

## Mommy Stories (True stories by CQ)

Transcribed 2014

Once when I went to school (when I was seven-years-old) a friend at school gave me a piece of candy. She was being kind to me and being a friend. Not too many of the children were being friendly so it was nice that she was trying. But I knew I wasn't supposed to eat candy. I wanted to be friends with her, but at the same time obey my mommy and daddy who told me not to eat it. So I put it in my pocket, and I told her "thank you." When I got home I gave it to Mommy. She said she was so pleased that I had made the right choice, and instead she traded it and gave me some nuts which were very rare for me to have. I felt glad that I'd made the right choice.

One time our family had a special video. Our daddy told us not to tell some other visiting friends about it yet. They were going to see it later. We had to keep it a surprise. When our friends were visiting, however, we didn't obey daddy because we were feeling pretty special that we were going to see the special video first, and so we started talking about it right in front of them, just like daddy asked us not to. It made him sad, and as a result my close friend and I had to miss watching the video with my family when they saw it for the first time. Later I got to see it, and so did our other friends. But I learned that some things are best to keep to yourself if it will make someone feel bad.

Once when I was in Brazil we lived in the mountains. I was ten and eleven at that time. Sometimes various wild animals would come into our property. We had a very large property. I looked out the window and on the huge tree was a tiny, bright green colored bird. It was very special to see it. I quickly called my mommy to come see it too. She came to the window, but when she got there it wasn't there. She went away, and as soon as she went away, guess what? The bird came back again. I saw it and I quickly called, "Mommy, come see the bird!" When she came again it wasn't there. It kept playing peek-a-boo. Sometimes we each get to see special things and not everyone gets to see exactly the same thing at the same time. So we can be happy when we get a chance. But if we're the only one who gets to see something special or do something special, maybe it's our turn and the Lord knows we saw it. Sometimes He lets just some special things happen for each one of us at special times.

I had to learn about forgiveness. I was about ten-years-old and I liked wearing headbands. I had long hair, and it was the quickest way for me to fix my hair. I'd been given lots of different kinds. I had a green, shiny one. I had a pink one with ribbons on it. I had all different types. There was this little toddler who really liked to play with my headbands, and a few of my headbands broke when she came to play to take them. It was a bit sad for me, but I realized it was just a piece of plastic and I could get a new one. She wasn't meaning to do it. I learned I'd be happier if I just forgave her and didn't get so worried about something that was replaceable.

When I was about five-years-old I had a team of friends staying at our house. We were all going to go out for a walk together. My mommy kept asking me to please get on my coat and my shoes so I could go with everybody, but I kept playing around and delaying and not wanting to do it right away. She kept asking me and I just didn't do it. Finally I noticed the house was very quiet and I wondered what had happened. It seemed everyone had gone ahead. They must have thought I didn't want to go. I missed the walk and was home with my mommy because I hadn't obeyed right away. I didn't act like I even wanted to go. Next time when the friends were going on a walk I got my shoes and coat on right away and I didn't miss it any more.

My daddy worked at home on the computer. He was a writer. One time I walked into his office. I didn't know what to do. I needed an idea. He was busy, but he stopped his work and he made something for me. He took an old shampoo bottle that was empty -- a small one. He cut a hole in it, took a few rubber bands, and he made a tiny little guitar out of this. I was so happy and I had my little, miniature guitar to play. Later I learned to play the guitar. I really liked learning it and I practiced every day, and I can use my skill of playing guitar now with my children too. It was nice that he stopped and took the time to make something for me which gave me an interest in learning a skill for later.

Mommy taught me how to do little sewing projects. My mommy taught me how to sew on buttons and do simple stitches. We made little doll clothes together or did simple projects, and now when I need to sew something I know a little bit how to sew. She gave me good ideas and taught me the basics of a skill. I was glad Mommy taught me that.

I have a sister that is several years older than me. We didn't do a lot of things together, but I remember one time when I was six-years-old that she taught me how to french braid my own hair. She put my hands in the right position and gave me ideas, and somehow I understood it, and then I practiced it. Several years later I still remembered what she taught me and I practiced even more, and I learned many different types of braids to do on hair all because my sister took time to teach me something. She also began teaching me how to knit. I didn't knit very much, but I still remember what she taught me when I was six-years-old because later I was able to practice it and make some simple things.

When I lived in Ireland we had berries growing in our garden. We had raspberries -- lots of raspberry bushes. They had to be covered with netting to keep the birds from eating them before we got to eat them. There was another kind of berry on the property that wasn't covered in netting. They were called gooseberries. The adults told us, "Don't eat the gooseberries. They are not ripe yet. Let them ripen." But there was no net on them, and we went ahead and picked them. We just couldn't wait until they would ripen. We put them in our mouth, and oh, they tasted terrible. They were incredibly sour, and we wished we'd obeyed because they were so sour. And because we picked them, those berries wouldn't ripen. So we learned not to do that next time, but to obey even if we didn't understand.

My daddy said we were going to have a skipping rope contest in a few weeks. He gave us some ideas of skip rope tricks we could practice until then. There was a list of all the things that to pass the contest we would need to do. I was determined to try my best. I started skipping rope every day for exercise, and I got very good at it. I was actually surprised because normally most things I couldn't do very well. I was very small. I wasn't very strong. I couldn't run as fast as many others. I wasn't as tall and strong as others. But when I started skipping rope I felt it was something that came naturally and easy for me, and when we had the contest I won! It was good to find something that I felt comfortable doing. So if you feel there's not something you can do very well, maybe you just haven't thought of something yet. There's lots of things to try. Maybe you'll find something that is just what works for you, you be able to do well and succeed at it.

When I was six-years-old I was playing at a park -- sliding and swinging. Then I decided I wanted to climb up the slide. So I grabbed the sides of the slide and started walking up, up. But when I was nearly at the top something hurt my hand very much. When I got down we discovered I had been stung by bees a couple of times on my hand. The bees must have had a difficult time because I'd grabbed them all of a sudden. It was a difficult situation, and my hand didn't feel good for a few days. But then it healed and I learned something very important from that. I learned never to grab something without knowing

exactly what's there, and to check it out and make sure it's safe. Because I learned that little lesson then it kept me safe for many years later. I was much more careful, and it helped me be wiser and more cautious when caring for those younger than me. For example, I was caring for my children. We were playing at a playground, and my son wanted to do the same thing -- climb up the slide. I noticed a bee right at the same place, and he was about to grab it. I quickly warned him, and by a miracle his hand missed just where the bee was. The Lord helped protect him. It was good I was aware of it so I could be praying and watching for his protection.

It was going to be my older sister's birthday. I was playing outside. I was seven-years-old. I wondered what could I give her for her birthday. There was a bush with some beautiful flowers -- light blue flowers. They didn't actually have a special sweet smell. They just didn't smell like anything, but they were the only flowers that were around that time of year. So I picked some of the flowers off the bush, and I found a little empty bottle. I did what I thought you do to make perfume, and I pressed them in water until the water turned all cloudy from the blue of the flowers. I poured it into the little bottle, and I gave it to her as a gift. She was so happy for a sweet present like that, and that I had done something, and put the effort to give her a gift. Even though it didn't actually smell like perfume, she knew that I had done it out of kindness and love. When she was older she decided to learn how to make perfume for real, and now she knows how to make perfume herself also!

My favorite toy to play with when I was young, and even when I was a pretty big girl, was to play with dollies. I liked all kinds of dollies -- the kind that were big and looked like real babies, and the lady-kind that had lots of types of clothes to put on them. I liked caring for them. I especially liked the kind that were like real babies, and me and my friends put the clothes on and the diapers, and we'd pretend like we were real mommies. It was good we practiced taking care of babies and playing because then when we got older, and I had my own babies, I'd had lots of practice. So maybe there's something that you can't do yet because you're not old enough yet, but you can always play good games and practice doing things the right way.

I remember the first time I saw a hippopotamus. It was at a zoo. We got to see it when it was time for it to be fed. The man threw the hippopotamus a whole loaf of bread. The hippopotamus opened his mouth. The bread went in, and then he threw in a whole head of lettuce, and that went into the hippo's mouth. I remember being so surprised how tiny a whole loaf of bread and a whole head of lettuce looked compared to the hippo's mouth. His mouth was huge. It would be like one little pea inside of your mouth. That's how the whole loaf of bread and lettuce looked.

Saturday was usually our clean-up day when I was growing up and we all helped with the jobs. I remember one job we used to do was to sweep, mop, wax and polish the wooden floor. We'd go outside after we mopped the floor to let it fully dry. Then we'd come in and get this thick, gooey stuff called wax for the floor. We'd rub it all over the wooden floor then we'd run outside to play while it dried. Then we could come in and buff it. Sometimes we'd buff it with cloth. Sometimes we were allowed to use the electric buffer. At the end the floor looked so shiny -- as good as new! Sometimes I would clean the bathrooms. Another job we had was scrubbing the wall that was along the staircase. That was always very dirty from happy, little hands going up and down the stairs. So we learned to do all kinds of things. I'm glad I learned those skills.

My first reader that I remember learning how to read was a Ladybird series called *Peter and Jane*. I remember reading the first one -- Number 1A. It was a cute, easy book. I remember enjoying learning

phonics also -- what letters and combinations made what sounds -- how to figure out words and the sound of them. I enjoyed learning how to read and learning about words. I felt it was like a key, and I learned how to read new words. It was like a key opening up a treasure. I could learn to read new stories and find out things I wouldn't have known if I hadn't been able to read it.

My parents made sure we memorized lots of Bible verses when I was young. We learned one nearly every day, and now I have so many verses in my heart and in my mind. Whenever I think of something I need an answer on from God's Word I can usually think of a verse I have memorized because not only did I memorize when I was young, but I continued with that habit of memorizing verses even when I got older. I have lots in my heart and mind now, and it makes it easy to know what the Lord's ways are.

When I turned six-years-old I had my birthday while out on a camping trip. We had nice weather. It was a very fun camping trip. I remember running around the campground with others. We were having so much fun that I even forgot it was my birthday until someone said, "Come back to the camp. We're going to have a party for you!" I went back to the camp and found a special birthday cake had been made. They couldn't make a regular one because there was no oven. So my mother had made lots of pancakes and they stuck them all together to make a pancake cake. It looked like a cake -- just made of many thin layers. I remember it tasted so delicious. I was given a little present of a sewing kit. That's when I started to learn little, simple sewing projects.

One time when we were camping there was a bicycle contest being held at the camp ground. I remember being in the tent and hearing the loudspeakers announcing this bicycle contest. All us children went to participate. I remember some of it. We'd ride a bicycle and when we got to a certain place we'd stop. For example, one table we had to stop at was a contest on how to thread a needle. I'd practiced some sewing before, even though I was very young. I was able to do it easily. I got back on my bicycle and kept riding to the next thing. One of them was a cookie hung on a string down from a branch of a tree and we had to ride past and bite the cookie. There were lots of fun things like that. Then we made it to the end of the bicycle contest. We all were winners. Everyone won because everyone tried their best and it was lots of fun!

When I was about to have my eight-year-old birthday, I lived in Brazil at that time. My mommy asked me, "What do you want for your birthday?" I was thinking all these great things, and then I finally said, "I think what I really want is a giant sized ruby." I wanted it as big as a ball. Well, that doesn't really exist, at least not where we lived. I had my mind on such glorious, amazing things that really weren't even possible to get. When I had my birthday, it ended up that I was sick and had to stay in bed the whole day. However, I got could get up and sit at the table for a simple party, and a birthday snack. I was presented with my simple, sweet gifts that my parents could give me. One of my gifts was the best they could do. It was a beautiful heart necklace with a little, red stone -- a red heart. It was kind of like a ruby. Well, I had so many amazing things in my mind wanting this gigantic ruby that it was easy to be disappointed when I didn't get what I was thinking. But I learned to be content and be happy with what people can give. Otherwise, if you think of all these great things for yourself that you wish that you could have you'll miss enjoying the simple, sweet and beautiful things that you can have. Then I got healed soon after, and I kept that little, cute, red heart necklace for a very long time.

Once when my family was walking down a busy street in Brazil -- it was very hot -- we children got very thirsty. I am sure my parents were just as thirsty too. We were so thirsty asking for water we could hardly even stop ourselves from repeating the request again and again. My parents were doing all they

could to try to find a place that had clean water. It wasn't easy. At last we found some! But it really didn't help us get any water faster, the fact that all us children kept saying again and again how thirsty we were and how we needed water. It didn't make it easier for our parents. We should have tried to be a bit more patient. After we got the water we felt lots better, and we realized we should have just been a bit more patient.

Sometimes on Sunday we'd go for hikes and climb up hills and mountains. It was beautiful out in the countryside. Once we were very thirsty after climbing for quite a while. We found some water trickling out of a mountain rock. It was so fresh and sweet. It was fun to find it there. It was hard work climbing up -- tough exercise, especially for me as I wasn't very strong. But the exercise was just what I needed to help me get stronger, and when I finally made it to the top of the mountain where everybody else was, I was glad I hadn't given up, and that I made it too!

When I was four-years-old I remember my birthday. I was looking forward to it. On my birthday Mommy gave me a big bottle of perfume. She said it wasn't just for me, but it was for me and my friends to share together. I remember feeling a little bit bothered in my heart because I wanted something that was just for me. In fact, I was so distracted by this feeling of, well, I guess it was selfishness, that I didn't even remember the special gifts that I got. I was reminded of them when I talked to my sister years later, and I talked about when I turned four-years-old. She said "That was the year you got such a beautiful package of beads to make necklaces." She wished she'd gotten that package that I had for my birthday, that it was so nice. Somehow I'd forgotten about that as I was so distracted by just wanting everything to be just for me that I missed out on some fun and happy feelings.

Once on my mommy's birthday I gave her a special gift. It was a wallet. It was made of cloth. It had a Velcro closing. My sister suggested that I sew the word "Mommy" on it with a red thread to make it more special. So I did that, just like you do with a pen, except I sewed it with a needle and thread. "M-O-M-M-Y." It was the first time I'd ever tried to do that, and it didn't get everything perfectly the way I would have liked to. I had really done my best. When I gave it to Mommy she was so happy with it. She felt so loved. She looked at it. She didn't even mention my little mistake or imperfection that I made in my sewing job, and she kept that wallet and she used it for years and years. Every time she used it I felt loved, like she really appreciated my effort, and that she really loved me because it was a special wallet with my hard work and effort to make her name be on it. It was difficult for me because I was young and I had never done that before, and she didn't mind that it wasn't perfect. She just saw the love and she loved it.

I had lots of playtime when I was young, and I really enjoyed it. But I also had clean-up jobs to help with each day. It wasn't my favorite time of the day, and I didn't always enjoy it. One time I decided to make up a song to help me do the job cheerfully, and I sang it as I did my job and that helped. Another time while I was sweeping the floor someone told me, "You're such a good sweeper! You're the best sweeper around! You really have a skill to do a good job!" When they complimented me saying how well I swept it made me feel good, like it was a talent I had. It was a skill I had. Every time I swept the floor from then on I enjoyed it, and I liked doing it and I liked to do my best. Because if I was good at that job like they said I was, then I needed to make sure to do it good each time because they knew I could and I liked to show that I knew how to do a good job.

One time on my birthday when I was a bit older (I was a teen) we didn't have a lot. My parents didn't have much to give me on my birthday. I didn't mind. I was having fun growing up. But I did want to have

a happy birthday, and I was kind of wondering what would make my day special. It didn't seem there was anything that could happen. There was nothing special going to happen. I wasn't going to be getting any special, fancy presents. I wasn't going on any excursion. I was just going to be home doing my learning and studying, and doing my little jobs, learning my skills. When I woke up on my birthday morning I had an amazing feeling. I just felt so, so happy. There wasn't any specific reason for it. I knew it was the Lord who was making me feel this feeling. I was just extra happy the whole day! And really that's what people want on their birthdays -- just to feel happy and have a happy day. Maybe that's why they think presents are so important because they are hoping to be happy, and thinking that will make them feel happy, but I got to feel happy no matter what. I got what people really wanted, just to have a joyful, fun day. It was a memorable day because of that. And that was the year, a bit later in the year, that I had one of the most happy days of my life—the day I decided to follow Jesus, and would live for Him and do His work all my life. That was the happiest days of all. I was overflowing with “joy unspeakable”.

Once when I was in my late 20's I was hiking in the mountains with some other young people. I was in charge and needed to take care of them, but it wasn't very safe there, so I was praying a whole lot. There is something that I would have been very afraid of if it happened. And guess what? It did happen. But amazingly I felt peace. What happened was a very large snake was right on the pathway where we were walking through the bushes, and it was so large I couldn't see its head or its tail -- just the fat middle section of its body as it crossed in front of me on this pathway of about a meter wide. I had to just step over it and keep on going, and the Lord kept us safe that whole time. If something that you're afraid of happens, if you're under the Lord's protection He can give you the peace and protect and keep you no matter what.

When I was a young girl of five-years-old and I lived in Ireland there was lots of green grass and trees. It rained almost every day and everything stayed green. When it wasn't raining we would play outside. There was a hill near our house. At the top of a little pathway was a big cow pasture. The cows weren't always there, but there was a fence around it so they would stay in their pasture. Sometimes my brothers and my friends and sister would climb over the little, wooden fence and go playing on the grass when the cows weren't there. They seemed to have fun finding all the big cow paddies. But I couldn't go play with them. Well, I could have if I wanted to, but something stopped me. I was terribly afraid of cows. I was sure they would come there right when we were playing, even though they were nowhere to be seen. My sister would encourage me, "Come, come. Play on the grass. It will be alright." But because I was so afraid I spent the whole time just standing on the wooden fence watching everybody play. Later when I was a young adult I was climbing up a hill, and at the top there were a lot of cows and bulls. In order to get to the other side where we needed to go we had to walk right past, right through the cows, right beside the bulls with big horns. I knew that when I was younger I was afraid of cows and I wasn't looking forward to passing by them, but there was nothing that could be done. I was forced to just trust the Lord, and pray. So I prayed for peace and I prayed for faith. I thought it was silly to stop from doing things that were fun and good to just because fears held me back. If I didn't go through the cows we would have had to just turn around and go all the way back down the hill and not reach where we were going. So I just kept walking and I prayed as I walked, and nothing bad happened to me, and it was all fine. I was glad I'd chased away my fear and trusted the Lord. And that Jesus hears my prayers and kept me safe, in what could have been dangerous with out His help.

When I was young I had to learn about being careful for my things so they wouldn't get lost. Once I had a very nice, big red umbrella. It was a gift to me. I really liked that umbrella. Not everyone had one like I did. It was special to me, and I liked that it was big and red because I liked bright colors. I would use it sometimes in the sunshine. We'd sit outside on the grass under our umbrellas to protect us from getting too much sun. There was a lot of sun there where we lived. On rainy days it was a handy umbrella to take out with us to keep us dry when we needed to go into town. One time when I went out I wasn't very careful, and I left my umbrella just wherever we were. I was imagining that my parents and someone else would take care of my things for me, but nobody noticed that I wasn't taking care of my umbrella. I just left it and kept on going. When I got home I realized my umbrella wasn't there. I didn't have it again. I never had it again because I wasn't careful and mindful and watchful. It was a good lesson to learn. I'm glad I learned it when it was just an umbrella. It's easy to get another one. There are some things that if you lose you can't get them again because maybe there is only one of them. Or something where it takes a long time to replace it, for example, a passport. If you lose that while you're traveling that takes a long time and it's very expensive to get a new one. Or maybe someone gives you something special and they made it by hand so there's only one of them. When I learned that lesson with that umbrella it made me more careful with everything else.

I had different pets around when I was growing up. I remember one pet someone in my house had was a turtle -- a big turtle. We had a stone floor house, and he just would walk around the house wherever he wanted to. I'd feed him lettuce and other leafy vegetables. It was fun to see him wherever he was trotting along. Another pet we had a few years later was a little green parakeet. We called him 'Peter Green,' and we liked him. He was sweet. One day a little girl went and opened the cage door when the parakeet's cage was on a porch outside. Our green parakeet flew away. It flew to the nearby tree. We could see him. The adults tried to catch him and bring him back but they couldn't. We were sad to see him go. Then we got a new green one to replace it.

We can't always keep everything forever. Things happen. Things or animals leave. Maybe people leave, or we miss them, or they're gone. The Lord can provide something else. It's best not to be too sad. There's always something that can cheer us up. Later we got another pet. It was a dog this time, and he was brown. We decided to call him 'Peter Brown.' We made up songs about him because he was very jumpy and wild. He tried to jump up on us whenever we played outside. He didn't hurt us. He was just a little bit too wild for us sometimes so we made up funny songs. But he was a naughty dog and he would run off -- run off down the street away from our property. Then one of the adults would go and find him and bring him back. One time he ran away and we never found him again. Maybe he went to live somewhere else. We were sad he was gone in some ways, but also he didn't jump on us anymore, and we could play more easily outside. And later we were leaving the country, and we would have had to give him away anyway, so maybe the Lord found a different home for him just in time before we left. So there are times to have things and times not have things. Every day you can trust the Lord for whatever comes your way or whatever leaves you or you don't have. If you have faith and praise there'll be something special soon or later. If you are happy for what you have and be content, and not always thinking you wish you had something you used to have it will be easier for you because nobody ever has something all the time their whole life. In heaven we'll get all the things we want and we won't have to miss having things that are special to us, like pets or friends.

Sometimes little hurts and bonks and bruises can help protect us from bigger ones. In some way it can keep us safe because it makes us more aware and alert. Some of the bonks I got that taught me

different lessons: One time when I was in the kitchen helping to cook, I didn't realize that steam was hot. Well, I learned that it was because I placed my hand right above where hot steam was coming out of the pot. It hurt my finger. I quickly put it in some very cold water to help take away the burning feeling. It was a surprise and a shock. I wasn't expecting it to happen, but it made me wiser and much more careful in the kitchen. It protected me from other burns because I was much wiser about pots and hot water. Another time I was walking down the street and I had a little paper card in my hand. I was fiddling with it with my fingers. I was rubbing it against my finger, and I didn't know either that paper is actually very sharp. If you rub it the wrong way against your skin it can cut you. Oh, it cut me and I didn't like that feeling, and it hurt. I didn't realize that would happen, but it made me more careful with paper, and now I can help other children when I see them fiddling with paper, and I see they might have the same accident. I can tell them about what happened to me and I can teach them, and it can save them from getting hurt.

Another time when I was two-years-old there was a mattress on the floor and us little kids were jumping and bouncing and rolling around and having great romp around for exercise indoors. I hadn't gotten hurt doing that before, but all of a sudden I got a bonk and I hit my lip, and my lip got a bit puffy. It wasn't a bad bonk, but I didn't like that feeling. All of a sudden I had this puffy lip when I tried to close my mouth. It felt very odd, and it showed me, 'Oh, I just can't always bump around and jump around and get wild without an accident happening. I have to be careful!' And that taught me to be more careful.

When I was older, in my teen years, I wanted to try and kick my leg as high as I could. I thought I could kick it really high, and I learned that sometimes you can lose your balance if you do that. I kicked my leg so high it made my other leg standing on the ground slip out from under me, and I fell down with a thud. Oh, it was a big bonk. I had a huge bruise on my thigh from falling, and that taught me to be careful. I didn't do that again without being careful. And now when I see my children doing something that they'll lose their balance because they're kicking so high, I can warn them, 'Be careful. Hold onto something. Don't lose your balance and fall backwards!' Now I got hurt once, but I saved children from getting hurt many times because of that. It made me wiser, and helped to protect others.

When I was ten-years-old my brother was very sick. He had appendicitis. We lived far out in the mountains, far away from a hospital. So after it seemed that he need to go to a hospital to find out what was wrong, that perhaps it was appendicitis, they took him to the hospital. By the time he got there his appendix had burst and it was a very serious and difficult situation. My brother got very ill and it seemed like he wouldn't make it. For a few weeks we prayed desperately for him every day. We joined in desperate prayer, and then he pulled through, and he was healed and we learned that God can do the impossible and as a result of prayer He heals. He's healthy and strong and did wonderful missionary work his family and his three children.

When I was about six and seven-years-old we lived in Portugal. Our house wasn't too far from the beach. Well, it probably didn't seem that way for an adult. Sometimes we'd walk to the beach for exercise time, and the walk seemed to go on and on, and seemed like a very long walk. It usually took about half an hour only, but when we got to the beach we were so happy we'd made it there and that we didn't give up and say the walk was too long because we liked playing in the sand. My favorite thing was trying to find treasures in the sand -- little lost toys or bits and pieces of this and that. I always felt it was fun when I found some little plastic trinket buried in the sand. I had learned that when I persevered



and made it to the end of what we were trying to do, I was happy I made it. When we got there it didn't seem like the walk had been so long because we were just glad that we got to go to the beach.

When I was young I liked to climb up things -- mostly low trees. We had a house with a basement where near the ceiling of the rooms was a window. The window was right on ground level if you were outside. One time I got an idea that I wanted to climb up all the way from the basement room up through that top little window and crawl out on the ground outside. Well, I made it safely, but it wasn't a very good idea. I don't know how I actually managed to safely get out. It would have had to been the Lord and His angels protecting me. I just gathered whatever I could -- all kinds of odd boxes and crates and stacked them all, balancing them on top of a chair. I managed to climb out. I think I realized when I got up there and looked back down through the window at how far I'd climbed, it really wasn't safe and I didn't do it again. I tried to be safer, especially because one of my friends tried a climbing trick on a tree earlier, and they'd fallen and got their arm very hurt, and it showed us all that you can't just climb wherever you want on whatever you want to because gravity just might pull you down and it won't feel so great. I was glad the Lord protected me when I was a child and sometimes had a silly idea.

One beach we went to when I was real young had a gate -- a very tall gate right at the entrance to it which was locked at night and opened during the day. We had a long beach trip there one day, and as the sun was starting to set we walked back up, way up to the entrance to get on the bus to return home. However, when we got to the gate we realized it had already been locked. It was locked up for the night and we were on the beach. Right then was when the bus arrived. What should we do? Well, the gate looked very tall to little me, but somehow with everyone working together, and the very kind bus driver getting out of his bus to come over to the big gate, we managed to get everyone up and over the gate, back down the other side, and all made it on to the bus. That was a kind bus driver to stop and wait and to help us.

I remember when I was around eight-years-old I started to feel lonely. Maybe it was because the Lord wanted me to be His friend. I was just starting to get to know more about Jesus and how to talk to Him. I used to always feel I wished I could have a friend. I did have brothers and a sister and several other friends living with us, but still I felt that sad feeling. One time on a walk with my daddy through this kind of woodsy area, I found some bamboo poles, and little bits of long grass leaves, and I made a tall person with it. I tied bits of long grass on to some shorter parts of the bamboo poles and made the legs act like a hinge so this bamboo person could walk besides me. I made a stick man. Somehow I actually started to feel a little bit happy like if I had a friend walking with me. Soon after that I began to talk to Jesus more and learn how to pray. One time I remember at New Year's Eve my daddy was praying for us for the new year, and that was his wish -- that his children would really learn to talk to the Lord and learn to pray. I guess God answered his wish because I felt more lonely then and it made me want to have a friend and Jesus was the One that was with me all the time. So I began to talk to Him more and find out how real He was, and He would answer my prayers, and I soon learned to hear from Him too. Then I wasn't lonely any more, at least not as lonely as I used to be. If I ever felt lonely again I'd realize maybe I hadn't talked enough to Jesus lately. That would always make me feel better.

One time I did a special project with my daddy. It was something different I hadn't done much of before. I had a little piece of wood and daddy taught me how to sand it and make it smooth on the edges. We put a pretty sticker in the middle of it. Then we varnished it and made it all shiny. It was a little picture. Then he showed me how to put a hook on the back of it. We screwed in a little hook so we

could hang the picture up. That was a fun project to do. I liked learning how to work with wood and make things.

I remember when I was eight-years-old for Christmas I got a new set of colored pencils. I really liked the way were in the box, and how they were organized. I really liked them and wanted to take very good care of them. But there was something I didn't like. That was the way I felt in my heart, that I never wanted anyone to use them or touch them or mess them up because I liked them so, so much. I started to think more about the colours than about my friends and helping them have nice art project time. So what I did was, I thought how could I get that feeling out of my heart of wanting everything thing to be so exactly perfect, and it making me not even want to share. So I did something kind of funny, but it sort of helped. I got my colored pencils and I mixed them up in the box so they weren't all in the exact perfect order. They were already mixed up so I didn't have to worry if someone put the colour back in just the right place or the wrong place in the box because it was all in a different pattern and a different arrangement. At least I was trying to do something to help me be a little more sharing. although it wasn't very easy. It is good to take good care of your things, and I was taking good of them. One of my favorite pictures to draw was sunsets. I always liked to draw a sun setting, the water and the beach, and a palm tree. I didn't really know how to draw very well, but that was something I found easy, and I liked the way it looked.

We used to have a skateboard. We didn't actually really use it. I think it was given as a gift to our family. But a lot of accidents can happen with skateboards and daddy wanted us to be safe so he transformed the skateboard into a go-cart. We did it as a project together and got some scrapes of wood, and nails, and screws, and rope, and this and that, and it was a little go-cart we could sit on, and turn it by the board in the front with our feet. If we wanted to go left we'd turn it with our feet to go left or right. That was a fun way to make a safe toy.

Another time I wasn't so safe was because I wanted to copy my brothers doing a trick with the bicycle. We had a steep driveway that curved around. My brothers, even though they were younger, could go down the hill easily even though it went very fast. I thought, "Oh, I am older. I should be able to do that." But I couldn't do it well. So I tried it, and I lost control, and fell, and got big scrapes on my knees and hands. I didn't get as hurt as I could have gotten, and I'm glad I didn't. But that showed me not just to copy what anyone's doing, or think I could be able to do it. I never tried that trick again. I was always much more cautious and careful.

When we lived in Brazil in a house that was kind of in the mountains, often we'd see some interesting animals. One time our mommy called us to come look outside up at the hill. We use binoculars and we saw monkeys -- wild monkeys on the nearby hill. One time we went into this barn that was also on our property, and there was an owl inside the barn. We had a nice quiet time sitting there watching it and not scaring it away so we could look at it. Later we had an art project, learning how to draw some realistic owls, and reading up about them. Another time we saw an armadillo. It was right there in our front yard. It was very interesting.

There is a plant called touch-me-not. We had a house that had kind of an area like a soccer field, except there were stairs leading up to it, and up at the top there was a play area. We discovered these little leaves on the ground growing, but when we touched them they all closed up. It was very fun touching them and watching them immediately react. Usually plants grow very slowly. You don't see them move, but that plant you could see it move very fast as soon as we touched it. I also had a little cactus, and I

learned how cacti plants only need a very tiny bit of water. If I watered it too much it didn't react very well, and I learned that each plant needed something different. I also planted a carrot garden one time. We had little carrots that grew and it was fun seeing our seeds turn into food.

When we went to Brazil there was some new fruit that was easy to get there that we had never tried before. So we had a special activity one night. We had a whole bowl full of one sample of several different types of fruit to try out. We had a coconut. We learned how to crack it and get the milk out first. There was a mango. We got to see what that was like with the huge seed in it. There were special kind of bananas that were to be cooked. We really liked those. They were very sweet when cooked. Another fruit we discovered years later at a house we lived in. In the front yard was a huge tree. It was a fruit tree. Once a year it would have ripe, delicious fruit -- the most delicious I've ever tasted. In Brazil we'd call it a jamboo. Some people say maybe it was rose apple. It was shaped like a pear, except a bit smaller. It was like a radish in color. The center was totally white, and the outside was purple red, and it was sweet as juicy honey with a round seed in the middle. It was hard to get because it was a tall tree. We had a two-story house so often we went on the porch with a long stick with a bucket attached to go out to reach out and pick the fruits with. It was very fun and delicious.

One sunny day we were outside all helping to wash our car together. I had bare feet and was walking on the grass. Well, it wasn't the best idea, especially not there because, before suddenly I had a pain in my foot. It hurt me so much, and I found out I had stepped on a wasp. The wasp stung me twice. Oh, it hurt so much! I sat down for a long time with my foot up. I cried a bit and I thought maybe it wasn't the best to walk around with bare feet in the grass. I learned to be careful. Sometimes it might be alright, but not in that area where I lived. You have to be careful with your feet. It's very important. It made me thankful. I didn't stop to think how I could walk. Every day you just take steps and you don't even think about it, but as soon as you can't use one of your feet or it hurts it makes you think how grateful you are for all the days you can walk easily without any trouble.

I remember when I was three-years-old, I had a sweet friend. Her name was Maria. I had brown hair and she had blond hair. We both had brown eyes. We both were three-years-old. We both were about the same height. We even wore matching clothes just for fun. I remember we wore matching jean skirts with a jean jacket. We even kept our clothes on the same shelf. Because her parents had to go on a long trip she was staying with us for a while, and we were great friends together. We slept in the same room. We were buddies. That probably helped her not miss her mommy and daddy so much because she had me to be with, and I had her. It was fun to have friends. It's fun to do things together with them. Then she went back with her parents when her parents came back from their trip, and I didn't see her again for many, many, many years. I didn't see her until I was nearly thirty years old. But the funny thing was when we met each other again it was like we'd been friends all that time, and had a very nice time talking again. It was nice that we met when we were young. The friends you have when you are little are very special. It's good to treat them well and be friendly together. Maybe you'll meet them when you are grown and you'll be so glad because then you'll have a friend when you're an adult too. And she even named one of her children after me because I was her special friend too.

I remember the first time I went fishing. Oh, it was so fun! We got together all the fishing rods, and the hooks, and the bait, and we learned about how to cast in our lines. We went to this kind of pond or river area. There were lots of reeds around the edge. We had to be careful not to get our lines stuck in the reeds. The fish seemed to be pretty tricky though, and they would bite off the bait without getting

caught. Oh, it took a lot of patience. We were waiting and waiting. We didn't know if we'd ever catch a fish, but it was fun fishing. Then to my surprise, I was the first one to catch a fish. Oh, I was so excited! I saw my line and my rod bobbing and being pulled away a bit. I was so excited I started pulling it in. Others had to help me so I could pull it in just right. We reeled the fish in. It's nice sometimes to feel special, and be the first one to catch the fish, or the first one to get to do something special and new. It wasn't always that way. I wasn't often first so I was very surprised that it was my turn. When something special happens to someone else and it's their turn to get it, it's nice to encourage them and make them feel glad because it's a special moment for them. I was glad the other children were happy for me that I got to have a fish.

Pictures you look at could really affect you. It's important to look at good, beautiful pictures. I remember one time we had a big, empty wall in my bedroom. There were no pictures on it. My mommy got an idea. She bought several postcards. These postcards had beautiful roses on them. One had pretty pink roses, others had red. Another postcard had yellow roses. Each one had a different color -- different colored roses, taken in a beautiful picture. I really liked those and decorated them on my wall. Before we put up those postcards our wall was getting pretty dirty from dirty fingers rubbing all over it. So we washed the wall and made it all pretty. It changed the way it looked and made me want to keep the wall nice too. Even when I grew up I still liked roses, and I really liked yellow roses. One of the postcards had yellow roses and it was one of my favorite ones.

When I was eight-years-old we had a ping pong table in our house. To me it looked very big. My favorite place during the middle of the day for quiet reading time was to go under the ping pong table. My brothers, friends and I used to go under there. We really liked it. It was kind of cozy. There was an old carpet rolled up under there. One time we unrolled it a bit, and we discovered a tarantula spider. It wasn't alive anymore, but it was interesting and made us realize that you never know what you'll find. There were lots of spiders and bugs and creatures in Brazil where we were living. It was good to be careful what you were peeking at, what you were exploring, so you could stay safe.

I remember when I was nine-years-old. I really liked singing. I liked singing things like "Baby Jesus" and "Mary" songs. I liked singing loud, and trying to make my voice sounds as pretty as I could. Around then is when I learned to play the guitar too. We used to sing lots of songs together. I'm glad I learned all the songs I did. When you're young it's easy to learn the words of songs. It helps you remember them when you are older. I'm glad I learned many, many songs when I was young so now I can sing them with my children because I know them by heart.

My mommy was a secretary. Her job was to type. However, when I was young there weren't computers like there are now, and Mommy typed on a typewriter -- a real typewriter. I really, really wanted to learn typing as well. It was something I just thought was very fun, and I still do. I really enjoy typing. It's easier now to type on computers because the keyboard is very soft, and you don't have to push the keys very hard. But with a typewriter you have to push each one down very hard in order to make it type, and make the letter appear on to the paper. So sometimes Mommy would take me to her office and teach me how to type, and I learned how to touch type without looking at the keys. One time, because she knew I liked typing, she gave me a project to type up a long list. I enjoyed it so much, and thought it was a fun job to do. And I felt glad that my typing skill was needed.

When I was two or three-years old we had to leave our house very suddenly. There was an emergency. We couldn't take all our things. I couldn't take all my special toys. I remember I had this big cardboard

box that had been made into a doll house. We taped a flashlight on to it to be the light. That was very fun for me and I enjoyed it. I had this necklace with a silver star on it that I kept in a drawer. But when we had to leave we had to leave quickly so we'd be safe. Maybe that's happened to you. You've had to leave things behind, or you've been in an emergency and had to evacuate. I remember what I left behind, but then I learned I didn't miss them so much. It was more interesting to have new and exciting things happen. If I'd stayed there forever I wouldn't have had all the other wonderful, new, interesting things that I got to experience as I grew older and traveled to different countries.

It's nice when you are young and you notice things that when you are older you seem to take for granted, or adults don't even notice because when you are young everything is new. When I was two-years-old we had these red couches. One day the sun was shining in the window, and my friend and I discovered that if we patted on the red couch it would make the dust fly into the air, and go up to the sunlight that was beaming in. We thought it was the most beautiful thing to see these dust particles sparkling and shining in the stream of light.

When I was about two or three I remember we went on a walk, and there was on the side of the road a very large clay jar. It had a wide opening. We wanted to go inside of it, it was so big. An adult lifted me up and put me inside. It was so big I could look up to the sky. Then we got lifted out again. Perhaps I was just very small and it wasn't so huge, but it was interesting to see how much I have grown now. This clay jar was so big I could fit inside it with room to spare all around me. That was kind of interesting.

Have you ever had a toy that you and others all wanted at the same time? When I was about seven we had this one toy plastic man. It was yellow. I think it must have been like a play mobile man, but it was a bit different than from play mobile nowadays. What was fun about this little man was that you could take it apart and put it back together again. We thought that was so fun to take it all apart and put it back together again. Everybody always wanted to have this man, but there was only one. But we realized it was ruining the joy of this fun toy when we all complained about who could have it first or second or third. So we came up with a plan one day when we were outside. We said, "Let's give each other one full day each with this yellow man, and no one will take it from them or ask them for it. It's their day to have the man all day." That worked! We were happy to have the man the whole day, and happy to share it with someone else for their day. Little solutions like that can be found if you're willing to share and wait your turn. You may get a nice big long turn, when it is your turn.

When I was five-years-old I needed some new sandals. I remember going on the back of the bicycle with my mommy. There was a little seat. She put me at the back, and she bicycled to the shoe shop. We tried on different shoes and different sandals. We found a pair that fit just right. They were a dark blue, leather pair of sandals that had little holes on the front, and a solid back. My mommy thought they were just perfect for me. Then we got back on the bike and rode home. I kept those sandals for quite a while.

Another time when I was seven-years-old Mommy thought it would be fun for me to learn how to sew -- to sew something simple. We went to the cloth shop and looked at all the fabric so I could choose which kind I wanted. I chose a navy blue piece of cloth that had little silver flowers on it. We walked home, and together with my mommy I made a simple skirt -- a skirt I could use. That was a fun project learning how to sew -- choosing my own cloth and getting to wear it.

When I was eight-years-old my teacher had a yo-yo, a very good one -- good quality and it really worked. I thought it would be fun to learn how to do the yo-yo. It was an adult size and had a very long string, and I was very short. So in order to practice it I had to stand on a step so I'd have a little extra room for the yo-yo to go down. Our teacher was very kind and let us borrow it whenever we wanted so we could practice it. I practiced and practiced every day, and I learned lots of really neat tricks -- some of the trickiest ones I could do because it was something I just kept trying every day. I didn't give up until I could do some of the fancy twirls and tricks with the yo-yo. It didn't happen right away that I knew it all. It took a few years, but it was fun once I mastered that skill.

Someone once gave me a pretty pink nightie. It had a picture at the top of a beautiful bird and some flowers. When my sister saw it she said, "Why don't you save it for special? Why don't you save it for your birthday? Don't show it to anybody yet. Just keep it and on your birthday you can wear it." So I learned to save it. I don't think my birthday was that long away, but when you are saving something special it can seem like a long time. Then on my birthday evening I put on my special nightie. It went all the way down to my ankles. It was very long. I walked in the room to show my family. They all told me how nice I looked. That was sweet of them to encourage me.

When I was young there were a lot of foods I didn't particularly like, and they were very difficult for me to eat. Some foods I had to eat because I needed the strength from them and the vitamins, but others I could choose from. There is the fruit guava, and I really didn't like it. So I would eat a different fruit for snack when others ate guava. One time someone couldn't finish their guava. They got too full, and they offered it to me. "Would you like to eat it?" I thought maybe I'd just try it. So I gave it a try and I ate it, and it wasn't so bad. I decided I liked guava, and I didn't have a problem with it, and I ate it after that. It didn't bother me. I used to have a hard time eating oranges because I didn't know how to peel them. As soon as I learned a special trick and how to peel it then I ate them all the time and I really liked it.

When I was nine-years-old there was a little boy who was one-year-old and the mommy asked if I could please keep an eye on him and keep him safe as she needed to go do something. I said, "Yes, I'll watch him." Well, I didn't really know about concentrating and watching little children yet, but that day taught me the importance of it. There was a video playing, and I got distracted and sat down and started watching the video. The mommy came in and said, "I just found my little boy. He was in the bathroom eating the shampoo." Oh, dear! I felt bad that I hadn't watched him well. That wasn't very good that he had something unsafe because of my not paying attention. That was my first lesson on attentive childcare.

We had a steep grass hill on one of our properties, and sometimes we would go on pieces of cardboard and slide down it. During exercise time one time we were out playing, and my brother went zooming too fast down that hill. At the bottom of it was a bit of a jump of a couple of feet so you had to stop before you got to the end, but he didn't, and he fell and got a big cut on his knee. Mommy got us altogether to pray, and read some verses together because recently before that accident we'd been quite silly, and hadn't been acting very wise, and hadn't been respectful to our parents or teachers. We had been acting very foolish. So sometimes accidents help you to get wiser. We memorized some verses and learned that accidents will happen if we're not really listening to the Lord and being too foolish, just doing our own things without praying. Then we decided to change, and things went better after that.

I got my first watch when I was seven-years-old, at Christmas time. I took as good care of it as I could. Eventually it didn't work anymore, or it broke or something. When I was older (I was twelve), I got a

new watch. It was a very nice watch with a gold color made of metal. I used it all the time. It could ring. It had alarms and different features on it. One time when I was camping I went to the bathroom to shower, and I left the watch on the sink. I forgot all about it. I wasn't watching the watch. I left the bathroom. Much later I realized I didn't have my watch. But when I went back to the bathroom it was gone. It was a hard lesson to learn that you have to watch and pray so you don't lose important things. You can't just be thinking about all kinds of things, but you have to focus on the important things.

My friends had little sisters that were twins. On their first birthday we had a party together. We decided everyone would dress up matching with someone else to pretend we were twins. There was a girl (one of their older sisters) who was younger than me, but we both had the same color hair -- brown, and we liked to do things together. We actually were almost the same size, even though she was a lot younger. It was fun doing something together and feeling like I had a friend. It's nice when you can accept people, and make them feel like you like them around you, and she did that.

I really liked going for rides on the Ferris wheel at fair grounds. It was pretty rare that we went on them, but I loved the sensation of being so high up and seeing all around on the ground below. Maybe one reason was because it almost seemed like I left all my troubles and little bothers behind, down on the ground, and I got to have a great view of more than just my little self and the things that were right in front of me. It gave me this kind of thrill, like I was flying.

We can't always go up high like that, just to feel better, and it only happened a few times in my life. But it's a good example of what we can do in our hearts and minds when we start to get too down and focused only on what's happening around us. Things may be difficult and not to our liking, or something may be going wrong, but if we remember to look past it or beyond it, and try to get a new perspective on the situation—more from the Lord's way of seeing things, from His high and good view of all that's going on down on earth—it might help us to be happier.

The first time I remember going on an airplane was when I was seven years old. I had gone on a few when I was younger, but I didn't remember, as I was just one year old then. So the flight when I was older was very memorable. I looked out the window at one point in the journey and said to my mummy, "Look! We are at the beach!" It looked like there was sand everywhere, fluffy sand. She told me that it was actually the clouds, and we were above them. I hadn't even thought of that, as I'd never seen clouds anywhere but above me—never below! I was seeing them with a totally new perspective. The sun was shining for us up there, but for the people way down below, on the ground, it was a cloudy day.

So if things aren't just what you wish they were, or something very difficult, bothersome or sad has happened, try to think of something different, something positive, or imagine what things might be like for someone else right at that moment. Maybe things are harder for someone else. Maybe there's something to be glad about that you haven't thought of appreciating in a while.

When I was 11 years old I got to see a comet. It was announced that when it came it would be very big and bright with a very long tail. However, that didn't happen. In fact, to see it well at all we had to use binoculars. Even then it was nothing more than a fuzzy looking star. But at least I got to see one! Some people didn't get to, so I'm glad I got the chance, as they aren't so common, and are special to see.

There's always something good in any situation! Yes, there is often something a bit bad too, in most situations. It all depends on how you look at it. Maybe it's like watching an eclipse.

I saw a solar eclipse once, and we had something special to look through that made the sun not too bright for our eyes. There was a shadow that slowly covered the sun and then it passed, and things were all bright again.

What if the shadow didn't pass, but had stayed on the sun, keeping it rather dark? When we focus on what we don't like and what is hard for us, it's like a shadow passing over our sunny and joyful heart, and lingering there. However, if we "look on the bright side" and don't keep thinking about the sad or bad, then the shadow of disappointment or sadness passes by, and we are happy again.

Here's a game to try if something unpleasant happens, and you are having a hard time seeing any good in the situation. It's called the "At Least" game. It's played as soon as something happens that's difficult.

What you do is to quickly say out loud something you are glad didn't happen, or something worse that could have occurred, but it didn't! For example, your Lego vehicle falls and breaks up, after you spent a lot of time putting it together. Maybe you could say,

"At least Lego is made to be put back together again, and it doesn't mean I have to now throw it away. At least we have Lego at all! I'm glad that I am not blind, so I can easily find the pieces and build it again!"

There is a saying that says, "Good things come to those that wait." So being patient helps you to not only get what you are hoping for, at the right time and in the right way, but also a lot of other good things included, that are equally important. For example if you really want a bicycle, but it hasn't worked out yet, and is just not yet possible. Having a positive attitude while waiting and praying for a bicycle helps you to enjoy what you do have now. It makes others glad to be around you because you are cheerful, instead of discontent and grumbling. Your attitude of faith also pleases Jesus, which makes Him want to give you a really good bike!

It reminds me of what happened once when I really wanted a turn on our bicycle. We only had one bike and my brothers and I would take turns with it. My younger brother was on it, and I wanted a turn. I asked him for it, and was having a very hard time waiting. I wasn't asking him nicely, but rather demanding a turn immediately. My kind brother seeing how much I wanted it rode it over to me, got off, and calmly gave it to me.

I had already let myself get upset, and was being so very impatient, so I didn't even say thank you. Instead I continued speaking unkindly and angrily, telling him that he should have turned the bike around for me, so it was facing the right direction for me to ride it. My brother didn't even get upset, or say anything back at all. He patiently helped me turn the bicycle around like I wanted. But the Lord wasn't happy with my anger, impatience, and the unkind way I was talking to my brother. So Jesus allowed me to get hurt.

There was something sharp on the bicycle, for some reason. It seemed there was a piece of metal that was sticking out of the bicycle and it cut the back of my leg badly while I tried to get on. I still have a scar on my leg from it. At that moment when I got cut, I knew exactly why it happened—to calm me down, to teach me to not act in that angry, impatient way. Mummy helped me to bandage it up, and I couldn't ride the bike then—not for a long while until it healed. So, my patient, kind brother got to keep riding, and I who wanted it so much, and wouldn't wait or talk nicely, had to miss out for a long time, due to



the little accident. Impatience cost me what I wanted rather than getting to have it. It just didn't work.

I was always very short and rather small—at least compared to my friends. One of my best friends when I was a child was taller and bigger, even though she was younger than I was. It seemed to take so long to grow up. Each new birthday seemed to take a long time to come. But I learned as each year passed, that eventually whatever age I wanted to be at, did happen. It just took time. I was eight years old when I decided that I wanted to be 14 years old—but it seemed so very long away. I thought, “Even just getting to be 11 years old will take so long!” However, as each day passed, as they continue to do, and after just the right amount of time had gone by I had at last reached 11 years old.

When I was nearly that age someone gave our family several new pairs of shoes, in case there were any that we needed or wanted. I chose out some that fit me, and was very happy about them. There was also a pair I really liked—white, leather slip on shoes, with an edge that looked like lace—but they were too big.

When you are growing, day by day, something that is a bit too big may fit you one day. If they had been too small, as some other shoes were, there wouldn't have been anything I could do to make them fit. So to get to wear these special shoes only required time and growth.

I kept these shoes, trying them on every several months to see if they fit yet. I think I expected to grow into them a bit faster than I did. It took me nearly four years till at last I could use them. When I was 14 years old, they finally fit me. It was a long wait, but in time it did happen. I grew to be both the age I wanted most to be, and the shoes could finally be used. It took time and patience, but eventually it all happened.

One time when I was seven years old we had a problem. We were told to never accept and eat candy from people we didn't know. Besides, we weren't to eat candy anyway, because it wasn't good for us. Then when we were outside playing one day, a boy reached over our low garden wall and offered us a handful of candy.

What should we do? Our parents were in the house, and the candy looked pretty interesting. Since we usually never had any we wanted to try it out. We each took one, ate it, and then must have felt the same way that Adam and Eve did. It was a terrible feeling. We couldn't even keep playing we felt so bad inside. We literally started hiding.

We hid the wrappers, and some of us hid in the house. We drank tons of water and kept giving each other a “breath test” to see if our breath smelled like the candy—so we wouldn't get caught that we'd eaten it. It would have solved the whole problem if we had brought the candy right away to our parents and asked them if we could try it out. Or since we had made the mistake of going ahead and eating it, we could have felt so much better if we'd just gone and told them right away what had happened.

The bad feeling never went away all afternoon, till we were discovered! A wrapper was found and our parents asked us about it. We could have answered then and gotten it cleared up, and gone on to happier times. However, because we were so afraid to be honest it took so long with a lot of talking

until we finally told them what had happened. Some of my friends made up silly reasons for why they ate it, saying things like, “The boy who gave it to us said in a scary voice that we had to eat it!” Of course it wasn’t true, and our parents knew no child would do that. So, rather than being honest we tried to make up reasons to try to make ourselves look better. It only did the opposite.

Finally at the end we told the truth and admitted our mistake. We were forgiven and then began to feel much better again. Daddy said that just that day he had brought home some sweet treats for us. Oh boy! If we had told them right way, we could have been eating the treat he brought for us much earlier, and saved ourselves from the bad feelings and wasted play time!

One afternoon my friends and I were sitting around in the room wondering what new thing to do for fun. “Let’s all cut a piece of our hair off,” someone suggested. We knew that was a bad idea. Our consciences told us it wasn’t for us to cut, but up to our parents. We didn’t know how to do it properly. However, no one said honestly what they thought, nor came up with a better idea. We passed around a pair of scissors and each snipped a little piece off our own hair. Probably many children do this to try it. The wrong thing was that in our heart we knew it was wrong to do it, but still did it anyway.

You know when something is wrong to do if you get that sudden “afraid” feeling, wanting to hide and not wanting someone to know about it.

Just as we finished, we heard the footsteps of my friend’s mum coming down the hall. We didn’t want her to see us and find out what we had just done. Sometimes you can do some pretty ridiculous things when you are trying to avoid being honest, afraid of what might happen. We all quickly did as Adam and Eve did and hid by crawling under the bunk bed. Well, as many of us as could fit. One boy didn’t make it as he couldn’t fit. When his mum walked in she saw him, he then noticed that there were bits of hair on the floor. We’d forgotten about that part in our rush to do the hiding thing. Crazy, wasn’t it? Especially since she could probably see us anyway, and she knew we were in the room playing. We wouldn’t have just disappeared suddenly!

It probably looked pretty funny to her, especially as her son looked down and spotted his lock of hair on the floor and said to his mum, “What’s that?” As if he really didn’t know!

Since I felt bad in my heart for doing what I did, I felt I couldn’t tell anyone about it—or I chose not to. It’s odd how afraid the Enemy makes you feel, making you think it’s really a bad thing to admit a mistake or wrong doing. But everyone does the wrong thing or makes poor choices at times, and the more we are honest about them the better we’ll feel, and we can get help, and learn and grow through the experience. Telling someone honestly about our mistake or bad decision can help us to stay humble, and can even help the person we talk about it with to learn something too. We learn something from our failures, and telling others what we’ve learned can help and encourage them too.

Well, it was dinner time a bit later on, and I couldn’t continue to stay away from everyone. As I walked into the dining room, and a table full of people and guests looked my way, it was obvious that I had cut a piece off my hair. One short little part was hanging down in my face.

Someone asked aloud, “Did you cut your hair?” And I said, “No.” Isn’t that silly? Instead of making one mistake I made two! Everyone could see that I had cut it a bit, and knew that I wasn’t telling the truth.

They kind of laughed a bit about it. No one got mad at me, but I felt bad in my heart for not saying to others what I had done, and saying I was sorry, since I knew it was wrong. And not telling the truth about it made people think that they couldn't trust the things I said to be true. Perhaps if I couldn't say what really happened in this situation maybe I wouldn't be honest at other times either.

People can't trust you to be truthful, or that what you say is true and accurate if they find out that you have told an untruth to them. It makes people sad. They feel like you don't love them. They feel hurt in their heart when you do that.

Untruthfulness or lying can take away people's trust in you, and can make friends feel bad towards each other. Someone can feel that if you love them and you know that they love you, you won't be afraid to let them in on the full and true story of what happened. People want to know the truth, and it shows love to your family and friends to tell it to them. Even if it makes you feel more embarrassed at the time, you and they will stay closer friends if you can be honest with one another and also forgive one another.

I was glad that I was forgiven for that mistake. It wasn't a big deal. Everyone still loved me. I saw then that it wasn't necessary for me to feel so afraid to be honest. I would have felt much better much sooner had I taken the step to admit my mistake and apologize.

Perhaps one of the lessons that I learned also was to speak up honestly when my friends had an idea of something to do that I didn't feel in my heart was right. It wasn't fun at the time to go ahead with it, but now I can look back and laugh at how silly I acted by not mentioning something to my friends and instead agreed to their idea.

When I grew a bit older, about 10 years later, I took a hair cutting course, and learned how to cut hair properly. I've since helped to give children, adults, and even myself, a hair trim. It's a bit tricky to do, but when you are older it can be a fun thing to learn, and a handy skill to have.

It's a great skill to be able to speak other languages—at least to be able to say greetings, 'please' and 'thank you,' or to express something important when visiting another country. It can really make someone feel loved and warm their heart if you can say even just one word in their native tongue—the language they learned to speak best.

One time at a park there was a lady sitting on the bench alone. She was from Japan and didn't understand English. A little boy went up to her, and to cheer her, said that God loved her. She wished she could have understood what he was saying. It so happened that some of the few words I could remember in Japanese were, "God is love." So when the lady looked at me, wishing for me to tell her what this cute little boy was trying to say, I was able to tell her, "Kamiwa Ai-desu" (God is love). She smiled, nodded, understood, and was glad for these kind words that a little boy wanted to tell her. She'll probably remember it for a long time and feel happy when she thinks of it.

Sometimes it's hard to say the words just right if you aren't used to a new language, and sometimes people can't understand. However, people appreciate that you try. It shows courtesy and respect for them and their culture.

One time I was offered a refreshing drink of my choice, while living in the hot country of Brazil. I was 11 years old and could speak a little Portuguese, but not enough to describe just what I wanted to drink, though I said things the best I could. I was trying to ask for lemonade. They looked surprised, but wanted to please me, so they went into the kitchen of their small restaurant and made me exactly what they thought I had asked for.

I was brought a small cup of straight squeezed lemon juice—as sour as can be! I saw that they were trying their best to understand me and had gone through the trouble of squeezing those lemons so I didn't want to make them feel bad. I thanked them and drank it all—with a smile! It was a bit funny. At least I got a good dose of vitamin C, and I didn't get the sugar that usually made me feel unwell anyway. I learned how nice it is to be able to speak others' languages if I want them to know more accurately what I'd like to say.

When I had just turned 12, I went to a Christian summer camp with many other young people. I was a very shy person and had a difficult time talking to others. One day while a teacher was talking to the whole group, helping us to memorize a long and difficult-to-remember Bible verse, I took a very brave step. I was willing to risk doing something embarrassing if it helped others.

I raised my hand and said I had thought of a way to easily remember the verse, and the order of the words in it. The teacher told me I could stand up and explain it to everyone. So I did. But by the looks on people's faces it seemed no one understood my method of remembering the right order of the words in the verse.

The teacher did his best to try to demonstrate what he thought I was saying, using the pen and whiteboard—but even he didn't understand, and got it wrong. I was so embarrassed. I wished I'd never tried to say anything. Later on when we were leaving the class another student walked beside me and said, "I understood what you were trying to say." Hearing those words made me feel so much better.

It was good for me to do things that were difficult, and to try to talk to others because that's how I would learn to make myself more clearly understood. But even when I didn't feel I could say things very well, when someone was thoughtful enough to express a kind and true word to me it changed me from feeling embarrassed into feeling confidence and friendship. It gave me courage to not give up, but to keep working on my communication skills.

Because of his encouragement to me I remembered him well many years later when surprisingly we met again and happened to live in the same neighbourhood. I forgot the names of many of the other students at the camp, but the ones who took time to talk with me and to speak kindly I always remembered.

When I was young my family was moving from one country to another in Europe, and we travelled by land. We packed up our car with all it could fit, as well as pulling a small trailer filled with everything else. We drove and drove, and we children fell asleep in the car at night while driving.

It was a difficult job for daddy to drive that heavy load. Then something even more challenging happened. The road in one place was very steep. It was so steep that the car didn't have the power to

pull the trailer up the hill. It was dark and late at night and we were stuck. We couldn't go on anymore, unless we got some sort of help.

I remember waking up and walking out of the car with mummy and daddy, and my brothers to see if there was anyone who could help us. We went into a café that was still open. Thankfully, we found a tractor driver who offered to hook up our car to his tractor. He then drove and tugged us all the way up that steep road. We were so thankful that we could continue on our journey. By morning we had made it to our new country and our new house.

When you are doing all you can, and working hard, and praying, and yet you still can't finish the job because it's too hard, it's great when someone is there to help you out. We all need help at some point, and we can all be willing and ready to help others when they get stuck too. Together as a team people can handle those "too hard to do it alone" type of challenges.

When I was nine we lived in a small house that didn't yet have a washing machine. We had friends who lived nearby that offered to do our washing for us, as they had a washing machine. We'd bring the clothes to their house, and their family would kindly wash and hang them, so the next time we'd visit they would have the clothes ready for us to bring back home.

One week when we went to their house and brought our dirty clothes they told us that their washing machine had stopped working that week, so they couldn't do the new batch of laundry we had brought. However, out of extra love and kindness, they had worked together – the mother and her children – and had washed the clothes we'd brought them last time, by hand! That was a lot of work for them, but they did it, and we were able to have some clean clothes to wear that week.

We didn't leave our next load of dirty clothes with them, since their machine wasn't working. We took care of it ourselves, washing it out, just as they had kindly done for our last load of clothes.

Doing a hard job that benefits you, though it is tough, is nice in the end because you get to have the results of it, and you are glad you did it. But doing a hard job to help someone else only takes lots of extra love and kindness, as you don't see any way that you also benefit from it. However love comes back to you and God blesses you for it, and others are grateful to you for it, and may reward you in special ways for what you did to help them. Helping others, even though it was difficult at the time, can make your heart feel even happier than if it was just a job that you did only for your own good.

It was always fun when our daddy got some new idea of what we could make or learn and do. One time he got the idea to make a potter's wheel, and thought of a way to do it. The main part was made with cement, shaped into a wheel, with a metal pole that went up from the middle of it. On top of the metal pole was a smaller marble wheel. When we sat down at this potter's wheel we could spin the big, heavy cement wheel with our feet, and it made the marble wheel that was flat and attached to it, move like a small spinning table.

On that marble surface we put our lumps of wet clay, and created simple pots and bowls. We children took turns spinning the heavy wheel while one child took their turn to sit and work the clay into a

shape. It was a lot of fun! We all liked to do the relaxing part of making things on it with the clay, but we also worked hard to make it spin to give each one a chance to have that bit of fun.

I remember one morning as we sat in our mountain house living room, we were feeling rather bored. It was more like we just weren't getting any new ideas. We thought each day of learning our school would be just the same as the next. It had been a while since we'd been excited and thrilled about a fun project. We were reading a book with our teacher, as my parents both worked. Thankfully they worked at home, so they were always around if we needed them.

Daddy walked past, and it must have looked like we needed something fun to give us a bit more joy and fun, and spark to our day. He asked us what we were doing, and then got us thinking about creating a puppet show. It was something new and fun that we'd never made by ourselves before.

We had to plan it all—the story, the script for the show, the characters needed, making the puppets with help, learning to sew the clothes for the puppets, writing a song to go along with the show, and all sorts of things. That sure kept us busy and learning new things for a few weeks, till at last it was done! We enjoyed every part of working on that project.

When it's time to run and play outside it's fun to have new games to play together. Today a five year old boy thought of a new game for us all to play. It was called, "Find the Scroll!" The "It" person would run and hide a rolled up piece of paper, then the others would go and find it. Whoever found it would open it and pretend to read instructions on it of where everyone was to go, and what they were to do—as if they were finding a treasure that the scroll was giving clues and instructions to help them find. It's fun to think of new games to play together, especially games that are outdoors in the fresh air.

When I was young we were often making up games and had a lot of fun running and playing. However, it can be hard when you get an idea that you think is real fun, but then you are told not to do it, and that it's not the best to do.

One hot, sunny day we discovered that if we sprayed water from empty squeeze bottles on to the cement it darkened it, and we could make designs and pictures and write huge words. My favourite thing to draw with the water bottle was a big house with an upstairs and a down stairs. It was so big that I could stand in it. The problem was that at the time there was a water shortage, so we were asked not to waste water on the ground, as there soon wouldn't be enough for our house and washing needs.

We felt sad as we were having so much fun, and that feeling of having something interesting to do was nice. So we had to learn that not every idea that seems fun will bring all the best results. Later on the water got less and less and the tap in the sink didn't have water in it, and the toilet didn't flush. We had to bring buckets of water from our swimming pool to the house. Thankfully, the rains came again, and our water tank filled up, and we had enough.

For fun water play we enjoyed our swimming pool. We played many games, and learned different ways to swim and dive, and played games underwater too. One Christmas I got a mask and snorkel as a gift, and used that for fun in the pool, and shared it with my brothers and friends. The swimming pool was the place to play with all the water we wanted! Beside the pool was a flat cement surface that was hot in the sun. We called it the "dancing board" because it felt so hot if we tried to stand on it with our bare feet after swimming, and it made us want to hop around. We went there to dry off and warm up after swimming. That was fun.

If we'd wanted to we could have sprayed little bottles of water taken from the pool on to that surface, to make patterns and pictures, and it would have been fine.

There was something that was very difficult for me when I was about seven years old. It was probably one of the hardest things for me to cope with. It was hard because I felt I could hardly talk with anyone about it, as no one could really understand just what I was trying to say when I tried to express it. Can you guess what it was? Dreams—and bad dreams! I had lots of very bad, ugly and disturbing dreams at night. Sometimes the same unpleasant and terrible dream would be repeated several times, on different nights.

It was so difficult for me to have all these disturbing thoughts and remembrances from my dreams, that I just wished I could forget. And I still remember the dreams as they were so unpleasant and made a big impression on me. Thank the Lord I don't have dreams like that anymore, and now I know how to handle them a bit better when they come. Do you know what I do? Well, I do the same thing as you do when you want to go into a room at night. I turn on the light! I'm not talking about turning on the light in the bedroom. The light that chases away the bad feelings of a dream is to think about Jesus, to quote verses, to pray, and to sing good songs of praise to the Lord. Another thing is to look at a picture of Jesus. This really helps. Just looking at the Light of world—Jesus—helps to chase away the dark feelings and images that are trying to disturb my peace of mind and good sleep.

I remember one time when I was 14 and I had a very bad dream, and I remembered it all day. The next night I didn't even want to go to sleep, even though I was very tired, as I was afraid of having a bad dream again. But then I did a new trick, and it worked like magic! I took a beautiful picture of Jesus and I got in bed. I said to myself, "I'm not going to close my eyes to sleep. I'm just going to look at Jesus—for a very long time!" So I lied down and looked at the picture of Jesus very closely and just kept thinking about how much He loves me and how close He was to me. I felt so much better. And do you know what happened? Well, before I knew it I was awake for the morning feeling very happy and rested—and glad for the very good dreams I'd had that night! I had fallen asleep—without even realising it—while looking at Jesus, and had dreamt beautiful dreams!

One day recently I was thinking about the dreams I used to have, and how hard they were for me. But then I got a good thought! Do you know why I can now be glad that I had those difficult dreams? Because they showed me how wonderful the love and light of Jesus is! They showed me how terrible and bad and ugly and icky and horrible the Devil is. And I decided then, as a child, that I wanted to be on God's side. I wanted to have a happy and faith-filled life. I liked the beautiful things that Jesus gave to me when I chose His way. I liked having dreams that made me feel happy the next day. I liked learning more about Jesus, as He made me feel peaceful and not worried or afraid. I liked how when I looked to Him—even at just a picture of Him—that amazing things happened. I liked that I just had to say His name in prayer or praise and miracles would happen.

The darkness of the Enemy will always keep trying to take away our joy and our peace and faith. That's what he does—because he doesn't know how to make anything good, or do anything real amazing, and he's the weakest thing around when compared to God's amazing, far-out super power that's more powerful than anything around! So all he can do is try to grab the joy and faith and peace that people have, if they let him. The Enemy can't give us anything, so he just robs and grabs and scares and pollutes and breaks down. It's like a demolition team that only knows how to bring buildings down, but not how to create nice, good, new buildings.

But God can make and do anything! And when we are close to Him He'll do the most amazing things for us— heal sickness that others say can never be healed. He can make rain come or make it stop. He can create stars and planets and an Earth, and fill it with people, animals, and plants. And God's mind is so big and amazing that He can be aware of every detail at the same time—he can know when someone on Earth needs it to stop spinning--like He did for Joshua. Or God can make it spin backwards for awhile like he did for king Hezekiah, to prove to him that he would be healed. Yet He can also keep track of how many hairs are on your head, and notice the tiniest little splinter that you—one person among billions—have in your finger, and help you to remove it when you pray.

Jesus loves, He cares, and He knows everyone and everything, and will give the best things to those who are looking to Him, loving Him, and wanting to be around Him. He brings all the good things to those who love and obey Him—because He's the only one that can create and make wonderful things that last!

When I was about 10 years old, sometimes on Sunday we'd go for hikes and climb up hills and mountains. It was beautiful out in the countryside. Once we were very thirsty after climbing for quite a while. We found some water trickling out of a mountain rock. It was so fresh and sweet. It was fun to find it there and to experience drinking fresh mountain water.

It was hard work climbing up and was tough exercise, especially for me as I wasn't very strong. But the exercise was just what I needed to help me grow stronger, and when I finally made it to the top of the mountain where everybody else was, I was glad I made it and hadn't given up!