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Foot-Long Worm Races

[Theme: Computer scanner creativity]

Mr. Davies returned to his 5th-grade Science class to see all his students gathered around the copying machine cheering. As soon as he appeared all the children got quiet and stood where they were. The teacher inspected the machine for any major damage. What he saw was two caterpillars crawling across the copier window with pencils separating them.

Mr. Davies pointed at the student holding a stopwatch and demanded, "Explain!" The response described a worm race. The stopwatch was used to give the worms a sixty second head start before turning on the copier and taking a picture of the progress. The teacher's smile put all the kids at ease. He said, "Hmm... sort of a photo finish, huh?" In a friendlier tone he directed the class to take their seats.

"Which of you has a computer and scanner at home?" He asked. Three students raised their hands. He then divided the class into thirds and assigned each scanner owner to each of the three groups. "I want you three teams to plan an after school field trip and what kinds of worms you can find to scan."

Next Monday the class would review each team's results.

Monday in Mr. Davies' class was a blast. One team showed their scans and described the differences. The feet of the caterpillar were compared to those of the centipede. The explanations continued with the advantages of some worms not having any feet at all.

A different team explained how they carefully put clear plastic food wrap over the scanner and then slowly covered the plastic with a thin coating of flour. When the different worms were allowed time to travel across the flour-covered scanner, their paths through the flour were scanned and compared.

One of the team thought changing the color of one of the flour scans in the computer would be a great entry for the art show next month.

The whys and what-fors of the different paths were discussed and really had all the students thinking.

Then it happened.

Mr. Davies took one shoe and sock off. None of the class could guess what would happen next. Steadying himself with a chair and a coat tree, he lightly put his bare foot on the copier window and made a picture of it. Holding it up for all to see, he spent the remainder of the class period describing God's magnificent design of the human foot and how it compares to worm feet. The school principle never did appreciate the value of science class worm races. But more than one student told him how to use his scanner to realize the wonder of God's design of things.

How about you? Could you describe to a friend, how to scan a worm race, God's perfect design of feet, and His wonderful plan of salvation. Tell them scanners cost money, but salvation is a free gift.

(end of story)

WALKING TREES???

I don't understand all this.. It sounds like there's a crowd of people over on my left and another, almost as big, over on my right. They all seem to be shouting at me. Oh, I wish I had my eyesight and I could determine what kind of a predicament I'm in.

Wait! Listen... I believe it is... It's my friend Darmon. He's shouting something...What? You want me to let go?? Let go of this hand that's leading me? Now I'm really confused. Darmon, I thought you were one of the group that brought me to this visiting healer. I'd about given up. So many men have taken what few coins I've begged for at the gate, promising they'd heal my eyes. But this man... Different from all the rest. Strange... Strange because He asked me if I had faith in Him. I said, "I don't know how." "Place your hands in mine, signifying your total trust in Me," He told me. I had no other hope in this world, so I did.

Next, he led me past the market place (I know fresh fish when I smell them), then we turned... we must be close to the new house that Kider is building 'cause I can smell fresh cut lumber. Wait a minute!! It can't be!! I'm being led to the edge of town!!! This can't be true!!!!

Some disciples came to our town about a year ago and they were stoned. Last August the Maseon boy was taken to the edge of town and stoned because he wouldn't mind his mom and dad. Are the people going to stone me because I'm blind? I don't fit in. I've tried to behave myself. Didn't I give Darmon a few coins last week to put in the church basket? If I'm led out of town, thieves or robbers will beat up on me for sure. What should I do -- let go and run??

"Trust in Me." He says. "Don't let go of My hand. I've allowed you to become blind just for this very day. Even though you can't see them, many eyes are watching you. Don't let go of My hand." Incredible. He's telling me people will be reading about me for thousands of years, if I remain steadfast and don't let go of His hand... Why the way this man talks -- He talks like He's God Himself. That can't be, though. I'm blind and I can't be of any use to Him...

The stones under my sandals are rougher now. We must be about to the edge of town. I wish... I wish all this was in a storybook and I could find out what's going to happen to me next!!!

I'll let Mark finish this true story in his book, in the 8th chapter.

You'll hardly believe your eyes!!!

(end of story)

“It says, “Wash your hands.”

“THIS IS GOING TO BE A TOUGH ONE,” I say to myself. Many years ago I really sank my heart into II Timothy 3:17 in seeing God’s Word as the supreme How-To Manual for ‘ALL good works’. That must include computing also.

This silver haired noggin of mine really thrills to find new ways to blend principles from God’s precious Word with computer metaphors. I think of them as ‘computer parables’.

The presentation I’m scripting now is using a junk computer mouse with the cover removed. I have already included several life principles using the mouse parts. This is done without any technical names or details. My plan is to show people of all ages how to use computer junk to share their love for the Lord Jesus. You would have been thrilled to see this done in a school classroom as two students shared their faith with their classmates. They were FIRST graders.

My mind so often sees the many preschoolers sitting in front of the family computer with the mouse in hand. They can’t read or spell their name, dress nor bathe themselves, but see what happens when they are taken away from the computer for any reason.

But now I am in a pickle. I want to somehow use that computer mouse to talk about cleanliness...hygiene. “My oh my. This is going to be tough one to pull off.” But I try always to start out my scripture searches with II Timothy 3:16, 17. Hmm...there’s that ‘ALL good works’ again.

Have you ever seen someone hit his or her mouse on the table to make the cursor move? Each time they move the mouse, they hit it again. Well, the problem is dirt and can be solved simply without special tools or technical skills. I turn the mouse over so I can see the ball. With my two fingers, I push and twist the ring a small amount, to remove the ring and ball. Then I can see two little rods that have a ring of dirt (actually lint) on them. With a pencil eraser or toothpick, I remove the lint and replace the ball and ring. So that cleans the dirty mouse, but where am I going to find some ‘dirty’ scripture?

“Dear Lord. Show me in Your Word some cleansing scripture.” He didn’t do that. He did far more than that. When we call upon the Lord, we must always expect far more than just our own little need. It’s probably what the ‘thoroughly furnished’ is telling us, in Timothy.

In the first half of Mark 7, I read about washing hands and dishes. The little word with three letters stuck out like a Neon sign... ‘Of’. It says, “Wash them often.” And then when you come back from the market, ‘don’t eat until you wash them.’ Wow! That was just what I needed for my mouse hygiene presentation. But wait a minute. Jehovah-jireh (God will provide) isn’t done with my need.

As I reread the scripture, I see that God was teaching the Pharisee’s about ‘higher’ hygiene. He was teaching them that even more important than cleansing on the outside (our hands), is the cleansing that must take place in the heart. Wow! Double Wow! Only in God’s Precious Word can we have our hearts stirred to tears, reading about washing hands, and Heaven’s eternal provisions.

“I’ll see ya later. I gotta go share this with somebody!”

(end of story)

Water, Water

“ARE YA STUCK DOWN THAT HOLE, MISTER?” came the little girl’s voice. The pain from aching knuckles and 71 year old knees was almost audible as he pushed himself back up out of the hole. The little girl took a quick scan of the modest mission property and didn’t see any helpers with this silver haired man.

It took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the sunlight after staring at those grubby water meter fittings in the hole. His eyes met the most becoming eyes of a little girl standing in front of him with a bouquet of fresh picked dandelions for her mama’s supper table. The sun’s rays filtered through curly hair and for a second made the man think he was looking at an angel... albeit a little angel with a torn dress.

“My name’s Mimi. What’s yours, mister?” “I’m Pastor Ray,” he said while rubbing his hands together to remove some of the mud. He was slightly grateful for the young visitor but was rather disappointed that other helpers, who knew more about plumbing, hadn’t honored their offers to help start the little mission church not far from a big lake.

With all the questions of a news reporter, Mimi asked, “Well, whatcha doin in that hole upside down?” As she finished her question, she remembered her dress tear and tried to cover it up with her dandelions. Pastor Ray noticed the attempted cover up and it melted his discouraged heart. The angel with the torn dress sat on the grass across from the weary pastor.

With a weathered smile he said, “Mimi. In that little white church building with the colored windows I want to teach boys and girls, and their moms and dads, how much God deeply loves them. In fact He loves them just the way they are. That means He loves them even when they have muddy hands, or ripped dresses. Do you understand, Mimi?” Her quick reply was, “Sure I understand what you said. But what I don’t understand is WHY?” In 41 years of proclaiming God’s matchless love, Pastor had never found himself being asked by an angel “why should He love me... me and my rags?”

With muddy hands the pastor explained that the church has no water. The water man came and did what he does, but nothing comes out of the faucets in the little church that was being opened after several years of vacancy. He explained that walls needed washed, flowers watered, and thirsty visitors would be coming to learn about Jesus. Songs and stories would tell how He could walk on water, and even make water come out of a rock.

The sermon on the grass explained to the little angel how water and soap could wash our outsides clean, but only God can make our inside clean. A mother’s lunchtime call, and Mimi was up and making her dandelion delivery.

The warm bright sun had just begun its downward trip to the horizon as the plumbing pastor was still trying to fix the water problem. He heard someone walking across the small gravel parking lot toward him and immediately heard that little angel’s happy voice, “Hi ya pastor!” He turned to face Mimi and was startled to see something not at all expected.

Mimi stood in front of him not with a bouquet in her hands, but a cup... a cup of water. But that wasn’t all. Behind Mimi was Fred. He had a cup of water too. His smile of expectation kept you from noticing the broken handle. A little older and he could preach a sermon like “It ain’t important if your handle’s broke, it’s what’s inside that’s important.” Behind Fred were three more children in clothes with stains, tears, and missing shoelaces.

Donna was the last in the precession. She asked, “Mister Pastor, I couldn’t find no cup. But I brung this soap. Can ya use it anyhow? Huh?”

Mimi got a real serious look on her face and said, “If these cups of water ain’t enough, I betcha God’d give you some of His water over there, don’t cha think?” Most all the children pointed to the big lake.

That evening Pastor Ray sat in his office chair and stared at his study books that covered the whole wall. Shelf after shelf held powerful majestic sermons that detailed God’s indescribable power to use water to destroy and preserve drawn from rocks or even heaven itself. His knees met the floor in thankful prayer for learning today that God’s simple saving love can even draw water from hearts... often little hearts.

He started scribbling notes for a new sermon from Matthew 18:4 “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

The real sermon is to see that His eternal love and provision can come as a big lake... or sometimes... one cup at a time. (end of story)

The Wondrous Web

Nita felt really left out. All the rest of her night school classmates were going to write their reports about the Internet and all the neat stuff you can find on it. Others were going to write their reports on the history of the World Wide Web. But somehow Nita just didn't feel like she fit in.

When she got laid off from her job cooking hamburgers it was a bit of a blow. Part of her small paycheck was to pay for a night school college class in design. For now she'd have to settle for this free course in creative writing. At least this would look good on her resume by showing that she was not a time waster until another job came along.

In her bedroom, she would often lie across her bed, face down, and daydream at the floor. This was one of those times. You'd think she was expecting the rug to roll back and show her what she should write her report about. The thought came to her, "Nita, you dummy. Rugs can't write reports any more than they can fry a hamburger." The thought had come to her more than once that she didn't fit into the night class and she ought to quit.

The nineteen year old was about to yank a blanket over her head and wish the world would go away. But then a very little spider peeked out from under the rug she had been staring at. This spider was too small to be scary thought Nita. As she watched the careful movements of the spider, her report started coming together.

A couple days later, Nita stood before her night school class with excitement written all over her face. She began, "My report is about the web. But listen carefully for it's not a web you're probably thinking of. I want to tell you about the web, that is the construction projects of spiders. The World Wide Web got its name from the design of spider webs.

Most spiders create their own distinctive webs. Scientists have found powerful uses for many of them. The Black Widow spider has an intimidating almost deadly sounding name. The bombers of World War II had a spider web on board that was so deadly it was carried on and off the plane by the airplane's navigator. The Black Widow's web was so deadly accurate, it was used in the Norton Bomb Sight that put bombs right on target.

Nita looked up from her report at the class and with a bit of a smile said, "I guess if you want to be on target with your life, be careful which web you use."

The "parachute" spider spins a web that is really just a very long thread. The thread acts much like a parachute in allowing the spider to sail with the winds and travel places far beyond its seemingly small world. Air currents that blow upward will even take them into the clouds. With a couple more details, she again looked up and said, "When you travel, be sure to choose the right web."

One more web I'll tell you about. One spider lives in an extremely hostile place. He lives down in the water. The web he creates is like an upside down basket connected to underwater plants. He makes trip after trip; each time taking a small bubble of air connected to the hairs of his body down and deposits the air bubble in the basket web he created. This allows him to live and breath in what would be a very hostile environment."

"The point is," Nita summarized, "we have dangers all around us. Today many of them are electronic and a bit of a mystery to us. As we choose our learning sites and then the jobs to provide our needs, we ought to learn well the true nature of things. If we honestly work at this we will trust the leading of God Who created the first web and wants us to communicate continually with Him.

(end of story)

Where's Mindy?!!

The busy highway just outside the church door and little Mindy prone to wander,

sent many to search every nook and cranny of the church, upstairs and down.

The children's Christmas play practice had finished for this Saturday, and everyone gathered in the activity room for cookies and punch. The smiles and laughter were suddenly broken with a loud desperate exclamation –

“WHERE'S MINDY!?!”

Many thought of Mindy as the “child of the church”. Often you'd see compassionate acts toward this little one; not a quick learner of new things like all the other children.

Mrs. Fox the youth director found Mindy safe and sound, in of all places, among the scenery of the Christmas play. Others who shortly happened on the scene instantly recognized a circumstance not to be interrupted and returned to their cookies and punch.

The “child of the church” was kneeling next to the manger as surely she had seen the others do earlier, playing their parts. But not according to script, Mindy was crying with as much hurt as a little one like her could. Just as Mrs. Fox was about to reach out and gather this little one full of tears, Mindy reached out and gathered the rubber dolly up and out of the straw that padded the manger.

Only then did the director of youth begin to understand what all the tears were about. Because of a birth defect or something like that, Mindy was not an easy four year old to understand.

It took quite some time for Mindy to make Mrs. Fox understand why all the tears. Mindy held the rubber dolly up to the director's face and pointed at the broken leg. That gesture wasn't understood at all, because the script called for the straw to cover up most of the doll. Mrs. Fox, desperate to find a way to explain this was just a prop; part of a play, when Mindy hugging the dolly close, jumped up and ran over to the piano still crying.

The lighting wasn't the best at that moment, but Mrs. Fox saw Mindy take the beautifully delicate doily off the piano, and before Mrs. Fox could scold her, the little mother wrapped the doily around the rubber dolly as tenderly as if the broken leg was real. As the grownup sat down and gathered up the crying little mother still holding the rubber doll wrapped in a treasured doily, the truth of the tears was finally learned.

Little Mindy was broken-hearted that all the attention was given to the little baby in the straw with stage lights and gestures and gifts and things. Then when punch and cookies were announced, everyone left this ‘center-of-attention’ all alone and unclothed in a dark room as though it never existed.

Mrs. Fox fought back the tears as she rocked the little mother and couldn't find even grownup words to explain the fickle actions of people.

Might you desire the wisdom of Mindy?

Is the historical event of the nativity just a play to you?

(end of story)

Where's The Mouse?

WHERE'S A MOUSE WHEN YOU REALLY NEED ONE?! Nenee was barely 6 years old, but she wanted to do the show and tell at the computer club tomorrow. Her tears almost flowed when a computer mouse, even a junk one, couldn't be located.

If there was ever an important use for a mouse, it was tomorrow. All the other clubbers had a special love for this little girl, given hardly more home-love than a piece of furniture. Gramps, the clubleader, was gone all week and the clubbers didn't have quite enough cash to buy a new mouse. But Dean told the club members he's have a computer mouse here tomorrow. He said, "Just trust me."

The next day at club show and tell, Dean stood first and reminded the clubbers that Gramps always says that most often you can have more fun making computer parts, rather than using the real thing. He opened a small paper bag and pulled out a computer mouse like none you've ever seen. It was handed to a very happy Nenee.

Dean had made a one inch hole in the side of a crayon box. He made a ball from aluminum foil a little larger than the hole. A short piece of twine was stuck in one end of the pretend mouse. Dean used a black marker to draw in some buttons on the top of the mouse. With a little help from one of the other clubbers, little Nenee had made a big red heart to use with the mouse she had trusted Dean to provide.

Little Nenee stepped in front of the clubbers and held up the crayon box mouse. The whole club was thrilled to pieces, even if their little one didn't say a thing. She asked, "Who knows what this is?" She got a correct answer. Next she held the mouse as high as she could reach, to show the mouse underside. "OK. What is this thing?" as she moved the ball with her finger. Another correct answer was given.

With the mouse in one hand and the big red heart in the other hand, she asked, "Do you know why we have a heart in us and not a rubber ball? Well, it's because God has a heart and we are made a lot like Him. The reason is He wants our heart to talk to His heart. He wants us to tell Him how much we love Him. And real often too," ended with a little girl giggle.

"Our grandpaw clubleader told me once, I can find out what's in God's heart when someone helps me read the Bible. Jesus uses Bible words to tell us to trust Him every single day. I'm just so happy Jesus put a heart inside me instead of an old rubber ball? I bet you are too." The applause from the clubbers was so loud, it scared her for a second. But the hugs to follow, washed away any thoughts of missed hugs at home.

Do you know of a Nenee nearby that is waiting for you to make a crayon box mouse for them?

(end of story)

Connecting Without Words

The Computer Missions Fair had been a success far above everyone's expectations. Most all the young exhibitors had partnered someone with silver hair. To add spice to the exhibits, most were created using computer trash of some sort. A few of the exhibits had little take-home papers to share with friends. The presentations used dialog that was pretty easy to understand – except one. However, the message it left with everyone spoke volumes to each who saw it.

The exhibit on most everyone's mind was the one that had no words, just grandma grins and preschool giggles. Beulah was an older lady from the other side of the tracks, so to speak. Her clothes were worse than most people's throwaways. Her income certainly didn't allow for store-bought perfumes etc. She thought this caused her to have to worship in a pew by herself each Sunday. Her helper at the Computer Missions Fair was a little preschooler that did far more of her share of disrupting fine-tuned church services.

Beulah and her little helper sat in front of two adjacent sides cut from a cardboard box. A broken computer cable found in the trash was stretched like a close line from one side to the other. Taped at one end of the cable was an older lady clipart picture cut from some church bulletin. A little girl picture was taped to the other end of the cable. The shunned older lady stuck a piece of tape to the back of a cutout heart. Tippie the preschooler taped it to the middle of the cable and both giggled as though they were away from the world of progress and prejudice.

On the cardboard background was a clipart picture of Jesus that the two had taped hearts all around. Neither Tippie nor Beulah could read or write. Beulah didn't begin to understand what all this computer stuff was about. But she knew perfectly how to connect with children who need to be loved and learn about the Love from the Cross.

So you had to imagine the sign above their scene that said, "**Links of Love Like the Lord**". Beulah heard someone use the word, "Website." The best she knew how, she explained to little Tippie it was some kind of covering over people's eyes that prevented them from seeing others like God sees them. (end)

(end of story)

(End of Bundle #10)