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Kids Say the Darndest Things Excerpt, [n.d.]

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"Mr. Linkletter, are they watching us in heaven on tv?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Because I want God to hear us."

"Well, I'm sure He's listening, so you go right ahead and tell Him what you want to."

"Could he come down on Saturday night for chicken dinner?"

There was laughter from the grownups at the idea of Our Lord sitting down to a roast chicken supper with the girl's family, but it was gentle laughter, for their hearts were touched.

Six-year-old Jackie told me his favorite Bible story:

"The one where Jesus died for all our sins."

"Why do you like that one?"

"Because I sin all the time."

"You do? How?"

He regarded me sadly and confessed:

"I'm a cookie stealer."

Cos when I get the sugar with chocolate

We Linkletters have always been great believers in Sunday School. Every one of our five little Links has attended regularly, all the way through high school. After high school we felt they were old enough to decide for themselves where and when they would attend church.

We never insisted on any particular church, because we found through the years that certain Sunday Schools would be more attractive to the youngsters, due to the gold stars they gave, the picnics or games they organized, or the availability of boy friends and girl friends for after-hours fun. What we did insist on was regular attendance, so they would have a

thorough education in the meaning and importance of religion.

The younger a child is, the merrier his confusion over theology seems to be. The difference between the earthly and the saintly baffles many a tiny Sunday Schooler, who finds it just as easy to believe in the Easter Bunny as John the Baptist.

"What's your favorite Bible story?"

"Humpty Dumpty."

"How does it go?"



"There was this egg that fell off the wall and he prayed, but even Heaven couldn't put him back together again."

"Are you sure that's in the Bible?"

"Sure! It's right after Little Bo-Peep!"

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Seven-year-old Benny was bouncing up and down with excitement as he told me his favorite Bible story about David and Goliath:

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"David went to the brook and got seven pebbles, and he put one in his slingshot. Then you know what? He whirled it around and around his head and threw it and hit this great big giant right between the eyes—and the giant fell down dead!"

"What does that story teach us?" I asked.

He sat there thinking for a moment, and then said, "Duck!"

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Here's a moral-with-a-twist to the story of Noah and his sea-going menagerie. I asked a five-year-old what Noah did, and he said:

"He took all the married animals on a boat and left the bachelors behind."



"What does that story teach us?"

"Always be married—and you won't be left behind on a boat ride."

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*when
marry - be first.*

The youngsters sometimes have a different outlook on the

way a Sunday School operates than the church officials might suspect.

"George, what do you want to be?"

"A Sunday School teacher."

"Why?"

"Because you only work one day a week!"

Church music comes in for its share of misinterpretation, too. Small voices are often singing lustily along with words that might startle the congregation if they were clearly heard. I asked a five-year-old what her favorite Sunday School hymn was, and she cheerfully replied: "Jesus, wash my skin away." She reminded me of the boy who came home from a church picnic, and said they'd sung a picnic song called "We Can Sing, though Full We Be." His parents learned later that the hymn was actually "Weak and Sinful though We Be."

You've heard of the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, and all the others of the Bible. There must also be a Suburban Version, judging from one girl's ideas about life in the Garden of Eden.

"What story do you like best?"

"Adam and Eve."

"What happened to them?"

"They were bad and God sentenced them to work."

"He did? What kind of work?"

"They had to clean the swimming pool every day."

A seven-year-old miss was also fond of the Adam and Eve story, so I asked her:

“What did Eve do?”

“She ate the poison apple and God threw her out of heaven.”

“Then what?”

“She went to the hospital and had two children named Cain and Mabel.”

And here’s a new way to look at Adam’s fall from grace, as seen through the eyes of a cautious seven-year-old boy. I asked him:

“What does the story of Adam and Eve teach you?”

“If a naughty girl tempts you to do something bad,” he said, “don’t do it while God is watching!”

Heaven sounded so good to one boy that he revealed he’d decided to become a preacher.

“What kind of preacher?” I asked.

“A Baptist one.”

“Why a Baptist?”

“’Cause I want to make sure I get into heaven.”

“What makes you so sure that Baptists get into heaven?”

“Because St. Peter is one—and he’s right there at the gate!”

Sunday Schoolers are utterly fascinated by the story of Jonah’s adventures with the whale, and they fascinate me when Jonah floats into the conversation.

“So your favorite story is Jonah and the Whale. What does that story teach us?”



“People make whales sick.”

“What’s your favorite story?”

“Jonah inside the whale.”

“What does that story teach us?”

“If you’re ever swallowed by a whale, build a fire and stay warm until the whale sneezes, then you’ll be out.”

(Something tells me that boy knows his Disney better than his Good Book.)

If there’s such a thing as a Biblical shaggy dog story, I think I heard one from a mixed-up five-year-old.

“Do you have a favorite Bible story?”

“Uh huh. Noah and his Ark.”

“Who was Noah?”

“A fellow who owned a dog.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, that’s the story—Noah and his Ark.”

“You mean you think the Ark is a dog?”

“No. It’s the *sound* his doggie makes.”

All of us have our own ideas about what Heaven might be like. I suppose most people envision it as the artists of the Middle Ages have taught us—a place of immense splendor with pearly gates and complete with immense groups of winged angels in white robes.

Seven-year-old Sally had her own ideas when I asked her what heaven was like. She told me the following very succinct definition of heaven:

“It’s a great big round gold dome with three lines of people waiting to get in—Catholics, Lutherans and Americans.”

Here is a down-to-earth sermon from a seven-year-old. I asked him:

“What did God do?”

“He invented the world, and houses, and wood, and rocks, and steel, and spiders, and food—”

“Wait a minute. What if we had no God?”

He looked at me thoughtfully and said:

“We’d be in a mess.”

Earlier in this chapter, we met the charming little girl who wanted God to come down for chicken dinner. I’d like to tell you one more of my favorites, showing how close a child can feel to his Maker:

A little boy ran into the house and told his mother, “I’ve just been outside playing ball with God.”

“That’s ridiculous,” his mother said. “You shouldn’t say such things.”

“But I did too play ball with God,” the boy said.

“How could you do that?”

← Paul

“I just throw the ball up in the air—and God throws it back to me.”

