. Think to thank - Thank to edify.

Develop an attitude of gratitude.

If you p/raise someone, you raise them.

## *Some blessings for us are*

1. Increased knowledge. Everything that God has, does or knows - we will too. Our memory of the knowledge we used to have has been taken from us so we can pass the test here. When that knowledge is put back again after we die, together with what we learn here on earth, it will be incredible.

2. Faster thought processes. The human mind can think only one thought at a time, but when we become an exalted being we will be able to think many thoughts at a time, and will be able to read the thoughts of others. At present, Heavenly Father is the only one who can know our thoughts. Language will then be thought to thought.

3. Sight. Scriptures tell us God can see every living being on the earth at any one time. That is an incredible level of sight.

4. Travel. Man is confined to the earth. Spaceships break past gravity and enter a new sphere, but man cannot do that without the spaceship. Christ, as a resurrected being, came down from Heaven and could walk through walls.

5. Earth. The earth will be celestialised and become like crystal, and as clear as glass.

6. Resurrected bodies. There will be no deformities but there will be different classes of bodies.

Earth life is a training ground with experiences and challenges to prepare us. Our challenge is to keep all the covenants and commandments, to prepare and prove ourselves. If we could see all the losses, difficulties and disappointments we will experience in life, and see them stacked up against eternity, we would realise they are but for a moment.

### *Father*

When you consider the great and marvellous names God could be known by, you think of words like Wonderful, Almighty God, All Powerful, Supreme Being. It is all the more amazing then that the name God wants us to call Him is Father. He is our Heavenly Father. Two thousand years ago a man was entrusted to be the earthly father of the baby who would become the Saviour of the world. This leads us to realise the amazing trust God has given to men on earth in being fathers.

### *Some quotes about fathers -*

The greatest thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.

My father did not tell me how to live my life, he lived and let me watch as I grew up.

Great men are not born but molded by their fathers, and their fathers before them.

It's love, not DNA, that makes a father.

Children who are loved by their fathers become parents who love their children.

If you didn't have a great father - become one.

### *Forgive me when I whine*

The other day upon the bus,  
I saw a girl with golden hair  
I envied her, her prettiness,  
And wished I was as fair  
When suddenly she rose to leave,  
I saw her hobble down the aisle  
She had one leg, and wore a crutch,  
And as she stood, a smile  
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine  
I have two legs, the world is mine

And then I stopped to buy some sweets  
The lad who sold them had such charm  
I talked with him, he was so pleased  
If I were late 'twould do no harm  
And when I left he said to me,  
"Thank you, you've been so kind  
It's nice to talk with folks like you.  
You see," he said, "I'm blind."  
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine  
I have two eyes, the world is mine.

Then later, walking down the street,  
I saw a child with eyes of blue  
He stood and watched the others play  
It seemed he knew not what to do  
I paused a moment and I said,  
"Why don't you join the others, dear?"  
He looked ahead without a word,  
And then I knew, he could not hear  
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine  
I have two ears, the world is mine

With legs to take me where I'd go,  
With eyes to see the sunset's glow,  
With ears to hear what I should know,  
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine!  
I'm blessed indeed, the world is mine!

Author unknown, quoted by Hugh B. Brown in *Abundant Life*

### *God is on our side*

In the Bible we read, If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31. Imagine yourself as actually looking at all your difficulties like an army lined up against you. Then realize you have a backing that can overcome them all. As you face these enemies of yours, discouragement, frustration, disappointment, hostility, weakness, ask yourself, "What shall I say to these things?" And the answer is, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Now, spend a minute realizing that God really is on your side, He really is for you, and say these words out loud: "God is with me. God is for me. God is greater than all these things." Then visualize those people who are destroying your peace and happiness. They may be people in your past or in the present. They may be people in your work, or neighbourhood or in your own family. Now visualise them backing away, giving way before God's power. Make the words important to you by saying: "If God be for me, who can be against me?" If you keep using these words, they will give you a sense of God's presence and a feeling of victory. You will no longer be a victim but a victor.

### *Heather*

This story has special meaning to me because long ago as a nurse I helped look after a very special little girl who had cerebral palsy. I knew her for several years from her babyhood upwards as she had to come to hospital quite often. She could not speak and could hardly move without help but had the most brilliant smile that lit up the room. In the almost 30 years since I left that hospital I have never forgotten her.

Heather, as told by Heather's teacher Jean Ernstrom.

I have never forgotten how, in one fleeting moment, the Spirit was powerfully manifest to me through two bright blue eyes. The eyes belong to Heather, a nine-year-old girl with a keen mind, infectious giggle, and a determined spirit housed in a frame with great physical restrictions. Because of her disabilities, the simplest of life's activities are major tasks for her. Unable to speak, Heather sends messages with her eyes. She is quite efficient. A direct gaze means yes, and a blink means no. Through a series of questions, gazes, blinks, giggles, and facial expressions, Heather shares her vibrant spirit and brings joy to the lives of those who interact with her. As her therapist and teacher for several years, I have many times sensed that for Heather, as for many other children with disabilities, the veil seems very thin between earth and heaven. If she could speak, what could she teach me about the things of the Spirit? One Monday morning, Heather and I chatted about the previous weekend. Heather indicated to me that she had attended Primary, which is the young children's section at church, so I began singing some Primary songs. A smile broke across her face whenever she recognized a song. I sang her my favourite, "I Wonder When He Comes Again."

Then I asked her if she had a favourite song. Immediately her eyes focused on mine and I was suddenly faced with the challenge of determining which song she loved above all the

hundreds of others. Through a series of questions I discovered that her favourite song was one she had heard in Primary. She wasn't sure which songbook it was in, but knew it was about Jesus. I went through every possible song I could think of. To my dismay and Heather's disappointment, none of them was the right one. Heather refused to let the issue die. For some reason she needed the two of us to share her favourite song. Finally, I agreed to bring my Primary songbooks to school the following day and go through them with her. On Tuesday morning, Heather let me know in no uncertain terms that she wanted to find the song — now! We went through the books, but to no avail. She liked all of the songs, but none of them was the song. In desperation, I told Heather that if her mother could figure out the song, we would sing it. If not, we would have to live with the fact that we couldn't find it. Heather came to school the next day more determined than ever to find her song. Tucked in her wheelchair was the Church hymnbook. I positioned myself next to her and page by page, we made our way through. I sang the first phrase of each song, and each time Heather's eyes closed in a definite no.

Halfway through the book, I began to sing: "There is sunshine in my soul today." As if someone had stuck her with a pin, Heather jumped and smiled. Her bright eyes looked directly at me. Together we laughed and revelled in the completion of our three-day search. "OK, now we can finally sing your favourite song," I said. She smiled as I sang the first verse, and as I began the chorus she mustered all the effort she could and joined in with occasional sigh-like sounds. As I finished the chorus she looked at me steadily as if to say, "I liked that part." I was so grateful I had found the song! I asked if she wanted to hear the rest of the verses and she responded with a firm yes. Again I began to sing the second verse; There is music in my soul today, a carol to my King, and Jesus listening can hear the songs I cannot sing. Heather's reaction to that line was so strong that I stopped. I looked at her as the reality and significance of the moment

pressed on my mind. "Heather, is that what you like about the song?" I asked. "Is that what you want me to know? That Jesus is listening, and he can hear the songs you cannot sing?" She lifted her head and looked me straight in the eyes. The testimony had been borne. Feeling guided by the Spirit, I ventured to ask, "Heather, does Jesus talk to you in your mind and in your heart?" Her look was penetrating.

Knowing her close relationship with the Spirit, there was one more thing I wanted to know. With reverent anticipation I whispered, "Heather, what does he say?" My heart pounded as I viewed the clear look in her eyes as she awaited my questions so she could share her insight. I felt that the Lord gave me the right questions to ask as I took a deep breath and proceeded. "Does he say 'Heather, I love you'?" Her eyes were radiant as she confirmed that statement. I paused, swallowed, and continued. "Does he say 'Heather, you're special'?" Again, Yes. I paused again, with a lump in my throat, and then asked, "Does he say, 'Heather, be patient; I have great things in store for you'?" Heather's head became erect; every fibre of her being seemed to be electrified as her eyes penetrated my soul. She knew she was loved. She knew she was special. She knew she only needed to be patient because great things were in store for her. The moment seemed too sacred for further words. I leaned forward and pressed my cheek to hers. Without words, but through the bright blue windows to her soul, the truth had been made known. Yes, Heather, Jesus, listening, can hear.

### *Jesus folded the burial cloth*

Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection? In the Bible the Gospel of John 20:7 tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded, and was placed separate from the grave clothes. Early

Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She told them, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!' Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side.

In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, we have to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of those times. The folded napkin had to do with the master and servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. The table was set perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating. The servant would not touch that table, until the master was finished. Now if the master had finished eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers and his mouth, and would crumple up that napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the crumpled napkin meant, 'I've finished'. But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because the folded napkin meant, 'I'm coming back!'

So the message Jesus Christ gave was that He is coming back!

## *Light*

People are like candles. Most of what we see in a candle is the candle wax but we don't light that. The wax supports the wick but it is the wick that is the most important part of the candle which is what we light when we want to see more clearly. In the same way our bodies are what we see but the most important part of us is our spirit. Farming methods hundreds of years ago used a heavy wooden collar around the necks of two animals to attach them to a plough to churn up the earth for planting. The wooden collar was called a yoke and ensured that the two animals pulled together at the same time because they were standing next to each other. In the Bible in Matthew 11:29 Jesus said, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. When we work alongside Jesus we learn better ways of understanding people.

Jesus said, My yoke is easy, and my burden is light, meaning not heavy, but it can also mean that when we come close to Jesus we see situations more clearly because He is the source of all light. The word Light has at least 2 meanings: not heavy, and giving ability to see clearly. The closer we move to Jesus the more His light enables us to see why people make the choices they do. When we are offended or hurt by others we can more easily see whether it was thoughtless or intentional. Many people have huge painful disruptions in their lives caused by the anger of others in such times as war, divorce, illness and injuries. Some of the worst hurts are caused by people who have been badly hurt themselves and lash out in retaliation. Either way, Jesus took that burden for us in Gethsemane and Calvary. He made it so we can forgive and let it go. Jesus will meet us in our pain without judging us for what we have done. He is the first to meet us and the last to judge us. If we continue to be upset and hurt by other people we are discounting what Jesus has done for us and all people. In effect, we are saying we do not want the supreme

sacrifice He made in Gethsemane and Calvary. When we move nearer to the light of Jesus the shadows of life must automatically fall behind us. We all have disappointments and difficulties but can now see them as opportunities to learn. Then not only can we see more clearly but our burden becomes lighter to carry until it is no longer there.

### *Candles*

Candles are like people ...  
They can be beautiful to look at,  
like the candles we do not like to spoil by lighting.

They can bring happiness and laughter,  
like the candles on a birthday cake.

They can be plain but useful,  
like the candles we light in a power failure.

An older candle burns brighter and better  
than a new one, and gives more light.

Candles come in all shapes and sizes  
and colours.

No matter what a candle looks like though  
it is of no use until we light it ... and it is burned.

We too must use our life to its fullest  
even if it causes us pain sometimes.

When we blow out a candle,  
we still have the candle ...  
but where does the flame go?

When we die  
our body is left behind on the earth ...  
but where does our spirit go?

Our spirit is the light  
that glows within each one of us.

It is who we really are.

We must nurture our own spirit  
and that of others.

We must find out what it is  
we are to do in this life,  
and do it,  
until at some appointed time  
our candle is blown out  
and our flame flies free  
to join the greater light.

Olive Redmond May 2021

### *Love*

In the Olympics held in Spain in 1992 the runner Derek Redmond was ready to run in the 400 metres sprint. He had trained long and hard for many years and was ready to give it his all. Suddenly at only 150 metres into the race the worst happened. He tore a muscle in the top of his leg and fell to the ground in intense pain. He was in tears of pain and disappointment. Then some surprising things happened. He stood up and started to hop on one leg to continue the race. He was not going to let the injury beat him. He was determined to finish what he had started. The crowd recognised this and all around the huge stadium they were on their feet applauding him. Then another surprising thing happened. From out of the crowd ran Derek Redmond's father. He put his arms around his son and half carried him the rest of the way. Why? Because he loved him. Did Derek's father have to say it? No, he showed it, just the same as he had shown it all of Derek's life by helping him aim for whatever he wanted to achieve in life.

Because of my strict, reserved British upbringing, my parents never told me in words that they loved me. Quite the opposite. They never praised me either because they did not want me to grow up conceited. I never, ever heard the words, I love you until my husband said it. Even then, he hardly ever said it because he also had a British upbringing and was not used to saying it. One of his greatest regrets expressed a few days before he died was that he had not been able to tell me more often that he loved me. Both sets of parents did everything they possibly could for their children as we grew up. They sacrificed greatly to help us achieve whatever was good in our lives. They asked for nothing in return, not even a thank you, although that was always appreciated when it was expressed.

When I was a little girl, attending our local Baptist church, I would be given a small piece of paper to take home from our Sunday School lesson. Each week those pieces of paper had a different verse from the Bible printed on them. The one I most remember was the shortest. It said, God is love. As an adult I have been told that God loves me but have had difficulty knowing it because I didn't recognise love from my parents, or even my husband. That was not because they did not love me, but because I didn't know how to recognise it because it wasn't spoken about. Sometimes it is easier to see the good things in other people's lives than it is to see them in our own. Recently, someone suggested that we can learn to recognise the love of God by looking for, and teaching ourselves to notice, what we can be grateful for each day. Then thanking God for it. The more we do this, the more we will recognise God's love for us. There have been so many times when I have made or bought a beautiful gift for someone else and sent it to them, but never received any acknowledgement that they liked it, or even that it had arrived. I felt so let down and disappointed. That must be how God feels when we take for granted His gifts to us. If we want to feel the love of God it starts by us thanking Him for what we have been given, not just the good things, but for

everything. Even in the terrible disappointments in life we can thank Him for staying beside us. It is a choice we make to do this, it doesn't simply happen all by itself. The only thing that makes hard things harder is complaining. Sunsets still happen, rainbows still occur, plants continue to grow, trees start to blossom, whether or not we notice them, whether or not we express gratitude for them. They are not where the change is to happen. It is in us that gratitude will make the change. Our gratitude is a form of returning love to God. The more we do this the more we will recognise God's love coming to us. If we did not learn about love as children, we can still learn it as adults, it just takes longer that's all.

Olive Redmond 2021

## *My Son*

Deena Green wrote this story. A wealthy man owned houses, land, antiques, and cattle, but though on the outside he had it all, he was very unhappy on the inside as he and his wife were childless. He had always wanted a little boy to carry on the family legacy. Miraculously, after many years, his wife gave birth to a little boy. The boy was severely disabled, but the man loved him with his whole heart. When the boy was five, his mother died. The father grew closer to his special son. At age 13, the boy's birth defects cost him his life and the father died soon after from a broken heart. The estate was auctioned before hundreds of bidders. The first item offered was a painting of the boy. No one bid. They waited like vultures for the riches. Finally, the housekeeper, who helped raise the boy, offered a few dollars for the picture and easily took the bid. To everyone's shock, the auctioneer ripped a handwritten will from the back of the picture. This is what it said: "To the person who thinks enough of my son to buy this painting, to this person I give my entire estate."

The auction was over. The greedy crowd walked away in



shock and dismay. How many of us have sought after what we thought were true riches only to find out later that our Father was prepared to give us His entire estate if we had only sought after His Son alone? (see Matthew 6:31-33)

## *Meals*

An elderly man who lives near me was assigned by his doctor to have a cooked dinner delivered to him every day because he could no longer manage cooking for himself. This was a permanent need beyond what neighbours and friends could do. Volunteers from the Meals on Wheels service would bring the meal, chat for a few minutes to check everything in the house was all right, and then leave to go on to the next person on their list.

Sometimes people say I don't need to go to church, I can be a good person without it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is like the dinner on the plate, it will fill all our needs. The church is a group of people like the volunteers who deliver the meal and make sure all is well, or if not, provide further help. Sometimes the people at church are unreliable or don't do what we think they should, but they are not the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are the vehicle that brings it to us.

No matter how nutritious the meal is, it will only help us if we actually eat it, and not only that one but many more. A man was asked by his friend why he went to church when it was the same every week. The man replied that his wife had cooked countless meals and some were wonderful occasions like Christmas and birthdays but usually he could not remember most of the meals. However, he would be a very different person if he had not had them!

Olive Redmond 2021

## *Missing Persons*

While we were away on holiday in 1992, staying with friends several hundred kilometres from our home, Zara, our very old dog, was left alone for a few minutes to eat her dinner, and wandered away. As it was dark, and she was in a strange place, she did not know where to find us. As she had become very deaf we could not call her and spent hours looking for her around all the nearby streets. The next day as soon as it was daylight we searched again. After asking many, many people, we eventually found her along a very long driveway. She was cold, tired, and obviously as glad to see us, as we were to find her. Thinking back over the time that Zara was missing, it was less than 24 hours but seemed much longer.

While we were at church in that town, one of the speakers, who was a policeman, spoke about a family he knew, Darren, Anne and little Millie, who had gone for a walk around the nearby Mangaweka area. Darren and Anne were discussing something intently, and suddenly looked around and realised they could not see little Millie. Frantically they ran and searched. Mangaweka has very high cliffs dropping straight down to the river below, and to their horror they found that Millie had fallen down one of the cliffs and was lying on a ledge far below. They were relieved to see she was still alive, but did not know how they could reach her, and had to get to her quickly before she fell off the ledge.

They drove their car as close as they dared to the cliff edge, and Darren tied a rope to the wheel axle and let himself down the cliff face to reach little Millie. He found he could not climb up the rope again as he was then carrying Millie, so Anne ran as fast as she could to Mangaweka camping ground where people stay to do river rafting, and poured out her story. There were 5 or 6 people there and they all willingly helped her. They gave her the keys to their car, which was amazing because they didn't know her at all, and told her to drive to a place further down the river and they would meet

her there. Then they got out of their raft and sailed it down the river till they reached the place where Darren and Millie were, pulled them into the raft, and sailed on to where Anne was waiting in the car. Then they took the relieved family back to their car again. The policeman who was telling us about all this said it was amazing how many people had been so concerned to help straight away, to rescue a 6 month old puppy called Millie. If we are willing to do that, how much more is our Heavenly Father wanting to help us, and how much He hopes we will help His other children.

Olive Redmond 1992

### *Mouse Story*

Author unknown

A mouse looked through a crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife opening a package. He wondered what food it might contain, but was aghast to discover that it was a mousetrap! Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning, "There is a mouse trap in the house, there is a mouse trap in the house." The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, "I can tell this is a grave concern to you, Mouse, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it." The mouse turned to the pig and told him, "There is a mouse trap in the house." "I am so very sorry Mouse," sympathized the pig, "but there is nothing I can do about it but be assured that you are in my prayers." The mouse turned to the cow, who replied, "Wow, Mouse, a mouse trap, but I am in no danger because I am too big for it." So the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected to face the farmer's mousetrap alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house, like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see that it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had

caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital. She returned home with a fever. Now everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient. His wife's sickness continued so that friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well, in fact, she died, and so many people came for her funeral that the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide meat for all of them to eat.

So the next time you hear that someone is facing a problem and think that it does not concern you, remember that when the least of us is threatened, we are all at risk.

### *My left or your left*

After being injured in a car accident recently I was having my back examined by a chiropractor. He asked me to turn to my left. As he was facing the opposite way from me, I wondered if that meant my left or his left. My left pointed to the window, but his left pointed to the door on the other side of the room. He clarified it by mentioning the window. It was a good example for life. Two people can be in the same room, having completely opposite views and both are right. My husband David and I had a disagreement that went on for several minutes. Of all trivial things to argue over, it was a jug of orange cordial drink. I was putting water in the jug first to mix in the cordial powder but David said the recipe on the packet stated to put the powder in the jug first and then add water. I said it would go lumpy that way. David said we should follow the directions. We went on arguing for some time, with me using my experience in the kitchen and him using his experience as an engineer following directions. Most arguments seem to be over trivial matters when what we are really asking for is to be listened to and valued. Many years later when David was in hospital, dying, I realised most arguments are over things that really do not matter. After

that when a minor problem or disagreement arose, I would tell myself and other people, There are many things in life to worry about - and this is not one of them!

### *Newborn baby thoughts*

Written by Bishop H. Burke Peterson January 1973

#### *For little boys*

I have often wondered what would happen if the method of introducing a father to his newborn child were different. Instead of a doctor saying, "It's a girl," or "It's a boy," how would we react if each time a child was born, our Father in Heaven made this kind of introduction to the parents:

"Thank you for preparing this little body for the spirit I have created. Now I present him to you for a season to care for. Please teach him of me and of my Son. I so much want him back with me some day. It all depends on you. Remember this: He is loving. He will respond to teaching. He wants to learn. Please treat him with respect. The road will not be easy. Some of the time it will be most difficult. I want to help you raise him. Please call on me often for advice and counsel. Together we can help him fulfill his purpose on the earth."

#### *For little girls*

I have often wondered what would happen if the method of introducing a father to his newborn child were different. Instead of a doctor saying, "It's a girl," or "It's a boy," how would we react if each time a child was born, our Father in Heaven made this kind of introduction to the parents:

"Thank you for preparing this little body for the spirit I have created. Now I present her to you for a season to care for. Please teach her of me and of my Son. I so much want her back with me some day. It all depends on you. Remember

this: She is loving. She will respond to teaching. She wants to learn. Please treat her with respect. The road will not be easy. Some of the time it will be most difficult. I want to help you raise her. Please call on me often for advice and counsel. Together we can help her fulfill her purpose on the earth."

### *Olive's BLESSINGS*

Written for an Institute Class assignment 20 Aug 1999.

**B** Baptist church I grew up in, taught so much by really good people. Both parents who did not just send me to church but went as well

**L** Laughter that lightens the day, is a great medicine, and I love to laugh

**E** Education that taught me to read, learn and enquire

**S** Sailing to New Zealand where people were less restricted than England

**S** Searching every church for the right church until missionaries found us in 1971

**I** Independence and freedom are very important to me

**N** New friends who became old friends and more like family

**G** Growing and progressing - no matter how much we learn, there is always so much more to extend our knowledge and abilities

**S** Speaking with my family and close friends about the things of life that really matter

### *More blessings in my life*

Sunshine that adds sparkle to the world and gives me energy

A home to live in, in safety, which many people in the world do not have

Clean water to drink

A warm bed to sleep in

Wood for the fire to give warmth

People who speak kindly

Funny things to read, see on TV or computer that make me laugh

The knowledge of others that they are willing to share with me

My husband learning

My sons working

The opportunity to teach in Primary where the children actually want to learn

Being able to walk without pain

Having a computer to produce the words that help others

Creating craftwork that gives me and others pleasure to look at

Being part of an extended family, no matter how far away they live

Having a phone and computer to keep in contact with others

### *Our birth days*

Sunday: Ethan, Joshua; Monday: Moana, Alma, Jacob;  
Tuesday: Cancy, Caleb; Wednesday: David, Kyla, Beth;  
Thursday: Scott; Friday: Olive, Monique, Isaac, Nathan, Amy; Saturday: Owen, Craig, Fraser.

Monday's child is fair of face,  
Tuesday's child is full of grace,  
Wednesday's child is full of woe,  
Thursday's child has far to go,  
Friday's child is loving and giving,  
Saturday's child works hard for its living,  
But the child that is born on the Sabbath day  
Is happy and healthy and good every day.

Monday for wealth  
Tuesday for health  
Wednesday the best day of all  
Thursday for crosses  
Friday for losses  
Saturday no luck at all

### *Opportunities*

The other day I heard someone ask her friend if she had ever prayed hard for something and she had got the answer straight away. The friend replied that she always got answers to her prayers but most of them came after a long time of waiting, or the answer was not at all what she had thought it would be. I immediately remembered praying constantly for nearly 2 hours to have the labour contractions stopped with my 4th baby. The reason was that it was the day before our 1st son's baptism which was a big event in our lives. Friends were travelling from other parts of the country and all the arrangements and food had been made for everyone to enjoy this special time. Suddenly I went into labour, which was not part of my plan, even though by then it was the due date for the birth. I just needed one more day! I lay down praying to

have the labour contractions stopped, but they didn't. I went on pleading for nearly 2 hours and eventually the contractions stopped. The next day we had the baptism and everything was lovely. With relief that the event was successfully over, I prayed again that the birth contractions would start once more, but they didn't. Days went by and still no contractions. The next 2 weeks passed uncomfortably. By this time I was more than 2 weeks overdue and the obstetrician booked me into hospital immediately. The next morning he and the midwife started an intravenous medication to induce the contractions. While examining me he said to the midwife that he could not understand why I had not gone into labour sooner because the cervix was a quarter dilated already! I could have told him, but kept quiet. I had two things to learn at that time. In the first instance I was given what I asked for, but after that I had to wait until the Lord's timing for the next part.

The Bible Dictionary states, The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them. We show respect to God when we kneel down to pray, or if unwell or elderly we sit down, but sometimes we are in a difficult situation where we pray on the run, or we simply have constant communication with God throughout the day. However the prayer happens, God wants to hear from us. He is already part of our lives but wants us to include Him by our own invitation. Not only are we encouraged to ask for help we need, but should always remember to say thank you as soon as possible. It is like opening a channel to heaven when we say thank you. It is easier to pray for things we need, or want, but more difficult to have a prayer where we simply express thanks. Develop an attitude of gratitude. Notice things and people to be grateful for. A flower does not think of competing with another flower, it just blooms. A sunset doesn't care if we watch it or not, it will keep on being stunning even if nobody bothers to look.

A strong woman knows she has enough strength for the journey but a praying woman knows it is in the journey she will gain her strength. What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become through achieving your goals. Believe in yourself. Have faith in your abilities. All successful athletes go over in their minds the day's events many times before they happen, programming successful moves into their minds so that when the opportunities arise they are prepared. Get rid of negative thoughts by visualising yourself throwing them in a rubbish bin or into a river and watching them float away. Use only positive words about yourself. The mind can give back to you anything you want but can only give back what it was first given, so don't fill it up with rubbish. Little children often don't understand what we ask them to do because we use confusing ways of speaking. If a child is jumping on a chair and we say, Don't Do that, we have used the word Do. They hear that word Do and think that is what they are to Do. If instead we say Stop jumping, they understand better. It is the same for our own brain. We respond to positive thoughts and words clearly expressed. We are not creatures of circumstance but we are creators of it. All these changes in our way of living do not happen without effort. The man on top of the mountain did not just fall there!

For many years I dreaded Mother's Day. I would sit in church while people were saying nice things about mothers, but instead I was remembering the many times I had shouted at my children. This was particularly difficult when my children were around 10 or 11 or in their early teens. My husband was often not home, chasing his own business dreams and I was left to manage on my own with very little money. I constantly felt I had not done well enough for my children, which was a situation that had started when our first son was a baby. Because we adopted him as a newborn baby I was always afraid social workers would take him away if they thought I was not looking after him properly. I loved him so much I think I would have died if that had happened.

Later when I was able to give birth myself, I still had the feeling that I must be seen to be doing things right. When I went out to work full time as a nurse I felt guilty at not being at home with my children, even though I made sure they were all set for the day, and the washing was pegged out on the line before I ran for the bus at 7.30 am. Sometimes I really thought I would drop dead right there in the middle of the street with everyone on the bus watching - and me being the only person who knew how to do CPR! I made extra effort to attend every school interview and concert and a lot more. I remember running along the road in the hot sun to get to my youngest son's swimming lessons, having had to ask to leave work early, and panicking in case I missed the bus. Then hoping the teacher would not think I was lazy because I was 5 minutes late. We have to forgive ourselves and not feel guilty. We are told we must forgive others, but maybe the most important person to forgive is ourself. Without that forgiveness for ourself or others we put a brake on the energy we can receive from God. We are a divine creation meant to receive energy into our spiritual being. If we put a stop on that, consciously or unconsciously, it is like having an electrical appliance that is not plugged in and still expecting it to work. Similarly, we would not expect our car to work without putting petrol into it, yet we expect our spirit to survive when we do not fill it up with scriptures, prayers, or taking part in activities such as Family Home Evening.

It is no good talking about happiness to parents who have had to watch their daughter die of painful cancer, or others whose son has taken his own life, or others whose child died when run over by the family car in the driveway of their home. These are all conversations I have been part of as a nurse, but thankfully they are not everyday occurrences. Yet there is something else that causes unhappiness and stress, that many people do every day and think nothing of it. I refer to watching the six o'clock news on television. Stories of sadness and disaster are brought into the living rooms of people who not only do not know those being interviewed

but cannot do anything about the tragedies involved. Often children in the family home watch these same horror stories but do not have the emotional maturity to deal with them. We really need the antidote to all this sadness. Maybe the antidote is not difficult to find and costs very little money. Could the answer be as simple as a smile? A smile we give to others, or they give to us, or even that we give to ourselves? We talk about service with a smile, but that is often what service to others gives to us. When we give to others, we often end up being given to ourselves, not in material things but in a feeling of increased happiness.

So here's the homework! Every day for a month, write down one thing that made you smile and another thing you are glad you noticed during your day. To make it even more memorable, if you have a family around you, or reachable by email, phone or post, write something every day that you are glad of about them, and let them know. If you have no family, include your friends. If you have no friends - you may have moved to a new home - then look for some voluntary work you could become involved in. If the Coronavirus pandemic has taught us one thing it is that life could be very short and not to take it for granted. As Thomas S Monson said, This is my day of opportunity, I shall not waste it.

Olive Redmond 2021

### *Satan's hold over people*

While reading Alma 42 I suddenly realised what verse 6 really meant: But behold, it was appointed unto man to die — therefore, as they were cut off from the tree of life they should be cut off from the face of the earth — and man became lost forever, yea, they became fallen man. I must have read it over 20 times in my life and never realised its full meaning before. It means that Satan's plan was rejected in the premortal existence, so he tried again by a different

route with Adam and Eve, and won. Heavenly Father's spirit children that would be sent to earth, that's us, would be cut off from Him just as effectively as those that followed Satan in the premortal existence.

Jesus Christ and other gods organised the elements to form the earth, oxygen, sunlight, plants, sealife, birds, animals and then mankind. Then they had to stand back and watch as Eve and then Adam broke the commandment not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Jesus Christ and the other gods were not allowed to help Adam and Eve in this matter because they had to choose for themselves. Because they had broken a commandment they had to be cast out of God's presence in the Garden of Eden as no unclean thing can enter His presence. Angels were set to guard the Tree of Life so they could not eat the fruit that had the power of everlasting life. If they had done that, the casting out from Heavenly Father's presence would last for eternity with nothing that could alter it.

Satan told Eve part of the truth by informing her of the advantages of eating the fruit, but left out the knowledge of the consequences, so she made only a partially informed choice. She wanted to gain knowledge and thought by eating the fruit of that tree she would be making progress. She was not aware her action carried such dire consequences. That only became apparent to her after she gained the knowledge from her action. In fact most of the consequences did not become known to Eve or Adam until much later. Eve told Satan she could not eat of the fruit as she had been told she would die. God our Heavenly Father had told her, In the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die. Satan assured her that this was not so but she would be like the gods knowing good from evil. Satan told part of the truth in that Eve did not drop dead the day she ate the fruit, but as soon as Adam and Eve had eaten of the fruit their bodies began to die, and within a thousand years they had died. A thousand years to God is as one day. So it was the truth from two different perspectives.

God knew Adam and Eve would then have children. Spirits would have to be sent from our Heavenly Father to enter the bodies of those children. There was no choice about that. They had to come from somewhere. That action was set in motion as soon as Adam and Eve made their choice to break the commandment. Verse 6 states; Man became lost forever, yea, they became fallen man. This means they were exactly like the approximately one third of all the spirits that followed Satan in the premortal life. We learn about this in the Book of Revelation at the end of the Bible.

Satan tried in the premortal life to have his plan accepted whereby all the spirits would be able to gain physical bodies. By not allowing any choices for them he would ensure they all returned safely to Heavenly Father with their body and spirit intact and undamaged. In return he asked for a great part of the glory of Heavenly Father for himself. He hoped to be an equal with Heavenly Father. His plan was not accepted, so he tried a different way by persuading Eve, and getting her to go to Adam, who had already refused Satan. She was to present him with a situation in which he had very little choice if he wanted to stay with Eve and fulfil God's first commandment to them to have children. Satan would have won at last even though it had taken longer than he hoped. He would now be in control of all the spirit children of our Heavenly Father.

The plan created in the premortal existence by Jesus Christ was then put into action. Our choice is whether we accept that plan or Satan's persuasion. Just like Eve, we will make some choices not realising the full consequences until they are revealed as time goes on. We will regret some of those choices, and be sorry. If we are sorry we learn to do better in the future, which is good, but if we are sorry to God as well and change our lives, that is repentance which carries with it the power to wipe out the everlasting consequences of that wrongdoing. It helps if we can find a way to change some of the earthly consequences of that wrong too.

After we die we will have to suffer the pain we inflicted on others with our thoughtlessness and wrongdoing. Everything we sincerely repent of and try to put right on this earth is one thing less we have to suffer for after we die. Most people do not know that. Repentance is more than feeling sorry for wrong doing. It is making a definite change and turning away from wrongdoing. In fact, it is even more than that, it is not only turning away from wrongdoing but turning towards Jesus Christ.

In the Premortal life we were with God but not like God. We wanted to be like God. So the world was organised. It did not just happen. As with all of us as mortal beings our first parents made wrong decisions. We call this the Fall. Before the Fall Adam and Eve were in a state of innocence and talked directly with God. All of us on earth are in a state of innocence until the age of about 8 years by which time we know right from wrong and must be given challenges and choices to make. The Fall caused 2 kinds of death, physical death and spiritual death. Physical death is separation of the physical body from the spiritual body. Spiritual death is separation of the spiritual body from God. After our physical death we shall one day be resurrected and our physical body will be joined again to our spiritual body. We do not have to do anything to make this happen. It is all due to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is through His grace and power that we are all saved from everlasting death. We do not have to do anything to earn it, but we express our immense gratitude to Him through our actions in doing what He has asked of us. Jesus Christ has redeemed everyone. Redeemed means to bring back. You can't bring back something that was not there in the first place. It indicates that we were once with our Heavenly Father and after our death we may return to Him. It means that all people, good or evil, will have their physical body back, joined to their spirit, and be back in the presence of God. It does not mean that we shall stay in the presence of God but will have to go there first for our lives and actions to be judged before being assigned onwards.

Everlasting life is about living forever after we leave this earth. Eternal life is about living forever with our Eternal Heavenly Father.

Olive Redmond 2020

### *Second marriages*

My mother's parents refused to go to her wedding. There were several reasons for this. My mother was the housekeeper for my father after his 1st wife died leaving him with 2 babies to bring up. Neighbours assumed they were living together without marriage and when her parents heard about it they assumed the same thing, even though many years later my mother assured me it was not true. Also, my mother was marrying a man over 20 years older than herself, and her own mother had done exactly the same thing, and that husband had died leaving her with 2 babies too. She later married her 2nd husband whose 1st wife had died in childbirth with twins. So there was a lot of justifiable concern following years of emotional trauma and my mother's mother wanted to spare her that.

I grew up in a home blighted by constant arguments which were mainly caused by the fact that my father really never stopped thinking of my mother as his housekeeper. When they first got married he kept a photo of his first wife on the bedroom shelf. My mother found it hurtful to have the first wife looking at her in the bedroom, and would turn it to face the wall, only to have it turned back by my father. She also thought of him as Daddy and I hardly ever heard her call him Will which was his name. They loved each other but in a very British way which meant they never talked about it. My husband David grew up in a home also disrupted by great arguments, mainly caused by having his grandmother live with them for 30 years after the death of her husband when David was 5. Again there was the British way of never talking



about your feelings. My parents never told me they loved me or even that I had done well with something. Many years later when I asked my mother why that was she replied it was so we would not grow up conceited. So we both brought to our marriage this inability to discuss our feelings because we had never seen it in the homes we grew up in.

Many years later in New Zealand my best friend died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage leaving a year old toddler to be brought up by her father. About 10 years later he married again to a woman with an 11 year old daughter. As time went on the 2 girls did not get on and the 2nd wife did not like the new daughter. Eventually, the marriage broke up and the father was on his own again with his teenage daughter. Realistically that marriage probably would not have lasted anyway, but it was greatly hampered by the fact that the husband was still in love with his deceased wife and the new wife could not compete with a ghost. Another 10 years went by and he married again to a woman, previously unmarried and with no children and they are very happy.

Russell M Nelson was married almost 60 years when his beloved wife died suddenly from a heart attack. He was crippled by grief for over a year but knew he was to marry again. He married Wendy Watson, also a woman previously unmarried and with no children. It is obvious to anyone watching them that they love each other and look for ways to care for each other's every need wherever possible. They hosted an online event in 2021 in which they mentioned the 'W' questions. Not just Why am I here on earth, but Why at this particular time and place? What did I commit and even covenant to do while on the earth? We understand that all previous knowledge was taken from us at birth so we would learn bit by bit as we progress. As we look for truth we will find it because we are not only a body but a spirit and our spirit recognises truth because that is what we knew before we were born. We are like a candle where the wax surrounds the wick just as the body supports the spirit, but it is the wick that produces the light. Jesus said He is the way, the truth

and the light. A business or school may write their mission statement, but we already have a mission that was prepared for us before we were born. What we need to do is discern what it is. What does God want me to do? It is more about remembering it rather than researching it. This is not a quick or easy process. It takes time, effort, prayer, and service to others. God uses people to complete His work, but He also uses His work to complete His people. There are TV shows where a house is renovated for a poor couple and at first they love it, but later follow-up has found that many do not have the income or knowledge of how to cope with the upkeep of their wonderful home and it has to be sold. As we progress in the gospel of Jesus Christ we learn through responsibilities in the home and at church, even though it is often tough and we think we cannot keep going. Jesus taught there are many mansions in heaven. He is not preparing the mansions for us but preparing us for the mansions.

When anyone is planning a new and important step in life there will be opposition. This will refine us and keep our mind on the goal ahead. At such times we often get so busy we forget prayer and study of the scriptures, or put it off until a more convenient time, but once put off it is easier to put it off again and again until it is a long way away from us. If you knew a child had disappeared, not only would you search, but would call out all your neighbours and extended family to join in the search until that child was found. When you search with that same determination for knowledge, you will find it.

In so many marriages where a spouse dies unexpectedly, the remaining spouse is left not only to mourn but to idealise that person, often glossing over faults that were there, or that would have been found if the person had lived longer. Sometimes people purposely remain sad because they think it is disrespectful to the memory of the deceased person, and that they should not laugh or find someone else to be happy with because they will feel guilty. We all come to this earth from somewhere else, and go on to somewhere else when we

leave it. We simply want those we love to be happy while they are alive and to learn what they came to earth to learn. If we marry again it is as useless to wonder why the second spouse does not do what the first spouse used to do, as to wonder why it does not snow in summer. They are 2 completely different seasons and 2 different people. We are all just ordinary people trying to make our way through life without causing too much havoc.

Very often we marry someone who has the opposite attributes as ourselves. We sometimes hear the phrase that the other person 'completes me'. It needs to be remembered that marriage is a partnership and we need the two halves to be different to make a complete whole. It is only in the last 100 years or so that people have been able to marry for love. Before that time, if you knew someone in your village who had a job, or could cook and look after a house, then you married them. If they were fairly presentable then that was a bonus. That very situation of being able to marry for love has put an extra expectation on us to believe that the romantic time before marriage will continue after the wedding. That was never meant to happen. Making a home together requires us to go to work to provide the income, and to work at home to make a home. Romance is nice for birthdays, Christmas and Valentine's day but realistically there is not enough money to plan for much more than that and still be able to pay the rent and power bill. However, romance does not need to be only financial and people need to learn other ways to express love.

The divorce rate knocks out about half of all marriages. A divorce costs a huge amount financially and emotionally. Often it does not solve very much but produces a different set of problems. It might be good counsel for a couple to look at the cost of divorce and spend that money and time on each other, perhaps a holiday alone together where they have time to remember what drew them to each other in the first place. Usually, though, the situation is left until nothing can repair it ... then the children pay for the disruption for the rest of

their lives, taking the mess into their own relationships.

So how do you avoid divorce? How do you avoid idolising the memory of a deceased spouse? How do you avoid comparing the second spouse to the first? There must be as many answers as there are marriages and each as different as the individuals concerned. There are some basic principles, even though many seem too simple to be effective. Gratitude is one. Looking for the good in the other person instead of criticising and blaming. Changing ourselves before we think the other person should change. Being in charge of our own happiness instead of expecting someone else to make us happy. Asking ourselves the deep questions of Why am I here on this earth and What am I to achieve before my life ends, and How can I help those nearest and dearest to me to achieve the same? If Russell M Nelson talks with God then we should listen to what he tells us ... and do it.

Olive Redmond 2021

### *The Self-Circle is Self-Destructive.*

People who lead a happy, fulfilled, successful life are often asked how they have achieved this. The truth is that everyone is able to find answers for their own life - if they look for them. Ask yourself - Are you aware of what you are feeling? Do you have more feelings than just anger, fear, or happiness? For instance, if you feel angry, ask what's beneath that. It might be a pain that the world is not the way you want it to be, and fear that you can't cope with it, and under that a feeling of powerlessness. Always under anger there is pain. Anger may show up as resentment, fear, jealousy, but it is really anger, and always under anger there is pain. People do not always recognise fear and may not want to think of themselves as fearful. They may think they are not afraid of anything. They spend their life trying to prove to everyone else and themselves they are in charge of their own lives, or they are able to be loved. They are

insecure people, desperately trying to prove they are not!

Sometimes people accept a lesser standard of value from others, just so they will feel loved. They feel powerless to do anything else than take whatever is thrown at them. They down-grade themselves to do whatever the other person wants of them, so they will feel needed by someone. They do not feel worthy. Their spirit is being suffocated. Often we do not want to talk about these very personal problems in our lives. We don't want anyone to know what we are really like. We keep to ourselves. In doing so we lock ourselves into more feelings of alone-ness. That alone-ness can lead to drug use of different kinds, sometimes suicide, and often divorce. It's like drawing a small circle around yourself, and not letting anyone in. The feelings of loneliness in the self-circle are intense. The effects of the actions taken while locked in that self-circle, can be immense. Service to others is the antidote to self-circle thinking. You can't think of doing something to help others, and stay wrapped up in your own worries. Depression becomes less when you go out and are around other people, even if you don't talk to them about your worries. Thinking about making someone else's life better, raises the happiness-level of your own life. Happiness is planted in tubs along the path of life, not in the pot of gold at the end of it - and service is the plant-mix it grows in!

Scripture verse: For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily, I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in no-wise lose their reward. But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned. D&C 58:26-29.

It's easier to talk about these concepts in life, and much more difficult to live them. Often we submerge our real feelings because we don't understand them, and don't know how to deal with them. When we feel unloved, disappointed, rejected, we feel powerless. We feel not valued, and not of any worth. Then we turn to whatever makes us feel better, whether that is food, chocolate, sex, gambling, shopping, alcohol or other drugs. These things mask the pain, but that's all they do. The pain is still there, they only mask it, and help us get through another day, without thinking about the real cause and dealing with it. The answer comes from "following your heart," which really means listening to your own spirit, following your deepest sense of meaning in life. That does not mean being sentimental. It's not "hearts and flowers" stuff. It's much stronger than that, and means hard work. Painful work. No gain without pain. You must find what you are on this earth for, and follow that. It doesn't mean you can't do anything until you see your whole life's purpose mapped out in front of you. That won't happen, but you must look until you find the start of the plan, the map, the guide. Then take the next step, and the next, and so on. That's what faith is. It's taking the steps you know to be right, even when it's all dark around you, and you can't see the way, but you know you will be given the guidance you have asked for.

When you value yourself,  
And know your own worth,  
Then you can do what you believe to be right,  
No matter what others may say or think.

The answer comes from your spirit. It does not come from thinking something out with logic alone. There are people who you meet all along the way in life and they all teach you something. However, your life is not dictated by other people, but by your reaction to them. When you continually try to feel needed by other people, you are allowing your life to be manipulated by others instead of making the decisions yourself. When you do that it may seem easier at the time to give in to them, but each time you do you give up a bit more

of your power, and that shrivels your spirit. We have grown up with expressions about it, like "What will the neighbours think?" "If you don't do it, you're rubbish!" "Don't be a loser!" "Everyone else does it!" If you do something out of fear, you will feel power leave you. Don't volunteer to be a victim. Keep positive thoughts in your mind, and have some ready to bring into your mind to counteract the negative words that will sometimes be said to you. Stand tall, be proud of yourself, and know who you are! Just in case you don't know who you are - here's something to think about. You are a child of God. He is the Creator of this world and many others. You were created with infinite care and absolute precision. There is a reason even for babies born with deformities and disabilities. You are not an accident, and neither is what has happened to you so far in your life. It has all been allowed, to give you experiences that will help either yourself, or someone else, further down the track. You don't yet know which that will be.

Learn from the challenges that are put before you. Don't run away from them, and don't sit and do nothing about them. You will never learn like that. Look back on your own life and recognise the people who did help you at difficult times. Be grateful for them. Be grateful for something new every day. Don't see a sunrise as just another day, but as the power of God displayed in glorious gold. Look at a bird flying - and wonder how it stays up there. Notice the different colours in a garden. Move your fingers and marvel at your intricate muscles. Admire the perseverance of stalks of grass that get mown down every few weeks but continue to grow again. Swallow your saliva, and be grateful you don't drown! Don't settle for the sameness shown on TV. Read and study and learn, learn, learn.

Scripture verse: Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come. There is a

law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated. And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. D&C 130:18-21.

When you make major changes in your life, like a career or marriage, you ask, "How can I know if I'm doing the right thing?" You must make a decision and act on it. If you travel a certain way and ask for God's guidance, you will have direction given to you, as long as you do what you know to be right. Sometimes you will not feel like you have received a clear direction, but that is because you cannot be told exactly what to do with every step of your life. You have to make an effort yourself. Sometimes it feels like you have a green traffic light to go ahead, or occasionally a red traffic light to stop you, but very often, maybe most often, it is a yellow traffic light where you are to proceed with caution. That means you continue with your plans because God trusts you to make your own decisions but wants you to include Him in the process while you think it through.

Olive Redmond September 2020

### *Stormy seas*

We are each of us in our own boat in life and each boat has holes in it so it is gradually sinking. It doesn't matter if I have only 5 holes in my boat and someone else has 500, we are still going to sink. The only one who can save us is Jesus Christ. He saved the fishermen on Lake Galilee when a huge storm blew up. They were strong fishermen used to storms on the lake but this was so strong, even they were terrified. Jesus calmed the storm and saved them, and He can save us too, no matter how terrifying the storm is around us. We don't need to learn to walk on water like He does, we just have to ask for His help, hold out our hand and He will take it and lift us up. When Jesus was at Bethesda, in Jerusalem one day he found a man who had been paralysed nearly 40

years. Jesus healed the man and told him to stand up and walk. The man was lying down on the ground and looked up at Jesus and knew that he could do what Jesus told him to do. He had faith but he followed up that faith by doing the doing. No matter how much we know, or how much faith we think we have, we don't really know until we test it by doing the doing. Then we help other people to do the doing so they can be lifted as well. We form a human chain of assistance to each other. The whole point of the story of the paralysed man is that he looked up to Jesus and that completely changed his life.

So often we think we are struggling along on our own because we do not realise Jesus is there beside us in the struggle. In the Bible we learn of real people who felt overwhelmed by their challenges because of this. We think of Mary standing outside the tomb where she had seen Jesus buried after His death. She actually spoke to Jesus, not seeing Him clearly through her tears of grief, and did not realise it really was Jesus right in front of her. Later 2 friends of Jesus were walking the long road to Emmaus and Jesus joined them. They talked for hours but did not realise it was Him. Often we are so busy dealing with our life challenges it does not occur to us to ask Him for help, or we think we should try harder to change or cope on our own. Maybe we feel guilty or ashamed and think He would not want to know about the addictions or emotions we are experiencing. Why on earth would we think Jesus endured all He did in Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary, for all people, and then would not care about what we are facing in our lives. He died for us. What stronger way could He show us how much we mean to Him. Believe that God is there even when we can't see Him. The struggle you are in today is developing the strength you need for tomorrow.

Olive Redmond 2021

## *The Black Dot*

A professor gave his students a blank page with only a black dot on the page. He asked them to write about what they saw. When they had finished he noticed they had all written about the dot, but nobody had written about the rest of the page which was blank. He said it is like our life. We focus on the problems, which are like black dots. They are small in comparison with the rest of the page but they are what we focus our energy on. The rest of the page is like the rest of our life. There is plenty of it and if we spend too much of our time and energy on the problems we lose sight of what we have in the rest of our life.

God has a growth mind-set. He wants us to grow and progress. So it does not matter so much that we try and fail as much as we learn from trying. We sometimes give up because we did not achieve success with something but it's not about success but about learning. It's not about who we are now, but who we are becoming. Maybe we work hard to achieve something and pray for success but it doesn't happen. Maybe we think God doesn't think we deserve success or we didn't work hard enough. It might not even be a work or education situation but an illness or infertility, and we plead for healing, but it doesn't happen. We hear of other people being healed and wonder why it does not happen in our case. We then wonder if God doesn't hear us or we are not good enough to be given what we ask for. Then our insecurities take over and we are sure we will never get what we are pleading for. Our fears are in our lives for a reason. If we didn't have a fear of fire we would get burned. If we didn't fear certain situations we would be in danger. But when fear and insecurities take over our lives we don't learn or achieve anything, instead we are paralysed with fear. We are on this earth to learn and God is only interested in what we learn, not what we fail at. Every day we have a choice. We can let doubt beat us up, or we can let faith build us up.

Look at what you really fear and you realise you fear it because of your insecurities. You think you are not good enough. Faith and fear cannot exist in the same space. Don't let fears about what you don't know unravel the faith you have in things you do know. What we are really good at is a gift we have but it cannot progress and increase in the face of fear. We know only too well our own weaknesses. We remember when we lost our temper or were unkind, or any amount of much worse things we have done in our lives. So it's easy for us to think God will not want to help us. Sometimes we think we are such a dead loss why should God be interested in us at all. A little child once said, "I know I'm special 'cause God don't make no mistakes." We sing the song, I am a child of God, but we don't believe it because we know ourselves. What we forget, or maybe never knew, is that we don't see ourselves as God sees us. He really knows our worth, our abilities, our potential, because He always has done. He knows how awesome we really are, but we don't know it ourselves. That doesn't mean any change in us will be quick and easy. There are no shortcuts to any place worth going to. As Neal A. Maxwell said, God loves you too much to let you go on being what you are because He sees what you can become.

When we isolate ourselves from others because we think they would not understand our problems, or would not want to know us if they knew the truth about us, we dwell negatively on our weaknesses and insecurities. We are so critical of ourselves, in fact, recent research has found that over three quarters of our thoughts are negative. We need 'faith friends' we can turn to in difficult times, to encourage us and help us keep strong. We need them because the temptation to quit will be greatest just before you are about to succeed. Sometimes God lets you hit rock bottom so you will discover He is the rock at the bottom. Often some of the best people to talk things over with are in their 70's and 80's. They are old enough to have plenty of life experience, and not so old they have lost all their marbles! We may not know why we have

these struggles but we can remind ourselves that even if we don't know - God does. Faith creates decisive action, requiring us to do something about our problems, not just worry about them. Nephi said, I will go and do, not, I will go and try. Faith creates the attitude for us to do something. There is a right-angle to every problem. It's the try-angle. But you can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading the last one. As Mother Teresa said, Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not yet come, we have only today, let us begin.

Olive Redmond May 2021

### *Christmas Jars*

After we had all left home in England, and Dad had died, our Mum was living on her own for several years. As she had heart trouble she avoided going out in snowy weather but had very good neighbours who checked on her every day and did any shopping necessary. Mum did not like to ask too much of them so she always had a good store of canned and packet foods to use during the winter. We knew this was good advice and each followed it ourselves in our own homes. Our parents instilled two requirements into us when we were growing up; we could not leave school until we had a training to go to; we were to save up for the down payment of a mortgage for our own home before we got married, and all four of us kept to that. As children we would sometimes run errands for neighbours and they often wanted to give us some money for doing it, but we were taught to refuse politely as our mother said we were not to help other people for payment but to do it for love.

As an adult I found it a good idea after shopping to put my loose change in a jar and then after a year there was a stash of cash to spend on something important. Sometimes it was spent on a summer holiday, or Christmas presents, or building up a supply of cans of food. Around 2015 Jason

Wright wrote a book called *The Christmas Jars*, which has since been made into a film. It describes how people save their loose change in a jar during the year and on Christmas Eve they give it anonymously to someone in need. The book and film show the changes in not only the people who receive the money at a time of great stress in their lives, but also the changes in the people who give the money, seeking no reward, not even a thank you. The anonymous giving of Christmas Jars has become quite a movement among people who simply want to help others cope with their challenging times. Many of the givers have been helped themselves and know what it is like to feel desperate.

It is especially applicable that the jars are given on Christmas Eve when we commemorate the birth of a baby into a family so poor they did not even have a place of their own to give birth to him. He came from unimaginable glory - to nothing! He does not need our money - He already knows where all the gold and diamonds are before they are mined. We are asked to give our money so we will learn how to do it - and how to do without it. As we head rapidly towards a cashless society we can find other ways of putting money in a jar. Maybe not actual coins but a note of what we have saved that week. Over a year the savings will mount up and we can take that amount out of the bank in cash, or exchange it for food, clothing or other necessities, to be given to someone in need.

Sometimes when buying items in a shop we say to keep the change. It is interesting that Russell M. Nelson said his main aim was to teach people about repentance. Repentance is not simply saying sorry, or even feeling sorry, but making a change away from wrong doing. Not only turning away from it but turning towards Jesus Christ. This is a change we can keep all year round, not just the change we put in a jar to give away at Christmas. The change we make in our lives is the gift we give to Him who has no need of gifts from us.

Olive Redmond 2020

## *Temptation*

A temptation is a trial-run to give us practice in working out how we will handle difficult situations in our life. We may decide we are not going to steal. We have the power to choose what we will do. We cannot choose the consequences as that is not ours to decide. All we can do is choose how to handle the situation when it happens. So we need to stop seeing temptations as terrible things, and see them instead as opportunities in which we can exercise our power of choice. We talk about "trials and temptations" and do not see a trial for what it really can be. In a court trial both sides put their statements forward and the case is sorted out from there. In our trials in life, we have situations that demand that we put our beliefs forward, and our life goes on according to how strong our beliefs are. For those of our beliefs that are strong enough, we do not need to repeat that experience, but those beliefs that are not strong enough will need further testing to make us re-evaluate what is truly important in life, to strengthen our beliefs, and ourselves.

In any life there will be trials and temptations tailored individually to fit each one of us. We cannot look at someone else's life and think they have it easy, or easier than us, as we do not know what it's like to live inside their life. We need to change our viewpoint so we can actually be grateful for our trials and temptations, for what we will learn from them. However, we do not need to go looking for them! As it says in Alma 13:28 "Watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear." The next verse goes on to mention faith. We often think of faith as something like our eyesight. You've either got it or you haven't and you know quite definitely whether you have or not. But faith is not like that. Often we are not sure how strong our faith is, or even if we've got any at all. As we learn in the Bible, in Mark 9 a father with a very ill child implored Jesus to heal his child. He was asked if he had enough faith for this to happen and in desperation cried out, "I believe but help thou mine

unbelief." Even one of Jesus Christ's best friends, Thomas, who had travelled around with him for 3 years, said after the Resurrection that he would not believe until he actually saw the nail prints in Jesus' hands. He recognised he understood some things, but not others. It is the same with us.

Sometimes in the middle of a difficult time in life, we wonder if we have any faith at all. At times like that it's like our eyesight in the middle of the night, we have to just go on, not being able to see much, but knowing that eventually we will come through that time of darkness, and be able to see clearly again. Like the saying, "Faith is knowing the rainbow will be there, even in the middle of the storm." All this hinges on the advice King Benjamin gave his people after he had given his last speech to them. In Mosiah 4:10 he said, "If ye believe all these things, see that ye do them."

Olive Redmond 2000

## *Frogs*

A story tells of a princess who met a frog and disliked him at first but as time went on they came to love each other and in a flash of lightning the frog turned into a handsome prince. He had been changed into a frog by a wicked witch and the spell could only be broken when someone loved him. In true story book style they got married and lived happily ever after. From my experience of life I knew that marriage is not as easy as that. A happy marriage is not because the people are perfect but because they have overlooked the imperfections. When my three sons got married I gave each of their brides a small photo frame in the shape of a green frog. Instead of putting a photo in it I wrote; He may sometimes act like a frog because he does not remember he is really a prince. It is not your job to change him. It is your job to love him while he changes himself. This applies to wives as well, or anyone else, when they forget who they really are.

## *Twelve Boys stories*

Short paragraphs written by Olive around 2010 to give in a talk for church

1. A little boy at the beach built a sandcastle and decorated it with shells and seaweed collected in his beach bucket. He enjoyed filling up his bucket and it did not cost a thing.

Thought: There are so many good things we can enjoy in life that don't cost much money.

2. A boy saw a girl attacked and bitten by a ferocious dog. The father of the girl ran after the dog to catch it, but it got away. The girl was bleeding and in a lot of pain. When the father came back the boy asked him, Why not look after the girl and forget about the dog?

Thought: Sometimes we hold on to bad things instead of letting them go and in the end they can cause a lot of harm.

3. An 11 year old boy was tempted to see if he could take something from a shop without the shopkeeper noticing. He had been dared to do it by one of his school friends and did not want to lose face. He reasoned that it was only a small item, costing hardly any money, so he didn't think it would matter too much. So he took it. The shopkeeper saw him and he was caught. The shopkeeper phoned his home and it was arranged that his mother would take him back to the shop to apologise. After they had done this the mother told the boy their family was known in that town for their honesty and she was very disappointed he had let the family down and had spoiled the good name of their family.

Thought: The boy vowed he would never willingly do something dishonest again as he had found it was not worth the feeling of shame and distrust.

4. A boy in the jungle, reached the age of being able to learn about being a man. He had looked forward to this time. He



would spend a night in the jungle with his father. He had seen other boys go off for their night in the jungle but nobody ever told what happened. When they were in the jungle his father sat him on a large tree stump and blindfolded him. The father told his son he had to prove he could be brave by sitting there the whole night alone in the jungle and not remove the blindfold until dawn. He heard strange sounds and was desperately worried it might be wild animals. He was determined to prove he could be brave. At dawn he took off the blindfold and saw his father sitting silently nearby to safeguard him, but he never knew he was there.

Thought: We have someone who watches over us but we can't see Him.

5. A little boy with a Batman cape and mask, climbed up a ladder onto the garage roof, ready to jump off like he had seen Batman do on TV. His mother ran out shouting to him, No, no, don't jump. You'll get hurt.

Thought: Sometimes we get into dangerous situations, but because of our inexperience we do not realise the dangers and need someone wiser to advise us.

6. That same boy grew up and gave a talk in church. This is what he said -

When I was at primary school Mum would always turn up to my sports days and swimming events. I would be so embarrassed at the time because to me it sounded like she was the loudest cheerer in the crowd. Now as an adult I realize that it wasn't that she was louder, but rather that I was tuned into her voice and could hear it above the crowd. Although as a boy I was outwardly embarrassed, inwardly I was proud to have my mother cheering me on from the sidelines.

Thought: Those who love us are cheering us on, even when we can't hear them because they have left this earth.

7. A boy near the mountains found a snake that spoke to him and told him he was too old and tired to go any further and asked the boy to carry him. The boy gently carried him until he got to the home of the snake. When the boy put the snake down carefully on the ground the snake bit him. The boy was horrified and cried out to the snake asking why he had bitten him after all his kindness. The snake simply said, "You knew what I was when you picked me up."

Thought: Sometimes we pick up bad habits. We can see how they have affected other people's lives but somehow convince ourselves it won't happen to us.

8. A boy was walking through a dark cave with his father. The father taught him to walk slowly and feel the walls and floor as he walked along in the dark. The father kept talking to the boy letting him know he was there. When they reached daylight again the father said he would walk back through the cave and then call the boy so he could walk back in the dark by himself. This would help the boy learn to be brave. When the boy was alone in the dark he called out to his father, Are you there? His father let him know he was there, even though he could not see him.

Thought: We have to be brave as we journey through life but we have a Father who is guiding us even though we cannot see Him.

9. A boy in his early twenties was out with his friends when they passed a tattoo shop. His friends dared him to go and get a tattoo but he refused. Then they tried to get him to have his ear pierced but again he refused. They kept persuading, saying they all had a tattoo or pierced ears and he was the only one different. After a while he told them he could not do this because of his mother. His friends were amazed that someone grown up would be worried about what his mother would say. He told them, "It's not about what she would say. It's the look of sadness she would give me when she saw what I had done."

Thought: What we do matters to those who we matter to.

10. A boy had a bad temper and sometimes threw things or even hit other people. His father told the boy that every time he lost his temper he was to bang a nail into the fence in the garden. The first week the boy had 37 nails banged in the fence but as the months went by there were less and less nails as the boy learned to control his temper. The father was proud of his son's achievement and suggested that every time the boy controlled his temper he could pull out one of the nails. Eventually all the nails were pulled out but the nail holes were still showing in the fence.

Thought: When we lose our temper we often say and do bad things and they leave scars in someone else's spirit, just like the holes in the fence.

11. A little boy chopped off a chunk of his hair, right across the front of his face. His mother was horrified he had done it because the scissors could have hurt his eyes, but he said he did not do it, it was his big sister. He was reminded that his sister could not have done it because she was at school. So he said it was his baby sister, but was told she was too little to hold the scissors. So he said it was the dog but was told the dog was out in the garden.

Thought: Some of the excuses we give to Heavenly Father because we don't do what He has asked us are just as silly as a child's.

12. A boy who was an athlete ran in lots of races. His father stood about three quarters along the race in a distant corner of the track. His wife asked him why he always stood there. He said, "I stand at the place my son needs me the most. He does not need my encouragement at the beginning of the race when he's excited, positive, and ready to win. He does not need me to cheer him at the end, when the finish line is clearly in sight. He needs to know I'm there at the most challenging moment, when he feels like he cannot go on. He needs to hear at that far corner a voice telling him to keep

moving because he has worked hard and deserves to do his very best. There will be cheers at the beginning and loving support at the end, but I will be at the corner where I know he feels like giving up."

Thought: That loving voice is always there to uphold us, we just need to listen until we find it.

### *Unfinished Composition*

Boyd K. Packer started this in 1992 when he reached the age of 68. Then 10 years later he added the second section. Another 10 years later he added the last section before he passed away in 2015 at 90 years of age.

I had a thought the other night,  
A thought profound and deep.  
It came when I was too worn down,  
Too tired to go to sleep.  
I'd had a very busy day  
And pondered on my fate.  
The thought was this:  
When I was young, I wasn't 68!  
I could walk without a limp;  
I had no shoulder pain.  
I could read a line through twice  
And quote it back again.  
I could work for endless hours  
And hardly stop to breathe.  
And things that now I cannot do  
I mastered then with ease.  
If I could now turn back the years,  
If that were mine to choose,  
I would not barter age for youth,  
I'd have too much to lose.  
I'm quite content to move ahead,  
To yield my youth, however grand.

The thing I'd lose if I went back  
Is what I understand.

Ten years have flown to who knows where  
And with them much of pain.  
A metal hip erased my limp;  
I walk quite straight again.  
Another plate holds neck bones fast —  
A wonderful creation!  
It backed my polio right away;  
I've joined the stiff-necked generation.  
The signs of aging can be seen.  
Those things will not get better.  
The only thing that grows in strength  
With me is my forgetter.  
You ask, Do I remember you?  
Of course, you're much the same.  
Now don't go getting all upset  
If I can't recall your name.  
I would agree I've learned some things  
I did not want to know,  
But age has brought those precious truths  
That make the spirit grow.  
Of all the blessings that have come,  
The best thing in my life  
Is the companionship and comfort  
I get from my dear wife.  
Our children all have married well,  
With families of their own,  
With children and grandchildren,  
How soon they all have grown.  
I have not changed my mind one bit  
About regaining youth.  
We're meant to age, for with it  
Comes a knowledge of the truth.  
You ask, "What will the future bring?  
Just what will be my fate?"  
I'll go along and not complain.

Ask when I'm 88!

And now you see I'm 88.  
The years have flown so fast.  
I walked, I limped, I held a cane,  
And now I ride at last.  
I take a nap now and again,  
But priesthood power still remains.  
For all the physical things I lack  
There are great spiritual gains.  
I have traveled the world a million miles  
And another million too.  
And with the help of satellites,  
My journeys are not through.  
I now can say with all certainty  
That I know and love the Lord.  
I can testify with them of old  
As I preach His holy word.  
I know what He felt in Gethsemane  
Is too much to comprehend.  
I know He did it all for us;  
We have no greater Friend.  
I know that He will come anew  
With power and in glory.  
I know I will see Him once again  
At the end of my life's story.  
I'll kneel before His wounded feet;  
I'll feel His Spirit glow.  
My whispering, quivering voice will say,  
"My Lord, my God, I know."

## ***Animal jokes***

### ***Duck and other bird jokes***

What do you call a fast duck?  
A quick quack.

What do you get if you cross a cow with a duck?  
Cream quackers.

Why were all the ducks sad?  
Because they had lots of bills.

What bird grows up as it grows down?  
A duckling.

Why don't ducks fly upside down?  
Because they might quack up.

What kind of bird can write?  
A Penguin.

Do ducks make good wallpaperers?  
No, they just paper over the quacks.

What is a duck's favourite TV programme?  
A duckumentary.

Help! The cat's just eaten a duck!  
Does that make it a duck-filled fattypuss?

### ***Pet Parrot***

A man buys a pet parrot and brings him home. But the parrot starts insulting him and gets really nasty, so the man picks

up the parrot and tosses him into the freezer hoping the shock of the cold will teach him a lesson. He hears the bird squawking for a few minutes, but all of a sudden the parrot is quiet. The man opens the freezer door, the parrot walks out, looks up at him and says, "I apologize for offending you, and I humbly ask your forgiveness." The man says, "Well, thank you. I forgive you." The parrot then politely says, "If you don't mind my asking, what did that chicken in the freezer do wrong?"

### ***Vampire bats***

A vampire bat came flapping in from the night covered in fresh blood and parked himself on the roof of the cave to get some sleep. Pretty soon all the other bats smelt the blood and began pestering him about where he got it. He told them to get lost and let him get some sleep, but they persisted until he finally gave in. "OK, follow me," he said and flew out of the cave with hundreds of bats behind him. Down through a valley they went, across a river and into a forest of trees. Finally he slowed down and all the other bats excitedly milled around him. "Now, do you see that tree over there?" he asked. "Yes, Yes, Yes!" the bats all screamed in a frenzy. "Good!" said the first bat, "Because I didn't!"

### ***Talking Duck***

A duck walks into a cafe and orders a drink and a ham sandwich.

The owner looks at him and says, 'Hang on! You're a duck.'

'I see your eyes are working,' replies the duck.

'And you can talk!' exclaims the owner.

'I see your ears are working, too,' says the duck. 'Now if you don't mind, can I have my drink and my sandwich please?' 'Certainly. Sorry about that,' says the barman as he gets the duck's drink. 'It's just we don't get many ducks in this place. What are you doing round this way?'

'I'm working on the building site across the road,' explains the duck. 'I'm a plasterer.' The flabbergasted owner can hardly believe the duck and wants to learn more, but takes the hint when the duck pulls out a newspaper from his bag and proceeds to read it. So, the duck reads his paper, has his drink, eats his sandwich, and leaves. The same thing happens every day for two weeks. Then one day the circus comes to town. The ringmaster comes into the cafe and the owner says to him 'You're with the circus, aren't you? Well, I know this duck that could be just brilliant in your circus. He talks, eats sandwiches, reads the newspaper and everything!'

'Sounds marvellous,' says the ringmaster, handing over his business card. 'Get him to give me a call.' So the next day when the duck comes into the cafe the owner says, 'Hey Mr Duck, I reckon I can line you up with a top job, paying really good money.'

'I'm always looking for the next job,' says the duck. 'Where is it?'

'At the circus,' says the owner.

'The circus?' repeats the duck.

'That's right,' replies the owner.

'The circus?' the duck asks again. 'That place with the big tent?'

'Yes,' the owner replies.

'With all the animals who live in cages, and performers who live in caravans?' says the duck.

'Of course,' the owner replies.

'And the tent has canvas sides and a big canvas roof with a hole in the middle?' persists the duck.

'That's right!' says the owner.

The duck shakes his head in amazement, and says . . .

'What on earth would they want with a plasterer?!'

## *Penguins*

Did you ever wonder why there are no dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica - where do they go? It is a known fact that the penguin is a very ritualistic bird which lives an extremely ordered and complex life. The penguin is very committed to its family and will mate for life, as well as maintaining a form of compassionate contact with its offspring throughout its life. If a penguin is found dead on the ice surface, other members of the family and social circle have been known to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into and buried. The male penguins then gather in a circle around the fresh grave and sing: "Freeze a jolly good fellow." "Then they push him into the ice hole."

## *Penguins and the Zoo*

A man is driving down the freeway with his two pet penguins when he gets pulled over by a cop for speeding. After the cop hands over the speeding ticket to the driver, he notices the 2 penguins. The cop informs the driver that he must take the penguins to the zoo. The driver agrees to do so. Two months later, the same man is pulled over by the same cop for speeding. The cop notices the penguins again only now they

are wearing sunglasses and eating ice cream. The cop says, "I thought I told you to take those penguins to the zoo." The man responds, "I did take them to the zoo. Now I'm taking them to the beach."

### *Bungy jumping and paragliding*

Two crazy young men stand on a cliff with their arms outstretched. One has some budgies lined up on each arm, the other has parrots lined up on his arms. Then they both leap off the cliff and fall to the ground. Lying next to each other in Intensive Care at the hospital, one says to the other, "I don't think much of this budgie jumping." The other replies, "Yeah, I'm not too keen on this parrot gliding either."

### *Cats*

A pastor found a kitten that climbed up a tree in his back garden and then was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, and persuaded but the kitten would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he tied a rope to his car and drove away slowly so that the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten. He did all this, checking his progress in the car frequently, then figured if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved a little further forward ... the rope broke. The tree went "Boing!" and the kitten instantly sailed through the air - out of sight.

The pastor felt terrible. He searched all over the garden but there was no sign of the kitten. So he went on about his business. Later that day he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. Now this

woman did not like cats and everyone knew it, so he asked her, "Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?"

She replied, "You won't believe this, but I'll tell you." She told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat for weeks, but she kept refusing. The child kept begging for a cat and said she was going to pray for one. So the mother finally told her little girl, "Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it." She told the pastor, "I watched my child go out in the garden, get on her knees, and pray and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws spread out, and landed right in front of her."

### *Chickens*

What kind of jokes do chickens like?  
Corny ones.

How does a chicken sell bird seed?  
By saying, Cheap, cheap, cheap.

How long do chickens work?  
Around the cluck.

If people get chickenpox do chickens get people pox?

Have you ever seen a man-eating tiger?  
No, but I've seen a man eating chicken.

Why should you be careful when you walk past a lot of chickens?  
In case you hear any fowl language.

What did the baby chicks say when they saw an orange in the nest?

That must be the orange mama laid.

Why did the chicken run on to the football pitch?  
The referee called a fowl.

Why did the hen sit on the axe?  
So she could hatchet.

How do young hens dance?  
Chick to chick.

Where can you read about hens?  
In the hencyclopaedia.

What does impeccable mean?  
It is something hens cannot eat.

A farmer brought home 90 hens from the market.  
He put 30 hens on the first perch.  
He put another 30 hens on the second perch.  
He put the rest of the hens on the top perch.  
How many hens did he own?  
Only the hens on the first perch.  
The rest were on higher perches.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall  
All the king's horses and all the king's men  
Had scrambled eggs for breakfast again!

The codfish lays ten thousand eggs  
The lowly hen just one.  
The codfish never cackles  
To tell what she has done.  
And so we scorn the codfish  
While the humble hen we prize.  
Which only goes to show you  
That it pays to advertise!

There was a government eggsecutive who was not achieving  
what was eggspected of him so he was sent on an eggsacting

management course. What he learned there only seemed to  
eggsaggerate his errors, and after the final eggsamination he  
made a hasty eggsit. The boss was so eggsasperated by this  
he went red in the face and looked like he would eggsplode.  
He warned the other eggsecutives that having spent so much  
money on an eggspensive training course he eggspected  
them to perform their tasks with due diligence. Otherwise  
they might be eggspected to follow their colleague's  
eggsellent eggsample and resign. However, if their work lived  
up to his eggspectations he would not regard them as  
eggspendable, but eggsalt in their success. He might even  
give them a bonus for eggsellence.

## *Cows*

Why did the cow cross the road?  
To get to the udder side.

What does a cow drive when her car is broken?  
A Cow-asaki Moo-tercycle.

Which two animals go with you wherever you walk?  
Your calves.

How do you count a herd of cows?  
With a cowcultor.

If the bull is taking a nap does it turn into a bulldozer?

What did the bull say to the cow?  
When I fall in love it will be for heifer.

What do cows like to do on Saturday nights?  
Go to the moovies.

Why do cows get on well together?  
They use cowperation.

Why do cows lie down when it is going to rain?  
To keep each udder warm.

Why did the cow sit on the spin dryer?  
She wanted to make a milk shake.

What game do cows like to play at parties?  
Moosical chairs.

## *Dogs*

### *Janitor dog*

A salesman dropped in to see a business customer. Not a soul was in the office except a big dog emptying waste-baskets. The salesman stared at the animal, wondering if his imagination could be playing tricks on him. The dog looked up and said, "Don't be surprised. This is just part of my job." "Incredible!" exclaimed the man. "I can't believe it! Does your boss know what a prize he has in you? An animal that can talk!" "No, no," pleaded the dog. "Please don't tell him! If he finds out I can talk, he'll make me answer the phone as well!"

### *The car*

I pulled into a crowded parking lot and rolled down the car windows to make sure my Labrador retriever dog had fresh air. She was stretched out on the back seat, and I wanted to impress upon her that she must remain there. I walked to the curb backward, pointing my finger at the car and saying emphatically, "Now you stay. Do you hear me? Stay!"

The driver of a nearby car gave me a startled look. "I don't know about you, lady," he said incredulously. "But I usually

just put my car in neutral gear and expect it to stay there."

### *The dog at the butcher shop*

A woman watched a dog go into a butcher's shop. "What is it today?" asked the butcher. "Pork?" The dog shook its head. "Beef?" suggested the butcher. The dog shook its head. "Lamb chops?" tried the butcher. The dog wagged its tail excitedly. The butcher wrapped up two lamb chops, gave them to the dog and the dog trotted out. The same thing happened the following day and the woman was so intrigued that she decided to follow the dog out of the shop. She saw the dog walk up the steps to a house, stand on his hind legs and ring the doorbell with his nose. A man answered the door and shouted angrily at the dog. The woman was incensed. "You should be ashamed of yourself," she told the man. "That is the cleverest dog I've ever seen. He goes to the butcher's, fetches your dinner, brings it home and rings the doorbell. And you treat him like that!" "That's as maybe," said the man, "but it's the 4th time this week he's forgotten his key."

### *Dog for sale*

A guy is driving around the backwoods of Montana, USA, and he sees a sign in front of a broken down shanty-style house: 'Talking Dog For Sale 'He rings the bell and the owner appears and tells him the dog is in the backyard.

The guy goes into the backyard and sees a nice looking Labrador retriever sitting there.

'You talk?' he asks.

'Yes,' the Lab replies.



After the guy recovers from the shock of hearing a dog talk, he says 'So, what's your story?'

The Lab looks up and says, 'Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government, so ... I told the CIA. In no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. 'I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running. But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. 'I got married, we had some puppies, and now I'm just retired.'

The guy is amazed. He goes back in and asks the owner what he wants for the dog.

'Ten dollars,' the guy says.

'Ten dollars? This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?'

'Because he's making it all up. All that talk about being a CIA spy. He's never even been out of this backyard!'

### *Dog food diet*

Yesterday I was at my local supermarket buying a large bag of Chum dog food for my loyal pet and was in the checkout queue when a woman behind me asked if I had a dog. What did she think I had, an elephant? So, since I'm retired and have little to do, on impulse I told her that no, I didn't have a dog, I was starting the Chum Diet again. I told her that it was essentially a perfect diet and that the way that it works is to load your pockets with Chum dog food nuggets and simply

eat one or two every time you feel hungry. The food is nutritionally complete so it works well and I was going to try it again. I have to mention here that practically everyone in the queue was now enthralled with my story. I added that I probably shouldn't do the diet again because I ended up in hospital last time, but I'd lost 2 stone before I woke up in intensive care with tubes coming out of most of my orifices and I.V's in both arms. Horrified, she asked me if I ended up in intensive care because the dog food poisoned me. I told her No, I stepped off the curb and bent over to pee on a lamp post and a car hit me. I thought the guy behind her was going to have a heart attack, he was laughing so hard. I am now banned from that supermarket. Better watch what you ask retired people. They have all the time in the world to think of daft things to say.

### *Clever dogs*

A couple of dog owners are arguing about whose pet is smarter. "My dog is so smart," says the first owner. "Every morning he waits for the paperboy to come around. He tips the kid and then brings the newspaper to me, along with my morning coffee." "I know," says the second owner.

"How do you know?"

"My dog told me."

### *Chess game*

A man went to visit a friend and was amazed to find him playing chess with his dog. He watched the game in astonishment for a while. "I can hardly believe my eyes!" he exclaimed. "That's the smartest dog I've ever seen." "No, he's not as smart as you think," the friend replied. "I've beaten him three games out of five."

## *Frogs*

Where do tadpoles change into frogs?  
In the croakroom.

Where do frogs keep their savings?  
In the river bank.

What goes 'croak, croak' when it is misty?  
A frog horn.

What is a frog's favourite flower?  
A crocus.

Where do frogs fly flags?  
On tadpoles.

Where do frogs go to check their eyesight?  
To a hoptician.

When is a car like a frog?  
When it is being toad.

Why are there so many frogs in wheelchairs in France?  
Because French people like to eat frogs' legs.

Recently, the Psychic Hotline and Psychic Friends Network launched hotlines for frogs. Here is the story of one frog and his discussion with his psychic:

Psychic - "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you."

Frog - "This is great! Will I meet her at a party, or what?"

Psychic - "No. Next semester in her biology class."

A frog walks into a bank and croaks, "I'd like a loan, please!" The teller says, "You will have to see our loan officer, Patty Black." The frog hops over to Patty Black's office, and says, "I'd like a loan, please." She replies, "Do you have any collateral, Mr Frog?" He pulls out of his pocket a little statue of a white elephant he got from a fairground. Patty Black tells

him, "I will have to talk to the bank manager. She goes to the bank manager and tells him, "There's a frog in my office who wants to get a loan, and the only collateral he has is this little ornament. I don't even know what it is!"

The bank manager replies, "It's a knick knack, Patty Black, give the frog a loan!"

## *Pigs*

Little pig  
Busy street  
Motor car  
Sausage meat

Why are pigs bad drivers?  
They are all road hogs!

Who's the smartest pig in the world?  
Albert Ein-swine!

What did the pig say at the beach on a hot summer's day?  
I'm bacon!

Why should you never share a bed with a pig?  
They hog all the covers!

What do you call a pig that knows karate?  
Pork chop!

What boarding school do pigs go to?  
Hogwarts!

How do pigs send secret messages?  
With invisible oink!

What's it called when a bunch of pigs compete in athletic games?  
The Olympigs!

A pig walks into an ice cream shop. He orders 3 milk shakes and drinks them. Then he orders 4 glasses of lemonade and drinks them. The shopkeeper asks, "Would you like to know where the bathroom is?"  
"No," says the pig. "I'm the little piggy that goes wee-wee-wee-wee all the way home."

What do you get when you cross a pig with a pine tree?  
A pork-U-pine!

What's the surname of a smart pig?  
Cunningham!

What do you get if you cross a pig and a frog?  
Ham-phantian!

How do deaf pigs talk to each other?  
Swine language!

New book at the library -  
To the Market, by Tobias A. Pigg

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

What do you call a pig who can't mind its own business?  
A nosey porker!

What do you get when you cross a pig with a centipede?  
Bacon and legs!

## *Rabbits*

How do rabbits keep their fur tidy?  
With a hare brush.

How do rabbits travel?  
By hare plane.

What did the rabbit want to do when he grew up?  
He wanted to join the hare force?

What do you call a rabbit with fleas?  
Bugs bunny.

What do you get if you cross a bunny with leeks?  
Bunions.

What happens when a rabbit gets very cross?  
It gets hopping mad.

What do you call a rabbit who inspects holes?  
A burrow surveyor.

What is a twip?  
A twip is what a wabbit takes when he widens on a twain.

What is the difference between a crazy rabbit and a forged \$5 note?  
One is a mad bunny and the other is bad money.

The guard ran out of the rabbit prison yelling, "The rabbits have escaped. Quick, comb the harea!"

What sort of jewellery do rabbits wear?  
Nine carrot gold.

## *Sheep*

What do polite sheep say to each other as they go through a gate?  
After ewe.

What did the sheep wear when she became the army mascot?  
A ewe-niform.

What is the difference between cats and sheep?

One has fleas and the other has a fleece.

Why was the sheep arrested while driving on the motorway?  
For making a ewe turn.

What do you call a row of sheep?  
A baa-baa-queue.

What is woolly and comes from outer space?  
A ewe-F-O.

Which planet do sheep like?  
Ewe-ranus

Why do sheep gaze at the stars?  
They are looking at the ewe-niverse

What do sheep learn in school about the earth?  
Longit-ewed and latit-ewed

Why do sheep like living in Great Britain?  
It is called the Ewe-nited Kingdom

What other countries do sheep like?  
Port-ewe-gal, Baa-celloner, the Ewe-essay, Ewe-zealand,  
Baa-li, Baa-rain

What group do sheep join at work?  
A Ewe-nion

Where do sheep go to be made pretty?  
The B-ewe-ty parlour

What is a sheep's favourite hymn?  
The Lord is my shepherd

## *Other animals*

What do you call a smelly gorilla?  
King Pong.

Why can't leopards escape from the zoo?  
Because they are always spotted.

What is a horse's favourite sport?  
S-table tennis.

Why don't horses eat salad?  
Because they do not like mayo-neighs.

Why do bees hum?  
Because they don't know the words.

Where do baby apes sleep?  
In apricots.

What job does Dracula have with the local baseball team?  
He looks after the bats.

Why was the crab sent to prison?  
Because he kept pinching things.

What did one elephant say to another elephant?  
Can I borrow your trunk? I'm moving.

What day do fish hate?  
Fry-day.

What is a cat's favourite exercise?  
Puss-ups.

Why did the cat go to the hospital?  
Because he wanted to be a first-aid kit.

Why was the cat arrested?  
For all his kitty litter.

Why was the glow worm unhappy?  
Because all her children were not very bright.

Why was the fly dancing on the jam jar?  
Because on the lid it said twist to open.

What do you call a steer with no legs?  
A ranch slider.

What do you do if your dog chews a dictionary?  
Take the words out of his mouth!

Why do fish live in salt water?  
Because pepper makes them sneeze!

A team of little animals and a team of big animals decided to play football. During the first half of the game, the big animals were winning. But during the second half, a centipede scored so many touch-downs that the little animals won the game. When the game was over, the chipmunk asked the centipede, "Where were you during the first half?" The centipede replied, "Putting on my shoes!"

What do you call a deer with no eyes?  
No eye deer!

What do you call an elephant in a phone booth? Stuck!

What would happen if pigs could fly?  
The price of bacon would go up.

A duck, a skunk and a deer went out for dinner at a restaurant one night. When it came time to pay, the skunk didn't have a scent, the deer didn't have a buck so they put the cost of the meal on the duck's bill.

How do you stop a dog barking in the backseat of a car?  
Put him in the front seat.

What cat should you never play games with? A cheetah!

How did Noah see the animals in the Ark at night?  
With flood lighting.

What did the farmer call the cow that would not give him any milk?  
An udder failure.

What do you get from a bad-tempered shark?  
As far away as possible.

Why don't bears wear shoes?  
What's the use, they'd still have bear feet!

A devout cowboy lost his favourite Bible while he was mending fences out on the prairie. Three weeks later, a Meerkat walked up to him carrying the Bible in its mouth. The cowboy couldn't believe his eyes. He took the precious book out of the Meerkat's mouth, raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "It's a miracle!" "Not really," said the Meerkat. "Your name is written inside the cover."

Rimsky Korsakov was a famous music composer who wrote the music called The Flight of the Bumblebee. This is about a different bee who was a clumsy bee who came down with a cold. As determined as ever, however, the bee continued to gather its pollen, only to drop it time and time again, so it had to visit lots of flowers before it was able to gather enough pollen. Sadly, though, it spread its illness to every single flower. That became known as the blight of the fumble bee.

A man in a movie theater notices what looks like a Meerkat sitting next to him. "Are you a Meerkat?" asked the man, surprised. "Yes." "What are you doing at the movies?" The Meerkat replied, "Well, I liked the book so I came to see the film."

A panda walks into a restaurant, sits down and orders a sandwich. He eats the sandwich, pulls out a gun and shoots

the waiter. As the panda stands up to go, the manager shouts, "Hey, You can't leave! You just shot my waiter."

The panda yells back at the manager, "Hey man, I'm a Panda! That's what I do. Look it up!" The manager opens his dictionary and sees the following definition for panda: "A tree dwelling marsupial of Asian origin. Eats shoots and leaves."

A turtle was walking down a dark alley when he was mugged by a gang of snails. A police detective came to investigate and asked the turtle if he could explain what happened. The turtle looked at the detective with a confused look on his face and replied, "I don't know, it all happened so fast."

For a little girl's 6th birthday her parents bought her a fish from the pet store. They couldn't help laughing when on the way home she announced "The fish's name is Sparingly." "How do you know?" they asked. "Look" she responded "It says on the fish-food jar "Feed sparingly 3 times daily."

Once upon a time there were two little skunks named "In" and "Out." They lived in a hollow tree with their mother. Sometimes In and Out played outside, but other times they played inside. One day In was out and Out was in. The mother skunk asked Out to go out and bring In in. So Out went out and in a few minutes he came in with In. "My my, Out," she said, "how did you find In so quickly?"

Out just smiled and said, "Instinct."

## ***Reminiscences***

### ***Childhood as it used to be***

Congratulations to all my friends who were born in the 1940's, 50's, 60's!

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us and lived in houses made of asbestos.

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese, raw egg products, bacon and processed meat, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes or cervical cancer.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets or shoes, not to mention, the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

We drank water from the garden hose if we were playing in the garden, and not from a bottle.

Take away food was limited to fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonalds, KFC, Subway or Nandos.

Even though all the shops closed at 6.00pm and didn't open on a Sunday, somehow we didn't starve to death!

We shared one soft drink from the bottle with four friends, and nobody actually died from this.

We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the

corner store and buy toffees, gobstoppers, bubble gum and some firework bangers to frighten girls with.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter and drank soft drinks with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because ... WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!

In school holidays and on Saturdays we would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the street lights came on.

No one was able to reach us on a cell-phone all day, and we were OK.

We would spend hours building our go-karts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. We built tree houses and dens and played in river beds with matchbox cars.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo, Wii, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 999 channels on SKY TV, no video/dvd films, no mobile phones, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms ... WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

Only girls had pierced ears and nobody ever thought of piercing anything else.

We dug holes in the ground and played in the dirt.

You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time.

We were given air guns and catapults for our 10th birthdays

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just yelled for them!

Mum didn't have to go to work to help Dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Joneses!

Our teachers used to hit us with canes and throw the blackboard eraser at us if they thought we weren't concentrating. We can put sentences together and spell and have proper conversations because of a good, solid three R's education.

Some of us had baths in the living room, in front of the fire. Even those of us who had a bath in the bathroom only had it once a week. Friday or Saturday night was bath night. Once a week. The rest of the week only bits of us got washed, like faces, bottoms and muddy knees.

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

Our parents didn't invent names for their kids like 'Blade' and 'Ridge' and 'Vanilla' and 'Tiger'

Not everyone made the rugby/football/cricket/netball team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that! Getting into the team was based on merit. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all!

We were able to grow up as kids before the lawyers and the government regulated our lives for our own good.

### *Eating in Britain in the 1950's*

Pasta and curry were never seen in Britain in the 1950's

Olive oil was kept in the medicine cabinet

Spices came from the Middle East where they were used for embalming

A takeaway was an arithmetic problem

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower in a far away country

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time

The only vegetables we had were potatoes, carrots, cabbage and sometimes peas

All crisps were plain; the only choice was whether to put the salt on or not

Condiments consisted of salt, pepper, vinegar and sometimes brown sauce if we were lucky

Soft drinks were called pop

Coke was something that we put on the fire

Rice was a milk pudding, and never part of our dinner

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining

A microwave was something out of a science fiction movie

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking

Figs and dates appeared only at Christmas

Coconuts only appeared when the fair came to town

Salad cream was a dressing for salads, mayonnaise did not exist

Only Heinz made beans

Leftovers went to the dog, animals had no special food

Fish was only eaten on Fridays

Ready meals only came from the fish and chip shop

For the best taste fish and chips had to be eaten out of used newspapers

The only frozen food was an occasional ice cream and in mid 1950's frozen peas

Most people never had a fridge until mid to late 1950's

Ice cream only came in vanilla, and we'd never heard of yoghurt

Jelly and blancmange was only eaten at parties

Healthy food consisted of anything edible

Nobody was on a diet because we couldn't get enough food to start with

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy

The word "Barbie" was not associated with anything to do with food.

Eating outside was a picnic

Cooking outside was called camping

Pancakes were only eaten on Pancake Tuesday in March

Hot dogs were a type of sausage that only the Americans ate

Cornflakes had arrived from America but it was obvious they would never catch on

The phrase "boil in the bag" would have been beyond comprehension

Our world had not heard of Pot Noodles, Instant Mash and Kebabs

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days and was regarded as being white gold



Lettuce and tomatoes were only found in our homes in summer

Prunes were medicinal

Pumpkin was thought of as cattle feed

Chicken was eaten at Christmas and hardly ever at other times

Pineapples came in a tin and we had only ever seen pictures of a real one

We thought that Croissants was the name of a place in France

Garlic was used to ward off vampires, but never used to flavour food

Water came out of the tap, if someone had suggested bottling it and charging money for it they would have been laughed at

Food hygiene was all about washing your hands before meals

Campylobacter, Salmonella, E.coli, Listeria, and Botulism were all called "food poisoning"

The one thing that we never had on our table in the 1950's was our elbows

### *Statistics from USA, 1910*

Just over one hundred years ago. What a difference a century makes! Here are some statistics for USA for the Year 1910:

The average life expectancy for men was 47 years

Only 14 percent of the homes had a bathtub

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone

Fuel for a car was sold in pharmacy stores only

There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads

The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower

The average US wage in 1910 was 22 cents per hour

The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year

A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year

A dentist \$2,500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per year

More than 95 percent of all births took place at home

Ninety percent of all doctors had NO university education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and the government as 'substandard'

Sugar cost four cents a pound

Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen

Coffee was fifteen cents a pound

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo

There were only about 230 reported murders in the entire USA

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30

The Five leading causes of death were:

- 1 Pneumonia and influenza
- 2 Tuberculosis
- 3 Diarrhoea
- 4 Heart disease
- 5 Stroke

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day

Two out of every 10 adults couldn't read or write

Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school

Eighteen percent of households had at least one full-time servant or domestic help

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner pharmacy stores. Back then pharmacists said, 'Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health'.

### *Looking back a few years*

I remember the cheese of my childhood,  
And the bread that we cut with a knife,  
When the children all helped with the housework,  
And the men went to work, not the wife

The cheese never needed an ice chest,  
And the bread was so crusty and hot,  
The children were seldom unhappy  
And the wife was content with her lot

I remember the milk from the billy,  
With the yummy cream set on the top,  
Our dinner came hot from the oven,  
And not from the fridge in the shop

The kids were a lot more contented,  
They didn't need money for kicks,  
Just a game with our mates in the paddock,  
And sometimes the Saturday flicks

I remember the shop on the corner,  
Where a penn'orth of lollies was sold  
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic,  
Or is it that I'm just getting old?

I remember the loo was the dunny,  
And the pan man came out in the night,  
It wasn't a little bit funny  
Going out down the back with no light

The interesting items we perused,  
From newspapers cut into squares,  
And hung on a peg in the outhouse,  
It took little to keep us amused

The clothes were all boiled in the copper,  
With plenty of rich foamy suds  
But the ironing seemed never ending  
As Mum pressed everyone's duds

I remember the slap on my backside,  
And the taste of soap if I swore  
Anorexia and diets were not heard of  
And we hadn't much choice what we wore

Do you think that it damaged our ego?  
Or our initiative was destroyed  
We ate what was put on the table  
And I think life was better enjoyed

But a huge fact not previously mentioned  
In this tale of nostalgic rejoice  
Is the reason we seemed to enjoy life  
Was because we had no bloomin' choice!

### *Mean Mothers*

Was your mother mean? I know mine was. We had the meanest mother in the whole world!

While other kids had lollies for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast.

When others had a fizzy drink and a chocolate bar for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches.

And you can guess our mother fixed us a dinner that was different from what other kids had, too.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. You'd think we were convicts in a prison.

She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them.

She insisted that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for an hour or less.

We were ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labour Laws by making us work.

We had to wash the dishes, make the beds, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, and all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do.

She always insisted we had to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Before we were even teenagers, she could read our minds. Then, life was really tough!

Our mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up. They had to come up to the door so she could meet them.

While everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16 and then only go in a group.

Because of our mother we missed out on lots of things other kids experienced.

We never got drunk, took up smoking, vandalised others' property, stayed out all night, or a million other things other kids did. It was all her fault.

Now that we have left home, we are all educated, honest adults.

We are doing our best to be mean parents just like our mother was.

That must be what's wrong with the world today.

There just are not enough mean mothers anymore.

### *No Better Off Now*

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider Freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less commonsense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbour. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

George Carlin

## *Remember*

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, takeaway food, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom.

Remember; Spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Speak kindly to someone who looks up to you, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Say, ' I love you ' to your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend many a hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

## *Do you remember when ... ?*

All the girls had ugly gym uniforms

It took five minutes for the TV warm up

Nearly everyone's Mum was at home when the kids got home from school

Nobody owned a purebred dog

When 2 shillings was a decent allowance

You'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny

All your male teachers wore neckties and female teachers did their hair every day and wore high heels

Your Mum wore nylons that came in two pieces

You got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, all for free, every time

Laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box

Cornflakes and other cereals had little plastic toys in the box

It was considered a great privilege to be taken out to dinner at a real restaurant with your parents

They threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed - and they did

When a 57 Chevy was everyone's dream car, to cruise, lay rubber or watch races

No one ever asked where the car keys were because they were always in the car, in the ignition, and the doors were never locked

Lying on your back in the grass with your friends and saying things like, "That cloud looks like a ..."

Playing rounders, with no adults to help kids with the rules of the game

Stuff from the store came without safety caps and hermetic seals because no one had yet tried to poison a complete stranger

When being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited the student at home? Basically we were in fear for our lives, but it wasn't because of drive-by shootings, drugs or gangs. Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we survived because their love was greater than the threat.

Summers filled with bike rides, games, Hula Hoops, roller

skating and visits to the swimming baths and eating sherbet powder with sugar.

How many of these do you remember?

- Candy cigarettes
- Penny candy
- Home made ice-cream
- Home Homemade Ginger Beer
- Homemade Hokey Pokey
- Home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers
- Newsreels before the movie
- White tennis shoes
- Telephone numbers
- Party lines with different rings for each family
- Peashooters
- 45 RPM records
- Hi-Fi's
- LP's
- Metal ice cubes trays with levers to pop them out
- Roller-skate keys
- Cork pop guns
- Stilts
- Washtub wringers
- The Fuller Brush Man
- The Rawleigh's Man
- Reel-To-Reel tape recorders
- Tinkertoys
- Meccano Sets
- Chinese Chequers

Do you remember a time when ...

- Decisions were made by counting on our hands "eeny-meeny-miney-moe"?
- or "one potato, two potato, three potato, more?"
- Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming, "Do Over!"?

- "Race issue" meant arguing about who ran the fastest?
- It wasn't odd to have two or three "Best Friends"?
- The worst thing you could catch from the opposite sex was head lice?
- Having a weapon in school meant being caught with a slingshot?
- Saturday morning cartoons weren't 30-minute commercials for action figures?
- Spinning around, getting dizzy, and falling down was cause for giggles?
- Sunday Morning request sessions for songs on the radio
- The worst embarrassment was being picked last for a team?
- War was a card game?
- Taking drugs meant orange-flavoured chewable aspirin?
- Water balloons were the ultimate weapon?

We said ...

See you later alligator

In a while crocodile

Gotta go buffalo

Out the door dinosaur

Bye bye butterfly

Be sweet parakeet

Toodle-oo kangaroo

Better swish jellyfish

Chop chop lollipop

See you soon big baboon

Gotta truck baby duck

Take care polar bear

Remember that the perfect age is somewhere between old enough to know better and too young to care. And with all our progress, don't you wish, just once, you could slip back in time and savour the slower pace, and share it with the children of today?

### *Things my mother taught me!*

My mother taught me To Appreciate a Job Well Done  
"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

My mother taught me Religion  
"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."

My mother taught me about Time Travel  
"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

My mother taught me Logic  
"Because I said so, that's why."

My mother taught me More Logic  
"If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."

My mother taught me about Foresight  
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

My mother taught me Irony  
"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."

My mother taught me about the science of Osmosis  
"Shut your mouth and eat your food."

My mother taught me about Contortionism  
"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

My mother taught me about Stamina  
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

My mother taught me about Weather  
"This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."

My mother taught me about Hypocrisy  
"If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"

My mother taught me Medical Science  
"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."

My mother taught me ESP  
"Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"

My mother taught me the Circle of Life  
"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out ..."

My mother taught me about Behaviour Modification  
"Stop acting like your father!"

My mother taught me about Envy  
"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have wonderful parents like you do."

My mother taught me about Anticipation  
"Just wait until we get home."

My mother taught me about my Roots  
"Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"

My mother taught me about Receiving  
"You are going to get it when you get home!"

My mother taught me Humour  
"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me crying."

My mother taught me How to become an Adult  
"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

My mother taught me Genetics  
"You're just like your father."

My mother taught me Wisdom  
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

My mother taught me about Choice  
"Do you want me to stop this car and put you out on the footpath?"

My mother taught me about Justice  
"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

### *Views on age*

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions.

"How old are you?"

"I'm four and a half!" You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half, going on five! That's the key.

You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?"

"I'm going to be 16!" You could be 13, but hey, you're going to be 16!

Then the greatest day of your life . . . you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony . . . You become 21. Yes!

But then you turn 30. Ooh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He Turned. We had to throw him out. There's no fun now. What's wrong? What's changed?

You Become 21, you Turn 30, then you're Pushing 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you Reach 50 ... and your dreams are gone. But wait! You Make it to 60. You didn't think you would!

So you Become 21, Turn 30, Push 40, Reach 50 and Make it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you Hit 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing; you Hit Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you Hit lunch; you Turn 5pm; you Reach bedtime. And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards; "I was Just 92." Then a strange thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!"

## *How to Stay Young*

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.

5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be Alive while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, to the next county, to a foreign country, but Not to where the guilt is.

10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity. And always remember: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

## *Not so long ago*

One evening a grandson was talking to his grandmother about current events.

The boy asked his grandmother what she thought about the shootings at schools, the computer age, and just things in general.

The Grandmother replied, "Well, I was born before people had television, antibiotics, polio shots, frozen foods, photocopiers, contact lenses, the pill.

There were no: credit cards, laser beams or ball-point pens

Man had not invented: pantyhose, air conditioners,



dishwashers, clothes dryers and man hadn't yet walked on the moon

People got married first and then lived together.

Every family had a father and a mother.

Until I was in my twenties, I called every man older than me, "Sir".

We were before gay-rights, computer-dating, dual careers, daycare centers, and group therapy.

Our lives were governed by the Ten Commandments, good judgment, and common sense.

We were taught to know the difference between right and wrong and to stand up and take responsibility for our actions.

We thought fast food was what people ate during Lent.

Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins.

Time-sharing meant time the family spent together in the evenings and weekends - not purchasing condominiums.

We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, CD's, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings.

We listened to Big Bands, Jack Benny, and the Queen's Christmas speech on our radio called a wireless.

Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and instant coffee were unheard of.

In my day: "grass" was mowed, "coke" was a cold drink, "pot" was something your mother cooked in and "rock music" was your grandmother's lullaby. "Aids" were helpers in the school office, "chip" meant a piece of wood, "hardware" was found in a hardware store and "software" wasn't even a word

We were the last generation to actually believe that a lady needed a husband to have a baby.

No wonder people call us "old and confused" and say there is a generation gap.

How old do you think I am?

I bet you have this really old lady in mind, at least 100 ... you are in for a shock!

This woman would be only 75 years old.

# ***Funny things children said***

## ***Children's science exam answers***

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature hates a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q: What is the fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does 'varicose' mean?

A: Nearby.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty?

A: He says good-bye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: How are the main parts of the body categorized? ( e.g., abdomen)

A: The body consists into three parts - the brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain; the borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels A, E, I, O, and U.

Q: Give the meaning of the term 'Cesarean Section.'

A: The Caesarian Section is a district in Rome, Italy.

Q: What does the word 'benign' mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

Q. What is a turbine?

A. Something an Arab or Sheik wears on his head

## ***What children have said***

I was driving with my three young children one warm summer evening when a woman passenger in the sports car ahead of us stood up and waved. She was stark naked! As I was reeling from the shock, I heard my 5-year-old shout from the back seat, 'Mummy, that lady isn't wearing a seat belt!'

On the first day of school, a first-grader handed his teacher a note from his mother. The note read, 'The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents.'

A woman was trying to get the ketchup out of the jar. During

her struggle the phone rang so she asked her 4-year-old daughter to answer the phone. 'Mummy can't come to the phone to talk to you right now. She's hitting the bottle.'

A little boy got lost at the YMCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, 'What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a little boy before?'

While taking a routine vandalism report at an elementary school, I was interrupted by a little girl about 6 years old. Looking up and down at my uniform, she asked, 'Are you a cop? Yes,' I answered and continued writing the report. 'My mother said if I ever needed help I should ask the police. Is that right?' 'Yes, that's right,' I told her. 'Well, then,' she said as she extended her foot toward me, 'would you please tie my shoe lace?'

It was the end of the day when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my K-9 partner, Jake, was barking, and I saw a little boy staring in at me. 'Is that a dog you got back there?' he asked. 'It sure is,' I replied. Puzzled, the boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally he said, 'Whatever did he do?'

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his tuxedo, she warned, 'Daddy, you shouldn't wear that suit.' 'And why not, darling?' 'You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning.'

While walking along the sidewalk in front of his church, our minister heard the intoning of a prayer that nearly made his collar wilt. Apparently, his 5-year-old son and his playmates had found a dead robin. Feeling that a proper burial should be performed, they had secured a small box and cotton batting, then dug a hole and made ready for the disposal of the deceased. The minister's son was chosen to say the appropriate prayers and with sonorous dignity intoned his version of what he thought his father always said: 'Glory be unto the Faaather, and unto the Sonnn, and into the hole he goooes.'

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. She decided not to go any more. 'I'm just wasting my time,' she said to her mother. 'I can't read, I can't write, and they won't let me talk!'

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages. 'Mummy, look what I found,' the boy called out. 'What have you got there, dear?' With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered, 'I think it's Adam's underwear!'

### *Children at Sunday School*

A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, "Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbors wife."

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in

a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys.

I had been teaching my three-year-old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer for several evenings at bedtime, and she would repeat after me the lines from the prayer. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer:

"Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail, Amen."

And one particular four-year-old prayed, "and forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

Three-year-old Reese prayed, "Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name." "Amen"

A little boy was overheard praying: "Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a real good time like I am!"

A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to church service, "and why is it necessary to be quiet in church?" One bright little girl replied, "because people are sleeping."

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud. Finally his big sister had had enough. "You're not supposed to talk out loud in church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men standing by the door? They're hushers."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin and Ryan. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'" Kevin turned to

his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore, where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked. "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought for a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah". The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him".

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?" Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white." The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, "Mummy, how come All of grandma's hairs are white?"

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of blood.

Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face." "Yes," the class said. "Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?" A little fellow shouted, "Cause your feet aren't empty."

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray: "Take only One. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor" thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat one little boy, the oldest of a family, answered, "Thou shall not kill."

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces and laid it upon the altar. Then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times. "Now," said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?" A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know, I know!" she said, "To make the gravy!"

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt when little Jason interrupted. "My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?" A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the ark?" "No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms?"

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?" One child blurted out, "Aces!"

A Sunday school teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Rick was excited about the task, but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Rick was very nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

The preacher's 5-year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why. "Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages, "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon." "How come He doesn't do it?" she asked.

A rabbi said to an energetic 6-year-old boy, "So your mother says your prayers for you each night? Very commendable. What does she say?" The little boy replied, "Thank God he's in bed!"

Our son had only heard his grandfather pray at Thanksgiving, Easter and other special occasions, when he typically said a long prayer over the food. One night, after a fun campout and fishing trip, Grandfather, to our son's surprise, asked for a very brief blessing on the food. With a gleam in his eye, our son grinned at his grandfather and said, "You don't pray so long when you're hungry, do you Grandpa?"

During the minister's prayer one Sunday, there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews. Gary's mother was horrified. She nudged him into silence and, after church, asked, "Gary, what ever made you do such a thing?" Gary answered, soberly, "I asked God to teach me to whistle - and He did, just then!"

A pastor asked a little boy if he said his prayers every night. "Yes sir," the boy replied. "And do you always say them in the morning, too?" the pastor asked. "No sir," the boy replied. "I'm not scared in the daytime."

My wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to our 6-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I don't know what to say," she replied. "Just say what you hear Mummy say," my wife said. Our daughter bowed her head and said, "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

When my daughter, Kelly, was 3, she and my son, Cody, would say their nightly prayers together. As most children do, we had to bless every family member, every friend and every animal, current and past. For several weeks, after we had finished the nightly prayer, Kelly would say "And all girls." As this became part of her nightly routine, my curiosity got the best of me and I asked her, "Kelly, why do you always add the part about all girls?" Her response: "Because we always finish our prayers by saying 'All Men!'"

## ***Kids' jokes***

Q: Why was 6 afraid of 7?

A: Because 7, 8, 9.

Q: What musical instrument is found in the bathroom?

A: A tuba toothpaste. (A tuba is like a really big trumpet)

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Pizza.

Pizza who?

Pizza really great guy! (Pete's a really great guy)

Q: What do you call cheese that's not yours?

A: Nacho cheese! (Not your cheese)

Q: Why did the boy bring a ladder to school?

A: He wanted to go to high school.

Q: Where do pencils go for vacation?

A: Pencil-vania.

Q: Why did the girl smear peanut butter on the road?

A: To go with the traffic jam!

Q: Why do bananas have to put on sunscreen before they go to the beach?

A: Because they might peel!

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Little old lady.

Little old lady who?

Wow, I didn't know you could yodel!

Knock, knock.  
Who's there?  
Lettuce.  
Lettuce who?  
Lettuce in, it's freezing out here!

After many years, a prisoner is finally released.  
He runs around yelling, "I'm free! I'm free!"  
A little kid walks up to him and says, "So what? I'm 4."

Q: Which flower talks the most?  
A: Tulips because they have two lips!

Q: A horse rider arrived in a small town on Friday. He stayed for two days and left on Friday. How is this possible?  
A: His horse's name was Friday!

Knock, knock.  
Who's there?  
Cows say.  
Cows say who?  
No they don't. Cows say "moo!"

Q: What did 0 say to 8?  
A: That's a tight belt!

Q: What did the mushroom say to the fungus?  
A: You're a fun guy [fungi].

Q: Why couldn't the pony sing himself a lullaby?  
A: He was a little hoarse. (horse)

## **Happiness**

*How to have more of it - notes I took from a talk by Hank Smith given in 2014 but added to by research from statisticians, psychologists and others.*

No matter what country we live in we all have one thing in common. We all want to be happy. Yet statistics show that one in four people struggle with depression in the United States of America. It is a common thing, but we treat it as if it is some sort of failure. We don't think that if someone has cancer or diabetes it means they must be doing wrong or living a bad life. Sometimes people think if someone has depression that person is not trying hard enough. The danger for some is when a couple of days turn into weeks, months, and years of sadness. It is important to be sensitive and show understanding to people who suffer from depression.

Through technology, brain scans have become very enlightening. The frontal lobe is where happiness is located. When someone is really sad, the right side of the frontal lobe lights up, and when someone is happy, the left part of the frontal lobe lights up. Happiness and sadness occur in different parts of the brain. Meditation will fire up the left frontal lobe and flood the brain with dopamine. There are 100 billion neurons in a person's brain, and they talk to each other. To do this they need neurotransmitters or chemicals. The three that make a person happy are norepinephrine, serotonin, and dopamine. Low levels of these chemicals may make a person unhappy, but returning them to normal levels may help some people.

Factors that influence happiness are 50 percent genetics inherited from your parents and other ancestors, 10 percent circumstances, and 40 percent activities a person chooses to do. A comparison study was done by the National Institute of

Health in 1978 between the happiness levels of lottery winners and people with paraplegia in wheelchairs. The study showed that one year later, happiness levels were about equal between the two groups.

It is suggested that the number one contributor to happiness is the quality of a person's social circle. This applies even if the person is of a shy and reserved personality. Women live longer than men because they have bigger social circles. There is a myth that when a man's wife dies he will die soon after because he can't take care of himself. This is not true. A man may die soon after his spouse if he doesn't have a social circle which he can rely on.

Boyd K. Packer said, It was meant to be that life would be a challenge. To suffer some anxiety, some depression, some disappointment, even some failure is normal. We must remember that if we have a miserable day once in a while, or several in a row, to stand steady and face them. Things will straighten out. There is great purpose in our struggle in life.

Even though technology that is supposed to make life easier and happier has increased a great deal in the last 50 years, people have not become happier. Researching data from multiple happiness studies from the past 40 years, here are some suggestions.

1. Happy people surround themselves with other happy people. Joy is contagious. People are four times more likely to be happy in the future with happy people around them.
2. Happy people try to be happy. Happiness is not something that just happens or we find after a long search but something we make. Happy people use laughter as a medicine. A good old-fashioned chuckle releases lots of good neurotransmitters. A study showed that on average, children laugh 300 times a day versus adults who laugh 15 times a day.

3. Happy people spend money more often on others than they spend on themselves. We feel good when we give.

4. Happy people have deep in-person conversations. Our social relationships are vital to our happiness. Invest whatever time you can with your loved ones. Sitting down to talk about what makes a person tick is a good practice for feeling good about life. Happy people praise others, and thank them for their help. They also feel comfortable telling their loved ones what it is they would like to be praised or thanked for. They feel secure enough to do this without fear of their openness being abused.

5. Happy people keep learning right into older age. It is not necessarily knowledge-based but more of curiosity such as learning a new recipe or returning to a musical instrument you learned as a child. In a family where the abilities and opinions of each individual are valued, even little children will feel comfortable giving their ideas, and therefore be more willing to accept changes that need to be made for the good of the family. Certainly as parents we need to be aware of where we have gone wrong with our children, but not to dwell on it. It is more important to build on what we are doing right, than criticise ourselves for the things we have done wrong in the past.

6. Happy people use the power of music. Researchers found that music can match the anxiety-reducing effects of massage therapy.

7. Happy people exercise and eat a healthful diet. Eating food that is high in sugar and fat, but low in vegetables and fruits, can contribute to depression.

8. Happy people take the time to unplug and go outside. Long times spent on various digital screens can bring on depression and anxiety. Happy people notice things around them. Little things like sunsets, rain, spring flowers, autumn



leaves, nothing amazing but they notice, and it costs nothing. Happiness does not cost the earth, nor does it need to use many of the natural resources of the earth. When little children learn to cross the road we teach, Stop, look and listen. This applies to our view of the world. We are so busy we do not take time to Stop, look and listen. How fortunate we are to be able to look, listen, move.

9. Happy people get enough sleep. When people run low on sleep, they are prone to feel a lack of clarity, bad moods, and poor judgment.

10. Happy people are grateful. Many of them believe in a higher being than themselves and give thanks to that source. Happiness does not make you grateful for what you have, but being grateful makes you happier about your life. If you want to be happier, try being grateful!

## ***Interesting short lines***

### ***Ambiguous statements***

Don't sweat the petty things and don't pet the sweaty things

Atheism is a non-prophet organisation

If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?

Can an atheist get insurance against acts of God?

Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

If a deaf child signs swear words, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

Whose cruel idea was it for the word Lisp to have an S in it?

Is there another word for synonym?

Where do forest rangers go to get away from it all?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

Would a fly without wings be called a walk?

If a tortoise doesn't have a shell, is he homeless or naked?

If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?

Why do they put Braille on the drive-through bank machines?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

How do they get deer to cross the road only at those deer-crossing road signs?

One nice thing about egotists - they don't talk about other people.

How is it possible to have a civil war?

If one synchronised swimmer drowns, do the rest drown too?

If you try to fail, and succeed, which have you done?

If someone with multiple personalities threatens to kill himself, is it considered a hostage situation?

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman where the self-help section was. She said, if she told me it would defeat the purpose.

### *Business signs*

The following are real signs from around the world:

In the front yard of a funeral home: Drive carefully. We'll wait.

In a veterinarian's waiting room: Be back in five minutes. Sit! Stay!

Pizza shop slogan: Seven days without pizza makes one weak.

On a fence: Don't take a fence.

In a non-smoking area: If we see smoke, we will assume you are on fire and take appropriate action.

On a plumber's truck: We repair what your husband fixed.

At an optometrist's office: If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place.

### *Clever thoughts*

The Grim Reaper came for me last night and I beat him off with a vacuum cleaner. Talk about Dyson with death.

I was at an ATM yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance, so I pushed her over.

I start a new job in Seoul next week. I thought it was a good Korea move.

My neighbour knocked on my door at 2 am this morning. Can you believe that, 2 am! Lucky for him I was still up playing my bagpipes.

I told my friend I'm thinking of buying a Labrador dog. "No don't do that!" said my friend in alarm. "Have you seen how many of their owners go blind?"

My wife was counting all the coins out of her purse onto the kitchen table when she suddenly got very angry and started shouting and crying for no reason. I thought to myself, "She's going through the change."

When I was in the pub I heard a couple of guys saying that they wouldn't feel safe on an aircraft if they knew the pilot was a woman. What a pair of sexist. I mean, it's not as if she'd have to reverse the thing!

Bought some 'rocket salad' yesterday but it went off before I could eat it!

A teddy bear is working on a building site. He goes for a tea break and when he returns he notices his pick has been

stolen. The bear is angry and reports the theft to the foreman. The foreman grins at the bear and says "Oh, I forgot to tell you, today's the day the teddy bears have their pick nicked."

Man asks his friend, "Why are you talking to an envelope?"  
Friend answers, "I'm sending a voicemail."

Just got back from my mate's funeral. He died after being hit on the head with a tennis ball. It was a lovely service.

An Asian fellow has moved in next door. He has travelled the world, swum with sharks, wrestled bears and climbed the highest mountain. It came as no surprise to learn his name was Bindair Dundat.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

They told me I had type A blood, but it was a type-O.

### *Funny Puns and One-Liners*

Corduroy pillows are making headlines

Every morning is the dawn of a new error

Dijon vu - the same mustard as before

When two egotists meet, it's an I for an I

What's the definition of a will? It's a dead giveaway.

A backwards poet writes inverse.

He had a photographic memory that was never Developed

If a clock is hungry does it go back four seconds

The short fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large

Acupuncture is a jab well done

Those who jump off a Paris bridge are in Seine

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion

If you don't pay your exorcist, will you get repossessed

### *Interesting facts*

1. Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated
2. Peanuts are one of the ingredients of dynamite.
3. The national anthem of Greece has 158 verses. No one in Greece has memorized all 158 verses.
4. There are 293 ways to make change for a dollar.
5. The average secretary's left-hand does 56% of the typing.
6. A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes
7. The average person falls asleep in seven minutes.
8. The name for Oz in the "Wizard of Oz" was thought up when the creator, Frank Baum, looked at his filing cabinet and saw A-N, and O-Z, hence "Oz."

9. It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.
10. In England, the Speaker of the House is not allowed to speak.
11. Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.
12. In most advertisements, including newspapers, the time displayed on a watch is 10:10.
13. A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.
14. An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
15. Almonds are members of the peach family.
16. The state of New Jersey, USA grows two-thirds of the world's eggplant.
17. There are more chickens than people in the world (at least before that chicken-flu thing).
18. The "dot" over the letter "i" is called a tittle.
19. The only domestic animal not mentioned in the Bible is the cat.
20. Honey is the only natural food that is made without destroying any kind of life. What about milk you say? A cow has to eat grass to produce milk and grass is living.
21. Honey is the only food that does not spoil.
22. One single teaspoon of honey represents the life work of 12 bees.
23. It's physically impossible for a pig to look up at the sky.
24. Flamingos can only eat with their heads upside down.
25. It is impossible to tickle yourself.

26. A typical pencil can draw a line that is 35 miles long.
27. Astronauts get taller in space due to the lack of gravity.
28. Buttermilk does not contain any butter and is actually low in fat.
29. Your own dead skin cells make up the majority of the dust in your house.
30. Most lipstick contains fish scales.
31. A giraffe can go longer without water than a camel can.
32. Snails can sleep up to 3 years.
33. You can't smile and breath at the same time  
That's not true, of course, but I just wanted you to smile

### *Interesting facts about words*

Stewardesses is the longest word typed with only the left hand

And 'lollipop' is the longest word typed with your right hand

No word in the English language rhymes with month, orange, silver, or purple.

Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing

The sentence: 'The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog'  
Uses every letter of the alphabet.

The words 'racecar,' 'kayak' And 'level' are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes)

'Dreamt' is the only English word that ends in the letters 'mt'

There are only four words in the English language which end in 'dous': tremendous, horrendous, stupendous, and hazardous

There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: 'abstemious' and 'facetious.'

TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters on only one row of the keyboard

A goldfish has a memory span of three seconds

A 'jiffy' is an actual unit of time, 100th of a second

A shark is the only fish that can blink with both eyes

Babies are born without kneecaps. They don't appear until the child reaches 2 to 6 years of age

February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon

In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated

If the population of China walked past you, 8 abreast, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction

Leonardo Da Vinci invented the scissors

The cruise liner QE 2 moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns

The microwave was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket

There have been a few winters so cold that Niagara Falls froze completely solid

Women blink nearly twice as much as men

### *One liners*

A bicycle can't stand on its own because it is two-tired.

She had a boyfriend with a wooden leg, but broke it off.

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.

With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.

Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.

Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

The man who fell into an upholstery factory is now fully recovered.

You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

Every calendar's days are numbered.

A lot of money is tainted. It taint yours and it taint mine.

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? Or one goose, two geese, so one moose, two meese? One mouse, two mice, so one blouse, two blice?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same thing, but a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

Why do you recite a play, but play at a recital? Why do you ship by truck but send cargo by ship? Why do you have noses that run but feet that smell?

Would a fly without wings be called a walk?

Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool .

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Typo.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about spicy sausage are the wurstt.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

When chemists die, they barium.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

Broken pencils are pointless.

What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.

I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.

I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.

Velcro - what a rip off!

Don't worry about old age; it doesn't last.

### *One liners to think about*

What if my dog only brings back the ball because he thinks I like throwing it?

If poison is past its expiry date, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?

Which letter is silent in the word "Scent," the S or the C?

Do twins ever realise that one of them is unplanned?

Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V?

Maybe oxygen is slowly killing you and it just takes 75 to 100 years to fully work.

Every time you clean something, you just make something else dirty.

100 years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.

The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims".

Your future self is watching you right now through memories.

If you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them.

Many animals probably need glasses, but nobody knows it.

If you rip a hole in a net, there are actually fewer holes in it than there were before.

If 2/2/22 falls on a Tuesday, we'll just call it "2's Day". Yes, it does fall on a Tuesday

### *Paraprosdokians*

These are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected and frequently humorous.

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.

10. In filling out an application, where it says, 'In case of emergency, Notify:' I put 'Doctor'.

11. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.

12. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

13. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure ...

14. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.

15. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

16. You're never too old to learn something stupid.

17. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

### *Puns for Educated Minds*

(It helps to read some out loud.)

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.

4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of maths disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
11. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'
13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab centre said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
16. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
17. A backward poet writes inverse.
18. In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.

19. If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine .
20. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'
21. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says 'Dam!'
22. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.
23. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says 'Are you sure?' The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'
24. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.
25. There was the person who sent ten puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.

### *Questions about why*

WHY do we press harder on a remote control when we know the batteries are getting dead?

WHY do banks charge a fee on 'insufficient funds' when they know there is not enough money?

WHY does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?

WHY does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?



WHY doesn't Tarzan have a beard?

WHY do Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

WHY do supermarkets make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front?

WHY do banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters?

WHY do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in our driveways and put our useless junk in the garage?

WHY don't sheep shrink when it rains?

WHY are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?

If flying is so safe, WHY do they call the airport the terminal?

You know that indestructible black box that is used on airplanes? WHY don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?

WHY didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes in the first place?

WHY isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?

WHY is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?

WHY is the man who invests all your money called a broker?

WHY is lemon juice made with artificial flavouring, and dish washing liquid made with real lemons?

WHY is it that doctors call what they do 'practice'?

WHY is 'abbreviated' such a long word?

WHY don't you ever see the headline 'Psychic Wins Lottery'?

WHY does the sun lighten our hair, but darken our skin?

WHY is it that no matter what color bubble bath you use the bubbles are always white?

WHY do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?

WHY do people keep running over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it, then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?

WHY is it that no plastic bag will open from the end on your first try?

WHY do moths and bugs manage to get into enclosed light fixtures?

When we are in the supermarket and someone rams our ankle with a shopping cart then apologizes for doing so, WHY do we say, 'It's all right?' Well, it isn't all right, so WHY don't we say, 'That really hurt, why don't you watch where you're going?'

WHY is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

In winter WHY do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?

WHY do you never hear father-in-law jokes?

The statistics on insanity are that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends - if they're okay, then it's you.

## *Short quotes*

We the willing  
Led by the unknowing  
Are doing the impossible  
For the ungrateful  
We have done so much  
With so little  
For so long  
We are now qualified  
To do anything  
With nothing  
- Mother Teresa

Sisters function as safety nets in a chaotic world simply by being there for each other. Carol Saline

Sister is probably the most competitive relationship within the family, but once the sisters are grown up, it becomes the strongest relationship. Margaret Meads

Your value doesn't decrease based on someone's inability to see your worth

When people have a disease it is in their body - their spirit does not have a disease.

It's not the disease that gets you down - it's the lack of hope

With an illness, pain is inevitable but suffering is optional

It's not so important who you are, it's who you become that's important

Know that you are loved. You are not alone.

Choose not to be bitter. Choose to be better

This is my day of opportunity, I shall not waste it.  
Thomas S. Monson

Every day presents you with a second chance, why let yesterday define tomorrow?

The gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to be converted which requires us to change and do and become.  
Dallin H. Oaks

The Holy Ghost will not steer us away from challenges but will sustain us through them. Glenn Burgess

A: be Attractive - reflect love and encouragement in your appearance

B: be Bright - brighten the room when you enter it

C: build Character with faith, virtue, patience and obedience  
Russell M. Nelson

To forgive is to let go of hate, bitterness, and resentment. We forgive not because the other person deserves it, but because it is good for our soul to let go and love. Forgiveness is not a one-time act. It's something to be practised day after day after day, just like repentance.

Exercise is a dirty word. Every time I hear it, I wash my mouth out with chocolate

Before you criticise someone, walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticise them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes

Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak

Families are like fudge, mostly sweet with a few nuts

Insanity is hereditary, you get it from your kids

The trouble with being a parent is that by the time you are experienced, you are unemployed

Always smile, it makes people wonder what you're up to

Everyone has a photographic memory, but some people just don't have film

They say that age is all in your mind. The trick is keeping it from creeping down into your body

A Freudian slip is when you say one thing, but mean your mother

A father carries his children's photos in his wallet, where his money used to be

Family is a social unit where the father is concerned with parking space, the children with outer space, and the mother with wardrobe space

Boys will be boys, and so will a lot of middle-aged men

A New Year's resolution goes in one year and out the other

In theory there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice, there is

The things that come to those who wait are usually the things left by those who got there first

Anything worth doing, is worth getting someone else to do

Sincerity is the key. Once you can fake it, you've got it made

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory

Work fascinates me ... I can sit and look at it for hours

If you can keep your head while all around you are losing theirs, you probably don't understand the problem

Money talks, but all mine ever says is goodbye

If you think that something small can't make a difference, try going to sleep with a mosquito in the room

I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it left

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well

Women always worry about the things that men forget. Men always worry about the things women remember

A recent survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75 percent of the world's population

I like the 50-50-90 rule. Any time you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90 per cent probability you'll get it wrong

Be careful when you follow the Masses ... sometimes the M is silent

Common sense is a flower that doesn't grow in everyone's garden

Sometimes I pretend to be normal, but it gets boring, so I go back to being me

Life is too short to be serious all the time, so if you can't laugh at yourself, call me and I'll laugh at you

Respect your parents ... they passed school exams without Google

There is absolutely no excuse for laziness ... but if you find one, let me know

My heart says chocolate and bubbly but my jeans say, For goodness sake, eat a salad

I don't understand how I can remember every word of an old song from years ago, but can't remember what I'm looking for in the kitchen

My brain cells, skin cells and hair cells continue to die, but my stubborn fat cells seem to have everlasting life

I intend to live forever ... so far, so good

If we're not meant to have midnight snacks, why is there a light in the fridge?

Prince William and Prince Harry pulled a prank on their grandmother Queen Elizabeth, changing her voicemail answer-phone to say: Hey! Wassup! This is Liz. Sorry I'm away from the throne. For a hotline to Philip press 1. For Charles press 2. For the corgis press 3.

When I was little I was scared of the dark. Now I'm an adult I see the electricity bill and I'm scared of the lights

I am not 40, I'm 18 with 22 years' experience

Plant smiles, Grow laughter, Harvest love

### *Stupid signs*

In the toilet of a London office:  
TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW

In a Laundromat:  
AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT

In a London department store:  
BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS

Spotted in a safari park:  
ELEPHANTS PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR

Notice in health food shop window:  
CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS

In an office:  
AFTER TEA BREAK STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD

In an office:  
WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN

Seen during a conference:  
FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR

Notice in a farmer's field:  
THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES.

On a repair shop door:  
WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR - THE BELL DOESN'T WORK)

In a Bangkok temple:  
IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER A WOMAN, EVEN A FOREIGNER, IF DRESSED AS A MAN

Cocktail lounge in Norway:  
LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR

In a Nairobi restaurant:  
CUSTOMERS WHO FIND OUR WAITRESSES RUDE OUGHT TO SEE THE MANAGER

On the main road to Mombasa, Kenya:  
TAKE NOTICE: WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE

In a cemetery:  
PERSONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING FLOWERS FROM ANY BUT THEIR OWN GRAVES

Tokyo hotel's rules and regulations:  
GUESTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO SMOKE OR DO OTHER DISGUSTING BEHAVIOURS IN BED

Outside a secondhand shop:  
WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING  
MACHINES, ETC. WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG  
AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?

On the menu of a Swiss restaurant:  
OUR WINES LEAVE YOU NOTHING TO HOPE FOR

Dry cleaners in Bangkok:  
DROP YOUR TROUSERS HERE FOR THE BEST RESULTS

On a poster at Kencom:  
ARE YOU AN ADULT THAT CANNOT READ? IF SO WE  
CAN HELP

Doctor's office, Rome:  
SPECIALIST IN WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES

In a City restaurant:  
OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK AND WEEKENDS

In a Tokyo bar:  
SPECIAL COCKTAILS FOR THE LADIES WITH NUTS

Hotel in Yugoslavia:  
THE FLATTENING OF UNDERWEAR WITH PLEASURE IS  
THE JOB OF THE CHAMBERMAID

A sign posted in Germany's Black Forest:  
IT IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN ON OUR BLACK FOREST  
CAMPING SITE THAT PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT SEX, FOR  
INSTANCE, MEN AND WOMEN, LIVE TOGETHER IN  
ONE TENT UNLESS THEY ARE MARRIED WITH EACH  
OTHER FOR THIS PURPOSE

Hotel in Zurich:  
BECAUSE OF THE IMPROPRIETY OF ENTERTAINING  
GUESTS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX IN THE BEDROOM, IT IS  
SUGGESTED THAT THE LOBBY BE USED FOR THIS  
PURPOSE

Hotel in Japan:  
YOU ARE INVITED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE  
CHAMBERMAID

Advertisement for donkey rides in Thailand:  
WOULD YOU LIKE TO RIDE ON YOUR OWN ASS?

Airline ticket office in Copenhagen:  
WE TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SEND THEM IN ALL  
DIRECTIONS

A laundry in Rome:  
LADIES, LEAVE YOUR CLOTHES HERE AND SPEND THE  
AFTERNOON SHOPPING

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian  
Orthodox monastery:  
YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT THE CEMETERY WHERE  
FAMOUS RUSSIAN AND SOVIET COMPOSERS, ARTISTS  
AND WRITERS ARE BURIED DAILY EXCEPT THURSDAY

### *Universal Laws*

Law of Mechanical Repair - After your hands become coated  
with grease, your nose will begin to itch

Law of Gravity - Any tool, nut, bolt, screw, when dropped,  
will roll to the least accessible corner

Law of Probability - The probability of being watched is  
directly proportional to the stupidity of your act

Law of Random Numbers - If you phone a wrong number,  
you never get a busy signal and someone always answers

Law of the Bath - When the body is fully immersed in water,  
the telephone rings

Law of Public Speaking - A closed mouth gathers no feet

Law of Logical Argument - Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about

Law of the Result - When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will

Law of Physical Appearance - If the clothes fit, they're ugly

Law of Biomechanics - The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach

Law of Replacement - When you lose something, if you buy a replacement you will soon find the one you lost

Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy - As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it

Law of Close Encounters - The probability of meeting someone you know increases dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with

Law of Doctors - If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there you'll feel better ... but don't make an appointment, and you'll stay sick

Law of Variation - If you change traffic lanes, the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now

### *To think about*

Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one?

If 4 out of 5 people suffer from diarrhoea, does that mean that one out of five enjoys it?

Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?

If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a racing car is not called a racist?

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

What hair colour do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?

I noticed how mothers feed their babies with tiny little spoons, so I wondered what do Chinese mothers use instead of chopsticks? Toothpicks?

Why do they put up pictures of criminals in the post office? What are we supposed to do, write to them? Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the postmen can look for them while they deliver the mail?

## ***More short items***

### ***Gems from all over***

A notice seen in All Saints Anglican Church, Palmerston North.

Be thankful, be quiet, be reverent,  
For this is the house of God.  
Before the service, speak to the Lord.  
During the service, let the Lord speak to you.  
After the service, speak to one another.

Written by Olive for Fraser on his 21st birthday

May you have the  
Inspiration of the Holy Ghost,  
Information from people you trust,  
Insight for those you love.  
Inspiration, Information, Insight.  
What more do you need  
To be a truly successful person?

Melbourne Mission in 1999 - The Missionary Commission:

Obedience is the price  
Faith is the power  
Work is the commitment  
Love is the motive  
Humility is the key  
Christ is the reason.

Reach for your dreams as high as the sky,  
Fill them with hope and set them to fly  
Among the clouds for all to see  
That you can be all you aspire to be.

Remember in the scripture class,  
We often read, It came to pass  
Be grateful that it did not say  
It came to stay!

The purpose of paramount importance for us while on this earth is to build character and endurance. Character is even more important than intellect. As we gain in character we increase in intellect.

Procrastination is unwillingness to accept personal responsibility now. Henry B. Eyring.

We are not helpless victims of our circumstances. Henry B. Eyring.

The trials of life can be very deep and we are not shallow if we struggle with them. Jeffrey Holland.

If we were accused of being a Latter-day Saint, would there be enough evidence to convict us? Stephen Oveson.

The flak is always heaviest towards the target.  
Boyd K. Packer.

All the water in the world  
No matter how it tried  
Can never sink the smallest ship  
Unless it gets inside.

For those that believe - no explanation is necessary.  
For those that don't - none is possible.

This is the Telestial world, but it is not as terrible as we understand the Telestial world will be. That is because there are so many good people in it at the moment. When they are

delegated to the Terrestrial world and the Celestial world, the Telestial world will then have no good people in it, and will indeed be an evil place to be.

Learned by Olive at the temple Jan 2000

When Heavenly Father required something to be done in the Garden of Eden, He suggested to Jesus Christ that it be done, as the Earth was created and organised by Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, for all His power, did not short-cut past Jesus Christ and simply order it to be done. Even He followed the Priesthood line of command.

Learned by Olive at the temple Mar 2000

Man's love of God is measured in terms of obedience and service. Bruce R. McConkie.

Live your life so that those who don't know Christ will get to know Him through knowing you.

Every law kept brings a blessing, Every law broken brings a blight.

Satan is a necessary evil because only through the way we react to his challenges do we grow.

Prayer

The LDS Bible Dictionary states:

The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them.

## *Giving*

Some statements heard by Olive on TV in March 2000

- To be truly happy, you have to find a way to give to the world.

- When you give to the world, the world gives to you.
- What goes around, comes around.

A woman who had a bad fall, and hurt her back and was always in terrible pain, went to put out her rubbish, and found a hungry child aged about 3 looking in her rubbish bin for food. She gave him a peanut butter sandwich. A few minutes later there was a knock on her door. There stood this little child with 5 other hungry children. The woman never realised there were so many hungry children in her city, and eventually set up a Feed the Hungry programme. Some time later on, the Nike company heard about it and gave free shoes to 150 children.

A girl in her early twenties, who was born with fragile bone disease, and has had 70 broken bones, and can hardly move because of the pain, helps other people with letters and phone calls. Her parents always encouraged her to do all she could in life. She said, There was never an option not to do well.

A famous basket-ball star has given several millions of dollars to build a college in America for students who can't afford to go to the others, mainly black students. He said, "I could die tomorrow, but if I did then I'd know I've done what I was supposed to do."

Information doesn't change lives. It's only when information becomes inspiration that the change occurs.

A middle-aged woman who decided not to put her aged mother in a Rest Home said, "Whatever they can do for my mother I can do for her at home. I love my Mum, not just for the person she is, but for the person she has helped me to become. It is a privilege to brush her hair and paint her fingernails, and make her look nice, as well as doing the basic physical care. By changing my attitude, instead of it being a burden, it has become a blessing."



## *Important people*

Read this straight through without stopping to answer the questions.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world
2. Name the last five world golf trophy winners
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss World contest
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize
5. Name the last five Academy Award winners for best actor and actress
6. Name twenty Olympic winners

How did you do? The point is, none of us can remember all the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields, but the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another, see how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school
  2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time
  3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile
  4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special
  5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with
  6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you
- Easier? The lesson: The people who make a difference in

your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.  
Charles Schultz

## *The Most*

The most destructive habit.....Worry  
The most satisfying work.....Helping others  
The greatest joy.....Giving  
The greatest loss.....Loss of self-respect  
The ugliest personality trait.....Selfishness  
The most endangered species.....Dedicated leaders  
Our greatest natural resource.....Our youth  
The greatest incentive.....Encouragement  
The greatest problem to overcome.....Fear  
The most effective sleeping pill.....Peace of mind  
The most crippling failure disease.....Excuses  
The most powerful force in life.....Love  
The most dangerous pariah.....A gossip  
The most incredible computer.....The human brain  
The worst thing to be without..... Hope  
The deadliest weapon.....The tongue  
The two most power-filled words.....I Can  
The greatest asset.....Faith  
The most worthless emotion.....Self-pity  
The most beautiful attire.....A smile  
The most prized possession.....Integrity  
The most powerful channel of communication.....Prayer  
The most contagious spirit.....Enthusiasm  
The most important thing in life.....God

## *Three Act Show*

At the end of your life what do you want to be known for? What do you want to have accomplished? What do you want to carry with you to the next world? It all comes down to the

three questions we know so well. Why am I on this earth?  
Where did I come from? Where am I going?

Every year we hear about wonderful shows that require hours and hours of rehearsals. You have been sent to this earth for the most wonderful show of your life. This is Act 2 and there is no rehearsal. You have already seen Act 1, but don't remember anything about it, and will one day go on to see Act 3. If you try to make sense of Act 2 without knowing anything about Act 1 you will be living only half of the Show.

Every so often Heavenly Father gives you a prompt to think about Act 2 and even Act 1, but you put it off. Then the busy-ness of life catches you up, and you put Act 1 away in the wings. It will stay there until you decide to bring it out, centre stage, and really examine it under the spotlights. Act 3 could happen to any of us at any time, and then it really is 'curtains'.

Olive Redmond 2002

## *Remember*

It is amazing being a missionary  
I get to see miracles from God firsthand  
The gospel we teach changes lives  
It moves hearts and desires  
The things we teach are like whispers from back home  
When we get done teaching, the people accept readily  
It is as if they have always known it  
Sometimes it is as if they have forgotten a song,  
And when they hear someone singing, it comes right back,  
And we can't help but sing too  
I don't think we teach as much as  
Help people remember

By William Brodegard in New Era August 2005

## *The Optimist's Creed*

I promise:

To be strong so that nothing can disturb my peace of mind  
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person I meet  
To make all my friends feel that there is something great in them  
To look at the sunny side of everything and make my optimism come true  
To think only the best, work only for the best, and expect only the best  
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as I am about my own  
To forget past mistakes and press on to greater achievements in the future  
To wear a cheerful face at all times and give everyone I meet a smile  
To give so much time to improve myself I have no time to criticise others  
To be too calm for worry, too noble for anger and too strong for fear  
To be too happy to permit the presence of trouble

## *Rugby*

The Fijian rugby team were told they couldn't win against the New Zealand All Blacks team because they were playing in New Zealand and were on their home ground. The Fijian captain replied, "They can have the ground but we'll have the game." The Fijians won. After the game the captain was interviewed on international TV and the first words out of his mouth were, "We give thanks to Jesus Christ for this victory. We asked God for strength and He gave that to us."

My thoughts as I heard what he said were that the All Blacks

didn't stand a chance if the Fijians had God on their side. They sounded like Helaman's 2000 young warriors. They played rugby like that too. Then I thought that life is like the captain's comment. This is Satan's world, but the "game" of life is up to us and what we make of it. So we must be determined that Satan can have the ground, but we'll win the game!

Olive Redmond 2009

### *Three Modern Wise Men*

The first wise man was young, a keen sportsman, and in one of the top professional basketball teams in the world. Although he was earning a lot of money he still continued working hard at his education until he had gained his degree. When asked why he did this, when he was already earning a lot of money, he replied it was because his parents wanted him to have a career for when he no longer played basketball, and he respected their wisdom so much that he followed it. He said his parents had always taught him, you don't get given things in life, you earn them.

The second wise man was talking to someone whose son had recently died in childhood and he felt devastated by it. The friend said his brother had died young too, and he also felt utterly bereft until he realised that in wishing he hadn't died he was almost blaming his brother for going off and leaving him. Unintentionally he was making less of his brother, and demeaning his time on the earth. He said he learned to change his way of thinking and remember the good times they had had together. To celebrate all the days of his brother's life, instead of dwelling on the one day of his death.

The third wise man was talking about his wife. He said he had a fairly good marriage, but wanted to make it even better. He didn't know how to do that until one day he realised it was to make his wife feel she was a special person.

He decided that from that day on, he would treat his wife so well, that even if she were in a room full of hundreds of other women, she would know that there was no-one there that was treated better than she was.

### *United Nations survey*

Question: Please state honestly your opinion on possible solutions to the shortage of food in the rest of the world.

The survey was a failure.

In Africa no one knew what was meant by Food.

In Australia no one knew what was meant by a Shortage

In Eastern Europe no one knew what was meant by Honestly

In China no one knew what was meant by Opinion

In the Middle East no one knew what was meant by Solution

In South America no one knew what was meant by Please,

and

In the USA no one knew what was meant by The rest of the world

### *Value life while you have it*

A man was riding a bus to a small cottage for a vacation with his wife, reflecting on a talk he had heard about the importance of showing our spouse love and respect.

Remembering that he had often failed to do that, he decided that he would do better during this vacation. When he arrived he complimented his wife on how nice she looked in her new yellow top. She was surprised that he had noticed and invited him to go for a walk with her on the beach. He was tired from his long trip and was about to say no when he remembered his resolution. He went for a walk and enjoyed it. Throughout the two-week vacation he kept in mind his

promise to himself and found he also enjoyed the vacation more. Then on the last day of the vacation his wife approached him and asked if there was something he should tell her. He was puzzled and asked what she meant. She reminded him that he had taken her to the doctor before the vacation and since he had been treating her so nicely she wondered if the doctor had told him that she was going to die. His response: No dear, you're not going to die but I am beginning to live. What a great message!

## ***Seasonal jokes***

### ***Christmas jokes***

Most of them you have to read out loud

Knock, knock.  
Who's there?  
Murray.  
Murray who?  
Murray Christmas, one and all!

Knock Knock  
Who's there?  
Anna  
Anna who?  
Anna partridge in a pear tree.

Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Dexter.  
Dexter, who?  
Dexter halls with boughs of holly.

Knock, knock.  
Who's there?  
Olive.  
Olive, who?  
Olive the other reindeer.

What's the difference between Santa's reindeer and a knight?  
One slays the dragon, and the other's draggin' the sleigh.

Darth Vader: I know what you're getting for Christmas.  
Luke: How do you know?  
Darth Vader: I can feel your presents.

One evening a Viking named Rudolph the Red was looking out the window when he said, "It's going to be a wet night." His wife asked, "How do you know?" He replied, "Because Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

How does a sheep say "Merry Christmas"?  
Fleece Navidad!

Grown up girl telling Santa what she'd like for Christmas, something for her mother. Santa said how thoughtful it was for her to want something for her mother - what was it? Immediately the girl answered - A son-in-law!

Good King Wenceslas phoned the pizza take-away shop for a pizza. The salesgirl asked him: 'Do you want your usual? Deep pan, crisp and even?'

How do snowmen get around?  
On their icicles.

Who's the bane of Santa's life?  
The elf and safety officer.

Q. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?  
A. Tinsilitis

Q. What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?  
A. Claustrophobic.

Q. What do you call a cat on the beach at Christmas?  
A. Sandy Claws.

Q. Why does Santa have three gardens?  
A. So he can hoe-hoe-hoe!

Q. What do elves learn in school?  
A. The elfabet.

Q. How many letters are there in the elfabet?  
A. Only 25 not 26 because the angel said no L.

Q. Why was Santa's little helper depressed?  
A. Because he had low elf esteem.

Q. Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?  
A. A mince spy

Q. What do you call a blind reindeer?  
A. No eye deer

Q. Where does Santa go when he's sick?  
A. The elf centre

Q. What nationality is Santa Claus?  
A. North Polish.

Q. What kind of bird can write?  
A. A Pen-guin.

Q. Why does Scrooge love all the reindeers?  
A. Because every buck is dear to him.

Q. Why does Santa Claus hate coming down chimneys?  
A. Because he gets Claustrophobia!

Q. What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?  
A. It's Christmas, Eve!

Q. What do snowmen eat for breakfast?  
A. Snowflakes.

Q. What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?  
A. Frostbite.

Q. What do you call a bunch of chess grandmasters bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?  
A. Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer.

Daniel and Carol went out to dinner with friends just before Christmas. Carol did not want to take her handbag and asked Daniel to put her lipstick and make-up in his pocket, which

he did. They enjoyed dinner but the bad news is that Daniel suddenly died. The good news is that he went straight to heaven and met two other guys waiting to be admitted. The angel at the gate was in a hurry to go to his own Christmas celebration so he told the three men to look in their pockets for something that reminded them of Christmas and if he thought it was a good enough idea, they were in. The first man took out of his pocket his car keys. He jingled them and said it reminded him of jingle bells. The angel did not seem very impressed but let it pass and the man went through the gate. The second man fished in his pocket and brought out a packet of matches. He said they reminded him of tiny candles for Christmas. The angel was even less impressed but he was in a hurry to go to dinner so he let the man go through. Daniel had become increasingly worried as each man tried to think of something to do with Christmas. He felt in his pockets and took out the lipstick and make-up. The angel was immediately surprised by this and asked what they had to do with Christmas. Daniel just shrugged and said, "They're Carol's."

### *Halloween jokes*

Where does a ghost go on vacation? Mali-boo.

What does a panda ghost eat? Bam-Boo!

What's a ghost's favorite dessert? I-Scream!

Why don't mummies take time off? They're afraid to unwind.

Why did the headless horseman go into business? He wanted to get ahead in life.

What kind of music do mummies like listening to on Halloween? Wrap music.

What was the witch's favorite subject in school? Spelling

Why don't mummies have friends? Because they're too wrapped up in themselves.

Why did the vampire read the newspaper? He heard it had great circulation.

How do vampires get around on Halloween? On blood vessels.

What's it like to be kissed by a vampire? It's a pain in the neck.

What do you get when you cross a vampire and a snowman? Frostbite.

Why do skeletons have low self-esteem? They have no body to love.

Know why skeletons are so calm? Because nothing gets under their skin.

## ***Christmas stories***

### ***Christmas crackers***

Christmas crackers are a traditional Christmas favourite in Britain. They were first made in about 1845-1850 by a London sweet maker called Tom Smith. He had seen the French 'bon bon' sweets which are almonds wrapped in pretty paper. Tom Smith created the same idea but changed it over time to have the sweets inside the crackers with a short poem. As the crackers were mostly bought by men to give to women the verses were usually love poems. Over time their sales did not go so well and Tom wondered how to increase interest in them. One night, while Tom Smith was sitting in front of his log fire, he became very interested in the sparks and cracks coming from the fire. Suddenly, he thought what a fun idea it would be, if his sweets and toys could be opened with a crack when their fancy wrappers were pulled in half. In about 1860 Tom Smith added the banger, two strips of chemically impregnated paper that made a loud noise when pulled apart. At first these novelties were called cosaques but soon became known as crackers. The name cosaques may have been related to Cossack soldiers in Russia who were known for riding horses and firing their guns in the air. A Christmas cracker traditionally contains a paper hat, a little gift and a joke written on a small slip of paper. The paper hat is often shaped like a crown. This is thought to relate to the three wise men who were kings.

### ***The real Saint Nicholas***

Santa Claus was a real man named Nicholas who lived about 300 years after Jesus in Turkey in Europe. He was a rich

man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it. Nicholas had a friend that had 3 daughters, but they could not get married because their father did not have enough money for their weddings. So late one night, in secret, Nicholas threw 3 bags of gold into their living room. The bags landed in socks that were drying by the fireplace. This began the tradition of stockings hung by the fireplace. Nicholas was a church bishop and he loved Jesus. People were very cruel to him to stop him believing in Jesus but he would not give up. Because he was so brave and so good people called him Saint Nicholas and this got shortened to Santa Claus. In 1823 a poem was written about him and some reindeer by Clement Moore. It became famous and is called The Night Before Christmas.

### ***Another poem about Santa***

My dear precious Jesus, I didn't mean to take your place,  
I only bring toys and things and you bring love and grace.  
People give me lists of wishes and hope that they came true;  
But you hear prayers of the heart and promise your will to do.  
Children try to be good and not to cry when I am coming to town;  
But you love them unconditionally and that love will abound.  
I leave only a bag of toys and temporary joy for a season;  
But you leave a heart of love, full of purpose and reason.  
I have a lot of believers and what one might call fame;  
But I never healed the blind or tried to help the lame.  
I have rosy cheeks and a voice full of laughter;  
But no nail—scarred hands or a promise of the hereafter.  
You may find several of me in town or at a mall;  
But there is only one omnipotent you, to answer a sinner's call.

And so, my dear precious Jesus, I kneel here to pray;  
To worship and adore you on this, your holy birthday.

Author unknown

### *The history of mince pies*

Mince pies, like Christmas puddings, were originally filled with meat, such as lamb, rather than a dried fruit mix as they are today. They were also first made in an oval shape to represent the manger that Jesus slept in as a baby, with the top representing his swaddling clothes. During the Stuart and Georgian times, in England, mince pies were a status symbol at Christmas! Very rich people liked to show off at their Christmas parties by having pies made in different shapes, like stars, crescents, hearts, tears, & flowers. The fancy shaped pies could often fit together a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. They also looked like the 'knot gardens' that were popular during those periods. Having pies like this meant you were rich and could afford to employ the best, and most expensive, pastry cooks! Now they are normally made in a round shape and are eaten hot or cold, often with custard or ice cream. A custom from the middle ages says that if you eat a mince pie on every day from Christmas to Twelfth Night, which is 6th January, you will have happiness for the next 12 months! On Christmas Eve, children in Britain and other countries often leave out mince pies and a drink for Father Christmas, and a carrot for the reindeer.

### *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*

Here is the true story of how it started. A man named Robert L. May, depressed and brokenhearted, stared out his drafty apartment window in Chicago, into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap quietly

sobbing. Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mother could never come home from the hospital. Barbara looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?" Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life. Life always had to be different for Bob. Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember. From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in. Bob did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at a group of stores named Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938. Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one - a storybook! Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope. Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling. The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose. Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there.

The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores. By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million



copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book. In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a bestseller. Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter. But the story doesn't end there either.

Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song except "White Christmas." The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing.

## *Christmas Trees*

The evergreen tree was an ancient symbol of life in the midst of winter. Romans decorated their houses with evergreen branches during the New Year, and ancient inhabitants of northern Europe cut evergreen trees and planted them in boxes inside their houses in wintertime. In the English-speaking world, the union of gifts, trees, and Christmas was due to the influence of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert, a native of Saxony, now part of Germany. German immigrants had brought the custom of Christmas trees with them to England in the early 1800s, but it spread widely after Victoria and Albert set up an elaborate tree for their children at Windsor Castle in 1841. At that time, Christmas presents were usually hung on the tree itself.

German and Dutch immigrants also brought their traditions of trees and presents to the New World of America in the early 1800s. The image of happy middle-class families exchanging gifts around a tree became a powerful one for American authors and civic leaders who wished to replace older, rowdier, and more alcohol-fueled Christmas traditions, such as wassailing, with a more family-friendly holiday. This family-centered image was widely popularized by Clement Moore's 1822 poem, known today as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas"

## *Christmas in December*

The first recorded date of Christmas being celebrated on December 25th was in 336 AD, during the time of the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine. A few years later, Pope Julius I officially declared that the birth of Jesus would be celebrated on the 25th December. This date was probably chosen because, in the northern hemisphere, the Winter Solstice of 21 December and the ancient pagan Roman midwinter festivals called 'Saturnalia' took place around this date, so it was a time when people already held celebrations. The birth of Jesus probably didn't happen in the year 1 AD but probably slightly earlier, somewhere between 2 BC and 7 BC. We know that King Herod was king at that time. Most of the world uses the 'Gregorian Calendar' implemented by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Before that the 'Roman' or Julian Calendar was used, named after Julius Caesar. The church at that time held a service called a Mass to celebrate the birth of Christ which gives us the name Christmas.

## *Xmas*

Some people are concerned that the word Xmas takes Christ out of Christmas. The fish, in Greek ichthys or ichthus, is a

symbol for Christ which has been in use since the days of the early church. In Greek, it is an acronym for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour:

Jesus - Iesous - Greek for Jesus  
Christ - Christos - Greek for Anointed  
God's - Theos - Greek for God  
Son - Yios - Greek for Son  
Saviour - Soter - Greek for Saviour

Frequently Christians were forced to worship secretly. The fish symbol served them well in difficult times because it generally would go unnoticed by a foe of Christianity when Christians used it to communicate. Placed outside a Christian's home, this symbol would announce silently that Christian Communion was to be observed secretly there that night. Artistic forms of the fish frequently decorated the Roman catacombs where Christians were forced to meet during persecution. Notice that X was one of the first letters in the word that was Greek for Christ, forming the basis for the fish symbol. In the fourth century, copies of the scriptures had to be handwritten. Commonly used terms were abbreviated using the letter abbreviation. The original four gospels were written in Greek and so the abbreviation of X for Christ remained. So the next time you see the X used in Christmas instead of Christ, instead of being upset and feeling like it is an effort to take Christ out of Christmas, be reminded of early Christians trying to worship their Saviour and later by people trying to speed up the process of making more copies of the scriptures.

### *Candy Canes*

A candy maker, probably in Germany in the 1700's, wanted to make a candy that would be a witness of his faith, so he made the Christmas Candy Cane. It included several symbols of the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. It began

with a stick of white hard candy; white to symbolize the Virgin Birth and sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the firmness of the promises of God. The candy cane was made in the form of a "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth as the Saviour of all mankind. It could also represent the staff of the Good Shepherd with which He reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs. The candy maker put in several red stripes representing the stripes Jesus received when He was beaten before His Crucifixion, and the blood shed by Christ on the cross so that mankind would have the promise of everlasting life. As time passed, the candy became known simply as a candy cane. It is now a standard decoration we see at Christmas time, but not carrying the meaning that was originally intended about us, who like all sheep have gone astray. Perhaps this story of the origin of the candy cane will help us to understand the wonder of God's Gift at the wonderful time of Christmas.

Author Unknown

### *Symbols of Christmas*

Candy Cane - shaped like a J for Jesus and coloured white for purity and with red to remind us of the blood He shed for us.

Christmas trees are always evergreen which symbolizes everlasting life.

Wreaths are always round to represent that God's love has no beginning or ending.

Star – the star the Wise Men followed to find Baby Jesus. Their journey was long and difficult and they never gave up until they found Jesus.

Angels – the angels that announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds. The birth of the Saviour of the world was not

announced in palaces amid gold and jewels, but in a field among rough men looking after sheep.

Bells – to ring out the good news of Jesus' birth.

Lights – to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. When we can't see our way in life we need to look to Jesus.

## *The Twelve Days of Christmas*

The song probably originated in France in the 17th century and was used by Catholics in England to teach the principles of their faith during 1558 to 1829 when it was a crime to be a Catholic. It refers to the 12 days after Christmas, not before. If all the gifts are added up they come to 365 which is the days in a year.

The gifts are symbols which mean the following:

1 Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour.

2 Turtle Doves = Two parts of the Bible; Old and New Testaments.

3 French Hens = Three Virtues; Faith, Hope and Charity.

4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

5 Golden Rings = The first Five Books of the Old Testament, written by Moses; the Torah which is the Hebrew Law; the "Pentateuch"; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation; Formation, Waters divided, Light of sun, moon, Vegetation, Animals, People. (Genesis 1)

7 Swans A-swimming = the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, speaking other languages, interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor 12:8)

8 Maids A-milking = the eight Beatitudes; humility, comforting, meek, righteous, merciful, pure, peacemakers, endurance. (Matt 5:3)

9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, selfcontrol. (Gal 5:22)

10 Lords A-leaping = the ten commandments; one God, no idols, no blasphemy, respect sabbath day, honour parents, no murder, no adultery, no stealing, no lies, no envy. Exodus 20

11 Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles; Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholemew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas. (Luke 6:13)

12 Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

## *The Wise Men of Christmas*

After Jesus was born, Wise Men came to look for Him, probably from an area which is now in either Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia or Yemen. Although they are often called the 'Three Kings', or the Magi, the Bible does not say how many there were, or that they were kings. One theory is that they might have been Kings of Yemen, as during this time the Kings of Yemen were Jews. Three is only a guess because they brought with them three gifts, but however many there were of them, they probably would have had many more servants with them. They were certainly men of great learning. The word Magi comes from the greek word 'magos'. Magos itself comes from the old persian word 'Magupati'.

This was the title given to priests in a sect of the ancient Persian religions such as Zoroastrianism. Today we call them astrologers. Back then astronomy and astrology were part of 'science' and went hand in hand with each other. The magi would have followed the patterns of the stars religiously. They would probably have been very rich and held in high esteem in their own society and by people who were not from their country or religion. They had seen an unusual new star in the sky, and knew that it told of the birth of a special king. No one really knows what the new star in the sky was. There are many theories including comets, supernovas, a conjunction of planets or something supernatural.

### *The Wise men visit Jesus*

When the Wise Men found Jesus and Mary, the family would have been living in a normal house in Bethlehem, because by this time Jesus would have been aged between one and two. Then they gave their gifts to him. It is believed the gifts had the following meanings:

Gold is associated with kings because Jesus is the King of Kings.

Frankincense is sometimes used in worship in churches and to show that people worship Jesus.

Myrrh is a perfume that is put on dead bodies to make them smell nice and foretold that Jesus would suffer and die.

When the Wise Men were about to return to Jerusalem, to tell Herod where Jesus was, they were warned in a dream not to, so Herod could not carry out his terrible plan.

### *Bethlehem*

Ancient Jews knew the significance of Bethlehem also known as the City of David. In the Bible prophets had foretold all through the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah to be born in Bethlehem. Micah in chapter 5 verse 2 states that Bethlehem, though little among the thousands of Judah, shall be the place to bring forth the ruler in Israel. In Hebrew Bethlehem is Beth Lechem which means The house of bread. How fitting for this village to be the birthplace of one who would later be called The Bread of Life, and whose life and death would be commemorated by millions in the breaking of bread.

We do not know why Joseph and Mary travelled the long distance to Bethlehem when Mary was so near to delivering her baby. They may even have set off weeks before Mary was due. In fact, there is nothing to indicate that Mary gave birth the night they arrived. However, the journey was long, about 90 miles, 130 kms, taking at least 5 days, and either walking or riding on a donkey may well have hastened the birth. There were two routes they could have travelled but probably did not go through Samaria as the Jews did not mix with Samaritans. Walking south-east through the Jezreel valley and down to Jericho, which is the lowest city on the earth, would have been relatively straight forward. Then they had to climb up 3,500 feet to Bethlehem. How exhausted Mary must have been by then and how desperate Joseph must have been to find shelter for the night, whether or not Mary was in labour at that time. It is unlikely that Mary and Joseph would have travelled alone. It was more usual to travel in a group as it was the only way to protect themselves from robbers. There would have been many people travelling to Jerusalem for the Passover as well as for the Roman census so it may have been easy to find a group to walk with. However, people have long memories and all those who lived near them in Nazareth knew that Mary was expecting a baby and it was not Joseph's. The couple may have been shunned

by relatives and neighbours that made it difficult for Joseph to find people to travel with, or to give them shelter when they eventually arrived in Bethlehem.

Written by Olive Redmond 2015

## *Jewish Passover*

A central theme of the Christmas story is that angels appeared to shepherds who were out in the Judean fields watching over the flock of sheep at night. When we realise that the shepherds were guarding sheep that would be sold for use for thousands of Jewish Passover meals, and therefore valuable, we recognise that the birth of Jesus could not have taken place in December, or even September as thought by some historians, but in early April. The Jewish Passover begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan, which typically falls in March or April of the Gregorian calendar. Passover is a spring festival, so the 15th day of Nisan begins on the night of a full moon after the northern vernal equinox which is 22 March. Every Jewish man was expected to make the journey to the temple at Jerusalem at least once a year. When Joseph and Mary were required to go to Bethlehem, as the birthplace of his ancestors, to be registered for the Roman census, Joseph would have been able to fulfill his visit to the temple at the same time. Bethlehem was only about 6 miles, 10 kms, from Jerusalem.

To understand about Jewish life at the time of Jesus, we rely on the Jewish writer Josephus. He was born 37 AD and educated in Jerusalem. As head of Jewish forces in Galilee he fought against the Romans and was eventually captured and kept as a slave and interpreter by Vespasian. When Vespasian became Emperor of Rome he granted Josephus his freedom. Josephus defected completely to the Roman side and was granted Roman citizenship. He later became an advisor and interpreter to Vespasian's son Titus, serving as

his translator during the Siege of Jerusalem which resulted in the destruction of the city and Herod's temple. Josephus died in 100 AD. The population of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' birth is not known but may be estimated as about 150,000 to 200,000. Josephus writes that around 70 AD 256,500 lambs were sacrificed for the Jewish Passover in Jerusalem. Jewish law stated that the Paschal lamb had to be completely consumed by the family at the meal and there were to be no less than 10 and no more than 20 people at the meal. If we take the number of people as at least 10 at a meal and there were over 250,000 lambs killed we can assume there were about 3 million people in Jerusalem at Passover. We now see that the population increased about ten-fold at Passover time and the number was probably similar each year. This helps us understand why 'there was no room for them at the inn'.

Researched by Olive Redmond 2015

## *The Inn*

The Hebrew word used in the ancient scriptures is Kataluma but it has several meanings including inn, and upper room. The only other time Kataluma is used in the New Testament is for the upper room of the Last Supper. The Biblical account of the birth of Jesus does not mention a stable, barn or cave, but it is assumed because of the manger being there. A manger is a feeding trough for animals, and a barn or stable is where one would expect to find it. But in the ancient world, as well as in primitive modern cultures, a small number of flock animals were housed, not in sheds, but inside the house in one of the ground floor rooms. Here, animals, tools and agricultural produce were stored. Here, too, food was prepared and possibly eaten. Family sleeping quarters were on the second floor, an upper room. By being inside, the animals were protected from bad weather and theft. In addition, their presence provided body heat for cold

nights, access to milk for the daily meal, and dried manure as a vital fuel source.

While we do not know why space was not made for a woman about to give birth, it may indicate the house was full of elder members of Joseph's family, who had priority. It is unlikely Mary gave birth alone, but would have had women relatives attending her. Jewish men were not usually present during the birth process, so Christmas card pictures of Joseph delivering the baby are unfounded. The scripture account actually says, There was no room for them in the inn. Indicating they were very low-down the list of important people for whom room would have been made. An inn in the Jerusalem area was a large building, usually 2 storey, called a khan or caravanserai. Just as our present day motels must provide room for cars, the khan would have rooms upstairs for people to sleep, and their animals would be kept at ground level in a large courtyard where they could still be seen by their owners. Animals were valuable to their owners and whereas you could lock your car, the only way to keep your animals safe was to have them within eye-sight. The rooms upstairs were not rooms such as we have in our homes, but were more like large balconies looking down on to the courtyard. There was no privacy in a khan with many people crammed into them, especially during Passover week.

Written by Olive Redmond 2015

### *Jesus' name*

A typical Jew in Jesus' time had only one name, sometimes supplemented with the father's name or the individual's hometown. Thus, in the New Testament in the Bible, Jesus is commonly referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth". Jesus' neighbours in Nazareth referred to him as "the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon" or "Joseph's son". In the book of John, the disciple Philip refers to him as "Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth".

The name Jesus is derived from the Latin name Iesus, taken from the Greek name Iesous. The Greek form is a rendering of the Hebrew name Yeshua, which comes from the earlier name Yehoshua, or in English, "Joshua". The name Yeshua appears to have been in use in Judea at the time of the birth of Jesus. The 1st-century works of historian Flavius Josephus, who wrote in Koine Greek, the same language as that of the New Testament, refer to at least twenty different people with the name Jesus. The origin of Jesus' name in the context of the New Testament is generally given as "Yahweh is salvation". Since early Christianity, Christians have commonly referred to Jesus as "Jesus Christ". The word Christ was a title or office "the Christ", not a given name. It derives from the Greek word Christos which is a translation of the Hebrew word mashiach meaning "anointed", and is usually transliterated into English as "Messiah". In biblical Judaism, sacred oil was used to anoint certain exceptionally holy people and objects as part of their religious investiture (see Leviticus 8:10–12 and Exodus 30:29). In Greek it is Christos, more commonly known as Christ.

Angels announced to the shepherds: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Bethlehem is the City of David. In the New Testament, in Greek, the word was translated as Hee-ay-sous, or Jesus. Only when we know the meaning of these words can we understand that the angel told the shepherds that the great creator of the world, Jehovah of the Old Testament, whose birth had been foretold as the Saviour of the world, longed-for for centuries, had been born that day in Bethlehem. Only then are we able to glimpse the amazement of the angel's next words - Ye shall find the babe ... lying in a manger. For centuries the Jews had longed for the great Mashiach, Messiah, to come to earth to save them from their constant oppression, but never would they have looked for him in a manger. No wonder they missed him!

Olive Redmond 2015

## *Boxing Day*

Boxing Day takes place on December 26th and is only celebrated in a few countries. It started in Britain about 800 years ago, during the Middle Ages. It was the day when the alms boxes were traditionally opened so that the contents could be distributed to poor people. These boxes were collection boxes for the poor, often kept in churches. Some churches still open these boxes on Boxing Day. In Holland, some collection boxes were made out of rough pottery called 'earthenware' and were shaped like pigs. Perhaps this is where we get the term 'Piggy Bank'!

The 26th December is also St Stephen's Day. He was a very early follower of Jesus and was the first Christian martyr. A martyr is a person who dies for their religious beliefs. He was stoned to death by Jews who didn't believe in Jesus. The Christmas carol, Good King Wenceslas, is set on 26 December, 'on the feast of Stephen' and is about Duke Wenceslas in the Middle Ages, in Bohemia, later called Czechoslovakia, who brings food to a poor family. He is accompanied by his page boy who, being younger and smaller, struggles through the deep snow. The king advises him to walk in his footsteps to make life easier for him.

It was traditional that servants got the day off to celebrate Christmas with their families on Boxing Day. Until the late 1950's it was common for milkmen, butchers, and rubbish collectors, to travel round their delivery places and collect their Christmas box or tip but this tradition has now mostly stopped. Boxing Day has now become another public holiday in countries such as Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It is the traditional day that pantomimes started to play. There are often sports played on Boxing Day in Britain, especially horse racing and football matches. Shops often have big sales in stores in Britain and other countries.

## *Merry Christmas*

How Merry Christmas sounds around the world

Chinese Cantonese - Saint Dan Fai Lok  
Chinese Mandarin - Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan  
Danish - Glædelig Jul  
Dutch - Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar  
English - Merry Christmas  
Filipino - Maligayang Pasko  
French - Joyeux Noël  
German - Froehliche Weihnachten  
Greek - Kala Christouyenna  
Hawaiian - Mele Kalikimaka  
Hindi - Shub Naya Baras  
Hungarian - Kellemes Karacsonyi unnepeket  
Icelandic - Gledileg Jol  
Indonesian - Selamat Hari Natal  
Italian - Buon Natale  
Japanese - Kurisumasu omedeto  
Korean - Sung Tan Chuk Ha  
Norwegian and Swedish - God Jul  
Russian - Pozdrevlyayu s prazdnikom Rozhdestva s Novim Godom  
Samoan - La Maunia Le Kilisimasi Ma Le Tausaga Fou  
Spanish - Feliz Navidad

## *No One Listened to the Donkey*

Far away, and long ago, a baby was born in a stable. The animals gathered around to look at him. The donkey started to speak but all the other animals loudly voiced their own opinions, not caring what anyone else thought,  
So no-one listened to the donkey.

The horse said, "He's just like any other child."  
The camel said, "He won't amount to much."  
The cow said, "He can't be very important or he wouldn't be born in a stable."  
The sheep said, "He's just an ordinary baby. There's nothing special about him."  
The donkey opened his mouth to speak, but just then they heard some amazing news,  
So no-one listened to the donkey."

The animals heard that a new king had just been born. They were all very excited.  
The horse said, "I shall carry him through the streets and everyone will see what a mighty warrior he is."  
The camel said, "I shall carry him through the desert. He will need someone who can travel long distances through the heat and sand."  
The cow said, "I shall be proud to give him my best milk to grow sturdy and strong."  
The sheep said, "He will need my wool to give him warm clothes and be dressed fit for a king."  
The donkey remembered the mother he carried on the long journey to Bethlehem.  
He started to tell the other animals about it, but they went rushing off to look for the new king.  
So no-one listened to the donkey.

Written by Olive Redmond 2001

## *A Difficult Decision*

He was a relatively young man, and he had a very difficult decision to make. It wasn't too long ago that they had first met, and from the moment he laid eyes on her, he just knew she was the one. After a relatively brief courtship, he asked

her to marry him. To his delight she said yes, and they quickly began making plans for the wedding. Neither of them was from a wealthy family, so the wedding wasn't going to be a very elaborate one. Just a few friends and relatives, maybe some wine and a bit to eat, but that didn't matter. It wasn't the wedding he was looking forward to, it was the marriage. He, a rather ordinary fellow, was going to marry the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. He couldn't imagine being any happier.

Then something unimaginable happened. She became pregnant, and he was not the father. When his friends learned of this state of affairs they counselled him to call off the wedding.

"How could you even think of marrying her," they asked, "She's already beginning to show. Everyone will know. Think of your reputation."

"Besides," they said, "Times are hard. Don't you have enough to worry about without taking on the added responsibilities of a wife pregnant with someone else's child?"

"No one would blame you," they reassured him, "If you called the whole thing off. After all, there's lots of fish in the ocean. Find someone else to marry. Someone with less, well, you know, baggage."

He had to admit they had a point. No one would blame him if he cancelled a marriage to a pregnant woman. This wasn't his fault. Why should he have to suffer because of her situation? Times were hard. Services for struggling families were few. Although taxes were high, they mostly went to benefit the wealthy. Making matters worse, the local political situation was pretty unstable. Some of the most recent policies, he was told, might even be downright dangerous, especially for young families. Better to wait to get married until things settled down a bit. What if he did go ahead and marry her? What then? Would he resent the child? That wouldn't be very fair to the baby, now would it? But



something told him none of that really mattered. He loved her and couldn't imagine living without her. He would grow to love this child, he told himself. He would have to. So they got married, and soon thereafter the child was born - a son. A good many visitors came by to see his wife's new son. Some he couldn't recall ever having seen before, but familiar or not, he invited them all in to see his wife's newborn child, and as he looked down upon his bride holding her newborn child, he knew - just knew - he had made the right decision. He would be a father to this child, he told himself. He just would.

The years went by, and by all accounts he was an excellent father, doing all those things that fathers and sons do. He took the boy fishing, talked with him about life, even taught him the family business. And despite the fact that neither he nor his wife ever pretended he was the boy's real father, the boy grew to love and honour him as well. The boy eventually grew into a fine young man, the kind of man that would make any father proud. Even after it became clear his wife's son would not enter the family business, his love for this child of another stood steadfast and strong, as did his love and faithfulness to his wife. Although the son would die at a relatively young age, his reputation lasted well past his death. Indeed, his life changed history, but so did the stepfather, the man who decided to forego prejudice and marry an already pregnant woman out of faith and love. In doing so, Joseph, husband of Mary, and earthly father to Jesus, provided an example to men everywhere and throughout time of the extraordinary power that faithfulness in marriage, and loving, devoted fatherhood has to literally change the world - one child at a time.

Author unknown

## *The "W" in Christmas*

Author unknown

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience. I had cut back on non-essential obligations, such as extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending. Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas. My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old. For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's "Winter Pageant." I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working on the night of the production. Unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his teacher who assured me I could attend the dress rehearsal on the morning of the presentation. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise. So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found an empty chair and sat down. Around the room, I saw several other parents quietly hurrying to their seats. As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song. Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment - songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer. So I was surprised when my son's class sang, "Christmas Love". Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads. Those in the front row, in centre stage, held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song. As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and so on until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "CHRISTMAS LOVE."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down, totally unaware that her letter "M" appeared as "W". Some of the children, aged up to 10 years old, snickered at this little one's mistake. She had no idea they were laughing at her, so she stood tall, proudly holding her "W". Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together. A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen. In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities. For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear: "CHRIST WAS LOVE."  
And, I believe, He still is.

### *One Solitary Life*

Written by Dr James Allan Francis 1926

He was born in an obscure village  
The child of a peasant woman  
He grew up in another obscure village  
Where he worked in a carpenter shop  
Until he was thirty when he became an itinerant preacher

He never wrote a book  
He never held an office  
He never went to college  
He never visited a big city  
He never travelled more than two hundred miles  
From the place where he was born  
He did none of the things  
Usually associated with greatness  
He had no credentials but himself

At only thirty three public opinion turned against him  
His friends ran away  
One of them denied him

Another betrayed him  
He was turned over to his enemies  
And went through the mockery of a trial  
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves  
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing  
The only property he had on earth

When he was dead  
He was laid in a borrowed grave  
Through the pity of a friend

Nineteen centuries have come and gone  
And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race  
And the leader of mankind's progress

All the armies that have ever marched  
All the navies that have ever sailed  
All the parliaments that have ever sat  
All the kings that ever reigned  
Put together  
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth  
As powerfully as that one solitary life

### *The Elephants*

by Linda Galley

"Grandma, come quick! The elephants are here!" I had no idea what my grandchildren were talking about, so I followed them to the front door. Standing on the front porch were two costumed "elephants" — one short and one tall — who handed gifts to each child and then, without a word, walked

quickly into the evening shadows. Amid the smiles and giggles, five-year-old Stephanie said, "Maybe it's Mrs Black. She was dressed as an elephant at Halloween." As the delighted children began opening their presents, they told me the elephants had been coming often, once bringing a box filled with the makings for banana splits, another time leaving gifts, and still another night delivering Christmas crunch cereal with four bottles of milk — each decorated with a picture of an elephant and labelled with the children's names. Next time there were two notes with the presents: "Please do not follow us" and "Ha! Ha! I am not Mrs Black!"

Who were the elephants? We wondered, but did not know. Perhaps they came because my daughter's family had just moved to this town, to be near the cancer centre where my son-in-law would be entering the hospital for chemotherapy after Christmas. After many nights, the elephants were still delivering boxes filled with things a family might enjoy. One of the most special gifts was a gray ceramic cookie jar shaped like an elephant with blue coveralls and a red hat. The jar was filled with cookies. After such an out-pouring of love, the children decided to hang a big banner outside under the window saying "Thank you, elephants." Two nights later, when the elephants returned, the children gave them each a small treat. After Christmas we assumed the visits would stop, but they did not. On their next visit the elephants left a special New Year's Eve party box.

In February, the children's father died, leaving behind a young widow and four youngsters, ages one to seven. At the funeral, the bishop finally gave us a clue to the elephants' identity. "As a bishopric, we had been praying that people in need might move into our ward so that we might exercise charity," he told us. "When your family moved in, we felt it was an answer to our prayer." Priesthood brethren were there to help unload the moving truck. From then on, many acts of service were performed. After the funeral, the elephants continued to visit. We noticed they always wore different sizes and kinds of shoes. Valentine's gifts arrived, as

well as Easter baskets and birthday gifts. One evening when the elephants appeared, one of the children exclaimed, "The elephant is going to have a baby!" She rushed forward to give her a hug. The hug was returned, but not a word was spoken that would give away the identity of the elephant. For over a year the elephants continued to remember my daughter and her children.

Years have passed and the children are much older now, but the cookie-jar elephant with blue coveralls still sits in the kitchen cupboard. It serves as a happy reminder of what otherwise might have been only dreary and difficult days. The caring and kindness of all our elephant friends will never be forgotten.

### *No Room At The Inn*

Dina Donohue remembers a Christmas event. For years now whenever Christmas pageants are talked about in a certain little town in the USA Midwest, someone is sure to mention the name of Wallace Purling. Wally's performance in one annual production of the Nativity Play has slipped into the realm of legend. But the old-timers who were in the audience that night said they never tire of recalling exactly what happened.

Wally was nine that year and in the second grade, though he should have been in the fourth. Most people in town knew that he had difficulty in keeping up. He was big and clumsy, slow in movement and mind. Still, Wally was well liked by the other children in his class, all of whom were smaller than he, though the boys had trouble hiding their irritation when Wally would ask to play ball with them, or any game for that matter, in which winning was important. Most often they'd find a way to keep him out but Wally would hang around anyway, not sulking, just hoping. He was always a helpful boy, a willing and smiling one, and the natural protector,

paradoxically, of the underdog. Sometimes if the older boys chased the younger ones away, it would always be Wally who'd say, "Can't they stay? They're no bother. "

Wally fancied the idea of being a shepherd with a flute in the Christmas pageant that year, but the play's director, Miss Lambard, assigned him to a more important role. After all, she reasoned, the Innkeeper did not have too many lines, and Wally's size would make his refusal of lodging to Joseph more forceful. And so it happened that the usual large audience gathered for the town's yearly show of shepherds' crooks, beards, crowns, halos and a whole stage full of squeaky voices. Nobody on stage or off was more caught up in the magic of the night than Wallace Purling. They said later that he stood in the wings and watched the performance with such fascination that from time to time Miss Lambard had to make sure he did not wander on-stage before his cue.

Then came the time when Joseph appeared, slowly, tenderly guiding Mary to the door of the inn. Joseph knocked hard on the wooden door set into the painted backdrop. Wally the Innkeeper was there, waiting.

"What do you want?" Wally said, swinging the door open with a brusque gesture.

"We seek lodging."

"Seek it elsewhere." Wally looked straight ahead but spoke vigorously. "The inn is filled."

"Sir, we have asked everywhere in vain. We have traveled far and are very weary."

"There is no room in this inn for you." Wally looked properly stern.

"Please, good innkeeper, this is my wife, Mary. She is heavy with child and needs a place to rest. Surely you must have some small corner for her. She is so tired."

Now for the first time, the Innkeeper relaxed his stiff stance and looked down at Mary. With that, there was a long pause, long enough to make the audience a bit tense with embarrassment.

"No! Be gone!" the prompter whispered from the wings.

"No!" Wally repeated automatically. "Be gone!"

Joseph sadly placed his arm around Mary and Mary laid her head upon her husband's shoulder and the two of them started to move away. The Innkeeper did not return inside the inn, however. Wally stood there in the doorway watching the forlorn couple. His mouth was open, his brow creased with concern, his eyes filling unmistakably with tears.

"Don't go, Joseph," Wally called out. "Bring Mary back." And Wallace Purling's face grew into a bright smile. "You can have MY room."

Some people in town thought that the pageant had been ruined. Yet there were others — many others — who considered it the best of all Christmas pageants they had ever seen.

### *Geese lost in the snow*

Author is unknown

There was once a man who didn't believe in God, and thought Christmas was a time for Santa Claus and presents, not the birth of Jesus. He didn't hesitate to let others know how he felt about religion and religious holidays. His wife, however, did believe, and she raised their children to have faith in God and Jesus, in spite of his disparaging comments. One snowy evening, his wife was taking their children to a church service in the farming community in which they lived. They were going to think about Jesus' birth. She asked him

to come, but he refused. "That story is nonsense!" he said. "Why would God lower Himself to come to earth as a man? That's ridiculous!"

So she and the children left, and he stayed at home. A while later, the winds grew stronger and the snow fell more heavily. As the man looked out the window, all he saw was a blinding snowstorm. He sat down to relax before the fire for the evening. Then he heard a loud thump, then another. Something had hit the window. He looked out, but could not see more than a few feet. When the snow slowed down a little, he ventured outside to see what could have been beating on his window. In the field near his house he saw a flock of wild geese. Apparently they had been flying south for the winter when they got caught in the snowstorm and couldn't go on. They were lost and stranded on his farm, with no food or shelter. They just flapped their wings and flew around the field in low circles, blindly and aimlessly. A couple of them had flown into his window, it seemed.

The man felt sorry for the geese and wanted to help them. The barn would be a great place for them to stay, he thought. It's warm and safe. Surely they could spend the night and wait out the storm. So he walked over to the barn and opened the doors wide, then watched and waited, hoping they would notice the open barn and go inside. But the geese just fluttered around aimlessly and didn't seem to notice the barn or realize what it could mean for them. The man tried to get their attention, but that just seemed to scare them, and they moved further away. He went into the house and came with some bread, broke it up, and made a bread crumb trail leading to the barn. They still didn't catch on. Now he was getting frustrated. He got behind them and tried to shoo them toward the barn, but they only got more scared and scattered in every direction except toward the barn. Nothing he did could get them to go into the barn where they would be warm and safe.

"Why don't they follow me?" he exclaimed. "Can't they see

this is the only place where they can survive the storm?" He thought for a moment and realized that they just wouldn't follow a human. "If only I were a goose, then I could save them," he said out loud. Then he had an idea. He went into the barn, got one of his own geese, and carried it in his arms as he circled around behind the flock of wild geese. He then released it. His goose flew through the flock and straight into the barn. One by one, the other geese followed it to safety. He stood silently for a moment as the words he had spoken a few minutes earlier replayed in his mind: "If only I were a goose, then I could save them!" Then he thought about what he had said to his wife earlier. "Why would God want to be like us? That's ridiculous!" Suddenly it all made sense. That is what God had done. We were like the geese - blind, lost, perishing. God had His Son become like us so He could show us the way and save us.

As the winds and blinding snow died down, his soul became quiet and pondered this wonderful thought. Suddenly he understood why Christ had come. Years of doubt and disbelief vanished with the passing storm. He fell to his knees in the snow, and prayed his first prayer: "Thank You, God, for coming in human form to get me out of the storm of life!"

### *Christmas Began with a Baby*

At the focal point of all human history, a point illuminated by a new star in the heavens revealed for just such a purpose, probably no other mortal watched - none but a poor young carpenter, a beautiful virgin mother, and silent stabled animals who had not the power to utter the sacredness they had seen. Shepherds would soon arrive and later, wise men from the East. Later yet the memory of that night would bring Santa Claus and Frosty and Rudolph - and all would be welcome. But first and forever there was just a little family, without toys or trees or tinsel. With a baby - that's how Christmas began. It is for this baby that we shout in chorus:

Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!  
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that man no more may die;  
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second  
birth.

By Jeffrey R. Holland in Without Ribbons, New Era Dec 1994

### *Bible Quiz for children*

1. How many Wise Men followed the star?
  - a. 3
  - b. one named Melchior, the others are legends
  - c. unknown – the Bible doesn't say
2. Who sent the Wise Men to Bethlehem?
  - a. an angel of the Lord
  - b. King Herod
  - c. no-one, they saw the star and followed it
3. Where did the Wise Men find Jesus and Mary?
  - a. in a house
  - b. in a stable
  - c. neither
4. How were the Wise Men warned that they should not go back to Herod after they saw the infant Jesus?
  - a. in a dream
  - b. by Joseph
  - c. by the shepherds
5. Who was Emperor of Rome when Jesus was born?
  - a. King Herod
  - b. Caesar Augustus
  - c. Cyrenius
6. Where did the angel tell the shepherds they would find the Baby Jesus?
  - a. in Bethlehem

- b. in a manger
- c. in a house

7. What is another name for the City of David?

- a. Nazareth
- b. Jerusalem
- c. Bethlehem

8. What does Immanuel mean?

- a. King
- b. God is with us
- c. Prophet

9. Who told Joseph to take his family to Egypt?

- a. the Wise Men
- b. King Herod
- c. an angel of the Lord

10. When they returned from Egypt, where did Joseph, Mary and Jesus live?

- a. Jerusalem
- b. Bethlehem
- c. Nazareth

Answers can be found by reading Matthew 1:18- 2:23, and Luke 2:1-20

1.c 2.b 3.a 4.a 5.b 6.b 7.c 8.b 9.c 10.c

### *Quiz questions*

1. In the Christmas carol where did the partridge live. (Pear tree)
2. Number of turtle doves a true love might send. (Two)
3. What country did the hens come from (Three French hens)
4. Number of gold rings from a true love. (Five)

5. Name the time of 4 weeks before Christmas (Advent)

### *Christmas Quiz*

1. Name 4 of Santa's reindeer.
2. Does Santa live at the North or the South Pole?
3. What gifts did the Wise Men bring to Jesus when he was born?
4. What does Santa put in the Christmas stockings of naughty children?
5. What usually decorates the top of a Christmas tree?

#### Answers

1. Santa has 9 Reindeer; Donner, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Cupid, Comet, Dasher, Blitzen and Rudolph
2. Santa lives with Mrs Claus at the North Pole, with his Elves and the Polar Bears.
3. There were three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
4. Santa puts coal in the stockings of naughty children.
5. The top of the Christmas tree is usually decorated with a star or an angel.

### *Name that Christmas carol*

- 1 Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief (Oh come all ye faithful)
- 2 Listen, the celestial messengers produce harmonious sounds (Hark the herald angels sing)
- 3 Nocturnal timespan of unbroken quietness (Silent night)
- 4 Embellish the interior passageways with greenery (Deck the halls with boughs of holly)
- 5 Twelve o'clock on a clement night witnessed its arrival (It

came upon a midnight clear)

6 While asleep, thinking of Christmas with no colour (I'm dreaming of a white Christmas)

7 A dozen festive 24-hour intervals (The 12 days of Christmas)

8 It's a fluff-ball sphere in the cold season (It's a marshmallow world in the winter)

9 The quadruped with the scarlet proboscis (Rudolph the red nosed reindeer)

10 A triple group of far eastern heads of state (We three kings of Orient are)

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