

BUSH BOYS

WINTER 2007

Explorers A Quarterly Publication

The Official Magazine of Father James Tierney's Bush Boys Books

HOW TO WRITE A STORY

Father James Tierney, the author of the Bush Boys books, has a dozen suggestions for the young writer:

1. Try **telling** your story to your brothers and sisters.
2. Try **writing** your story as part of a letter to a pen pal.
3. Make up characters from **real people** you know.
4. But **don't tell** the reader what sort of people they are.
5. Rather, let him find out from **what they say and do**.
6. And, it is best to keep some things a secret from your reader!
7. Only write about things **you really know** about.
8. Put in some **pictures** and maybe a map.
9. Make sure you **don't contradict** yourself as the story grows.
10. Write about **what delights you**: then it may delight a reader.
11. Gently **awaken desire** in your reader for Truth and Beauty, Goodness and God.
12. Finally, **read** the finished story aloud and **post** it to friends to read.



Father James Tierney
before he needed
spectacles

From HANDOUTS No.5: *How to Write a Story*

Download your copy of Fr Tierney's Handout: *How to Write a Story* from the Downloads section, www.cardinalnewman.com.au

START WRITING!

Bush Boys Explorers magazine has now been in production for TWO YEARS! To mark this occasion, we are putting together a **Bush Boys Children's Contribution** page on the Cardinal Newman website. Please send in your comments, letters, stories, drawings etc and we will share them with other readers by putting them online. Send contributions to elvisfamily@optusnet.com.au

INTRODUCING NEW CHARACTERS

Introduce new characters a few at a time or the reader will get them mixed up.

Repeat a trait of character with the second or third mention of a new name. Dickens used such repetitions for humour.

Father James Tierney

Father James Tierney - Retired Parish Priest,
Catechetics Consultant and Author



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Books by Father James Tierney

Bush Boys (\$5)
Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys (\$2)
Bush Boys and Bush Rangers (\$10)
Bush Boys on the Move (\$15)
Catholic Family Catechism Disciples'
Edition with 50 Questions and Answers (\$5)
All available from Cardinal Newman Faith
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GROUP DYNAMICS

Have you ever heard of group dynamics? Group dynamics is about how a group of people interact with one another. For example, in the Bush Boys books, Pete and John relate to each other as older and younger brothers. Greg and Bernie interact with each other in a similar way. Pete relates to Greg as cousins of the same age. The younger boys, John and Bernie relate to one another similarly. It is not only age and family relationships which affect the way people relate: personality also has its part to play. Pete and Bernie are the more mischievous of the four bush boys. These boys tend to pair off. Their behaviour is in contrast to the more serious Greg and John.

The dynamics of a group can change when someone extra is added to the group. When Cuthbert joins the bush boys there is now a gang of five which tends to divide into the older boys, Greg and Pete and the younger ones, Bernie, John and Cuthbert.

There is a good example of how group dynamics works in *Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys*. Greg announces that he and Pete are going to return to The Hills of Home to report in, and collect more supplies. The younger boys are to continue up Bunyip Creek. The junior boys are delighted with this plan. Without Greg and Pete, they will be more independent, having to make their own decisions and not relying on their older brothers for advice or orders. Bernie, in particular, is relishing the thought of being in charge. Bernie is determined that the younger boys will do something impressive while they are on their own. Cuthbert wants to stand under the water fall, but Bernie, in true elder brother fashion, orders the boys to fetch wood, start a fire and get the billy boiling, before he will let them embark on this adventure. He has observed Greg's style and is following it to the letter now that he is in charge. Bernie also assumes responsibility for Cuthbert and will not allow him to get out of his depth in the water. When the boys discover the beach and then the cave behind the falls, they agree not to tell Greg and Pete straightaway. They are enjoying the thought that they know something the older boys are unaware of. Of course, when Greg hears about the hidden cave, he will be the one to decide the next course of action.

Group dynamics is very important in story writing. It is vital for bringing characters alive. Think about the characters in your story. How do they interact with one another? What are their personalities like? Their ages? Who is related to whom? What if another person joins your group of characters? What if someone leaves? Do boys relate differently when girls are around? What about girls? Do they act differently when boys are present? Think of your characters as real people and let them come alive in your imagination. Your characters will then seem like real people just like the bush boys.

Peter continued with some details. "You three," he said to Bernie, John and Cuthbert, "are a bit slower than us cos you're younger. So how about you carry your basic gear and go ahead of us up Bunyip Creek?"

The prospect of independence pleased the younger boys. Bernie wanted more details. After all, he would be in charge.

"Look!" said Bernie. "it's not very deep under the falls. You could stand there, like a shower."

Let's!" pleaded Cuthbert.

Bernie was determined to have them *do something*, anything would do, that Greg had never done. Nevertheless, and Cuthbert noted it, Bernie followed Greg's starchy style to the letter..."Get wood and we'll light a fire," Bernie ordered. For his own part, he got out their billy from his knapsack. "While we're swimming, we'll boil a billy for morning tea."

From *Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys*, Chapter22: Kidnapped! p177 and p181

Try writing your own story, thinking about the group dynamics of your characters.



THE SPIRIT OF THE BUSH BOYS

SELF-RELIANCE

Pitching your own camp,
trekking across country,
sailing a boat,
crossing England in a canal barge:
things like these
teach a lad self-reliance
in a way games cannot.
Games are not like life
and not much preparation for it either.

LEADERSHIP

You will neither eat nor drink,
you will not sit down
or as much as lean against a tree
until you have first made sure
that the men under you
have already done so.

Field Marshall Sir William Slim

From *Cuthbert Joins the Bush Boys*, p 6

FIRST AID IN THE BIBLE

Imagine yourself living in Biblical times. You are sick but you can't visit a doctor. Why not? Because in those days, doctors were rare. You would rely on your own herbal remedies, simple powders, salves and ointments for treatment of your illness. The Israelites knew that many plants could be effective in healing various ailments. They had gained much of this knowledge from Egypt where they spent several hundred years before Moses led them out towards the Promised Land.

The Egyptians did not know how a particular plant worked; they only knew that it was beneficial in the treatment of a particular ailment. Scribes of ancient Egypt started to write down these treatments. Baked clay tablets and papyri containing this information have been found in the tombs of kings and pharaohs,

But back to the Israelites: In the earliest times, the people were taught to look to God for health and healing. They thought of disease as a punishment from God. The disease could also be healed by God. "The Lord will afflict you with consumption, fever, inflammation...", Deuteronomy 28:22.

The people also looked to physicians for healing. See Genesis 50:2 where Joseph commands his servants, the physicians to embalm his father. Sirach 38:1-2 says "Honour physicians for their services, for the Lord created them; for their gift of healing comes from the Most High and they are rewarded by the king." "The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not despise them." Sirach 38:4

We know that the Israelites used herbal remedies because Ezekiel says, referring to the trees growing along the banks of a river, "Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing." Ezekiel 47:12

So what kinds of remedies did the Israelites use? By reading our Bibles, we can find a few answers. Jeremiah mentions balm, an aromatic herb. He says, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Jer 8:22

Figs were used for healing. Isaiah says, "...Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it to the boil" (of King Hezekiah) Is 38:21. Also in this book of the Bible, we see how oil was used as a remedy: "but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they have not been drained, or bound up, or softened with oil." Is 1:6

There is another reference, in the Bible, to the use of oil

The girls said grace before meals just as the boys had done and, as they tucked in, smoothly picked up the threads of the conversation. "I'm doing First Aid in the Bible, Uncle Matt," Jenny told him, you know, oil and wine in wounds, medicinal leaves to heal the nations, and mouth to mouth resuscitation in Elisha; outdoors I'm doing practical 'first aid' and the boys'll have to let me practise bandaging them; and also 'safety first' so I won't have to bandage them as often." That, she thought to herself, was a neat upstaging of the bolder sex.

From *Bush Boys and Bush Rangers*, Chapter 9: Monday Breakfast, p 87

in first aid. Do you remember the story of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament? What did the Samaritan pour over the wounds of the injured man? It was oil and wine: "He went to him and bandaged his wounds having poured oil and wine on them." Luke 10:34. The Samaritan probably didn't know why the oil and wine were beneficial. He only knew they would help in the healing. Today, we know that wine contains ethyl alcohol and methyl alcohol which are both good disinfectants. Olive oil, also, disinfects skin as well as moisturising, protecting and soothing it.

There are references, in the Bible, to 'safety first': how to stay healthy so that first aid and medicine are unnecessary. In Leviticus, God forbids the drinking from vessels or stagnant water that has come into contact with dead animals: Read Leviticus 11:33-36. We know today that contaminated water can cause cholera and typhoid.

We all know that certain diseases are very infectious and we often quarantine a seriously ill person to avoid passing on the germs. Talking about lepers, Leviticus says, "He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp." Leviticus 13:46

"Laughter is the best medicine" is a well known quote. This wise advice has been around since Biblical days. In Proverbs 17:22, we read, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones."

All these healings and preventions of ill health were carried out by the Israelites in a natural manner. Of course, there are many references in the Bible of healings which are of a miraculous nature. In the Old Testament, Elisha cures Naaman of his leprosy: 2 Kings 5:4. In the New Testament, Jesus cleanses lepers; heals the deaf, lame and blind; cures epilepsy; stops a haemorrhage, raises the dead and brings about other healings. Faith in Him allowed Jesus to perform these miracles. Even more important than healing the body, Jesus was able to heal souls by forgiving sins and casting out demons.

When you are reading your Bible, watch out for these and other references to medicine, first aid and healing.

Perhaps you, like Jenny, might like to do a project on first aid in the Bible. Use the Internet, the Bible on computer and of course, your own copy of the Bible to help in your investigation.



CAMP HYGIENE

Q.33: *What is camp hygiene?*

Camp hygiene means washing and latrines:
wash hands with soap and water
before meals and after using toilet paper:
wash up utensils in hot soapy water
and clean teeth after eating;
wash face and hands on rising
and, on long camps, have bush baths.

Q.35: *What is a bush bath?*

A bush bath is sponging the body all over
with hanky, hot water and soap,
rinsing well-away from waterways,
and a cold plunge in the creek.

From *The ABC of Camping*

DOUBLE ENDED SOAP MOLECULES

It is very fortunate that soap making is one of the oldest chemical processes known to man. How would we get on without it? Everyone knows that trying to remove grease and oils with only water just does not work. So who made the first soap? The Roman historian Pliny, reports that this honour goes to the Phoenicians who fabricated soap from boiled goat's fat and caustic wood ashes in 600 B.C. Sodium and potassium hydroxides (lye) in the ashes, reacted with the fat and the result was soap. There is another popular soap discovery story which is linked to Sapo Hill on the outskirts of Rome. Here, the ancient Romans sacrificed animals to heathen gods. Fat from these animals reacted with hot wood-ash producing soap. This soap was washed down to the riverbank and absorbed by the clay on the banks of the river Tiber. The local women used this clay to do their washing because of its remarkable cleaning properties.

So what happens when lye reacts with fat? Fats have a backbone of glycerol linked to three fatty acids. Lye breaks these linkages. Glycerol is liberated and sodium or potassium salts of the fatty acids result. These are the soaps. The reaction is known as saponification.

What is so special about soap molecules? How do they work? It's all to do with the chemical structure of the molecule which gives it special properties. Soap molecules have long tails which are non-polar, grease loving and water repelling. In contrast, their heads are ionic, water loving and grease repelling. So when we drop liquid soap into a sink of clean water, all the soap molecules will gather at the surface. Their water loving, ionic ends will be in the water and their grease loving ends will be stuck out into the air.

Now we slide a greasy dish into the sink. What happens? The grease loving tails of the soap molecules will attach themselves to the oil and

grease. A rinse with water or a wipe with a cloth will encourage the grease to leave the plate. More soap molecules will surround the blob of grease that is now free in the water. The grease loving tails will be buried in the grease and the water loving heads will be floating on the outside of the grease blob. In this way, grease and oils become dispersed in the washing up water. Soon the water will be looking rather dirty and you will notice that it is no longer effective in removing grease from the dishes. At this point all the soap molecules have been used up and it is time to empty the sink and start again.

Find out how to make your own soap. There are lots of helpful sites on the Internet.

The Cumberlands were experts at bush baths.

There was full shade under a cluster of small turpentine trees well back from the pool. Here the dixies were lined up ready. Greg poured a little boiling water into each and Pete diluted it with cold from the canvas water bucket...

...Each boy knelt at his dixie and, when his turn came for the new cake of soap, lathered his hanky and scrubbed himself bit by bit: face, hands, hair, ears, neck, and working down from neck to toes.

The billies were boiled over and over again, and the water bucket refilled...Requests for fresh water were continuous.

Then the hankies were wrung out for a final 'sponge all over' with clean warm water. Then the hankies were rinsed and hung up to dry, and the solid dirt scrubbed out of the dixies.

Thereupon they splashed back into the pool.

Kev sliced across the surface in a long gliding dive. "Wow!" he cried, "being clean does feel better."

From *Bush Boys on the Move*, Chapter 17: Active Afternoon, p 221-222



WHY SCOTLAND HAS THE FINEST MEN

Oats are a traditional food of Scotland. There, they have been grown since late medieval times. At the start of each week, the mother of a family would prepare the porridge (probably using water and salt). She would pour the porridge into a 'porridge drawer' to cool. This porridge provided meals for the family over the next few days. The solid porridge could be cut into slices and eaten cold. These slices would provide a portable lunch to be eaten away from home. The slices could also be enjoyed fried up for breakfast.

Oats are central to Scottish cuisine. The Scottish don't just eat oats as porridge: they use this cereal as a cooking ingredient in oatcakes, haggis, some sausages and dumplings and other dishes.

There is a traditional saying in England: "Oats are only fit to be fed to horses and Scotsmen." The Scots have their own witty reply: "And England has the finest horses and Scotland the finest men".

Samuel Johnson wrote a notorious entry in his dictionary. He defined oats as "A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

Cranachan: a Traditional Scottish Dessert

Toast some oats to a golden brown colour. Combine with fresh whipped cream and soft berries. Add whisky if you are an adult!

"Bags me making the porridge," said Peter. "How much do we use?"

"Half what's there," said Greg. "It's for two breakfasts. Use about one and a half mugs full." Peter scooped full his own mug and half John's mug and, sure enough, there was about the same amount left over.

"How much water?" said Peter.

"Double that of the oats," said Greg, so Peter tipped the oats into the aluminium billy and added three cupfuls of water. He remembered to break a clean stick as a wooden spoon for stirring it. When it boiled, he sat it at the front of the fire to simmer. He remembered to turn the handle away from the fire.

The others made milk in two mugs, enough for the porridge, with the rest to be shared for tea, with sugar added separately. There was more brown sugar for the porridge.

They ate it up like four bears without Goldilocks.

From *Bush Boys*, Chapter 27: We'll Head for the Hills.

WHAT ARE OATS?

Oats, like barley, rye, corn and rice, are cereal grains. Grains are the fruits of the grass family. Perhaps you think of grains as being seeds. You would be partially right. A grain is, in fact, a complete fruit consisting of a seed and a shell. As you can imagine, the shell is very thin and it cannot be removed except by a special milling process.

Cereal grains are the most important fruits used by man. Many people rely on grains as a stable part of their diet, especially rice. Grains are easily cultivated, they provide plentiful yields and are easily stored for long periods of time due to their low water content. Best of all, grains are good for you! They are rich in starch; they supply essential mineral elements such as phosphorus, sulphur and calcium (especially when the whole grain is used); they provide essential fatty acids; they are a source of vitamins E, B1 and B2. Oats have a few nutritive attractions of their own: they are rich in protein, being the highest protein cereal, and contain more fibre than many of the other cereal grains. Because of this, oats gives you that nice full feeling that lasts for hours.



So now winter is here, make porridge oats part of your breakfast. The ads are right: they'll keep you going until lunch time. You could make your oats in the traditional Scottish manner with water and salt. Or perhaps you will be tempted to use milk and a good sprinkle of brown sugar and cream!

Use oats to make Scottish cranachan or a batch of Anzac biscuits. See *Bush Boys Explorers*, Summer 2005-6, for a recipe.

POCKETS AND MATCHES

Q.13: *What are pockets for?*

Pockets are for handkerchief, pocket knife, matches, string and Rosary Beads.

From *The ABC of Camping*

Bush Boys' Pockets

Matches: in an old shoe polish tin to keep dry. Put a spare striker from an old box inside with the matches.

From *Bush Boys on the Move*, p 447, Greg's ABC of Camping

But Kev was stubborn. He did not bother with a fireplace. At the bottom of the screen he poked some old newspaper from his knapsack under leaves and twigs, and tried to light it. The damp paper smouldered...

He half opened the matchbox, turned it upside down – and lit the lot. Flames licked his hands. He flung down the box. Some drier grass flared. Smoke rose to blind and choke him. He jumped back. He smelled singed hair. But far worse, the fire was spreading uphill.

From *Bush Boys on the Move*, Chapter 5: The Day Before the Picnic, p 65

Find out more about the element phosphorus.



HISTORY OF THE MATCH

1669: Phosphorus, which is used in matches, was discovered, by the alchemist Hennig Brandt when he allowed a vat of urine to boil dry. He had been hoping to get gold but what he actually obtained was a white waxy substance that glowed in the dark.

1680: Robert Boyle witnessed a demonstration of phosphorus and was captivated by its eerie glow and its ability to burst into flame. He started to experiment with phosphorus and eventually created fire by rubbing a piece of wood, coated with sulphur, over a piece of paper, coated with phosphorus. However, Boyle did not go on to create a useable match because phosphorus was very hard to obtain. Later this problem was solved when Johan Gahn discovered that bones are made of calcium phosphate. When he heated them in the presence of carbon, phosphorus could be isolated.

1827: John Walker, a pharmacist, produced the first friction matches. One day he was asked to make up a mixture of the chemicals, antimony sulphide, potassium chlorate, gum and starch by a customer who had heard that this mix would ignite when struck. Walker noticed that a tear shaped droplet formed on his stirring stick. When he tried to scrape off this drop, it ignited. Walker began to make matches based on this method but he did not patent them and made little money from his invention. It was Samuel Jones who proved successful at marketing the matches. He changed their name to 'Lucifers' and added sulphur to the mix to make them easier to ignite. They were very popular among smokers despite igniting in an unpredictable explosive manner and the fact they burnt with a foul odour. It was the Lucifers and not the cigarettes that carried a health warning!

1830: Charles Sauria, a French chemist, created an odourless match by adding phosphorus to the ingredient list. Phosphorus is easily ignitable and so it was possible to replace some of the offensive components with white phosphorus. Unfortunately, matches became odourless but smokers became sick. White phosphorus is poisonous and caused a near epidemic disease known as 'phossy jaw' in which the jaw bone disintegrates. One pack of matches contained enough phosphorus to kill a person and it wasn't long before matches became the means for murder!

1855: It was discovered that white phosphorus, when heated in the absence of air, converts to red phosphorus which is not toxic and ignites at a much higher temperature. Johan Edvard Lundstrum patented the first safety matches by putting red phosphorus on a sandpaper striking surface and the other ingredients on the match head. This solved the problem of phossy jaw and also made matches safer.

1892: John Pusey invented the matchbook. Unfortunately, he placed the striking surface for the match on the inside of the book of fifty matches. When one match was struck, all fifty were ignited! The Diamond Match Company later purchased the patent and placed the striking surface in a more sensible place: on the outside of the cover.

1910: The Diamond Match Company obtained a patent for a non-poisonous match that used sesquisulphide of phosphorus.

1911: The Diamond Match Company yielded their patent in the interests of public health. Other companies could now manufacture matches using sesquisulphide of phosphorus and they were encouraged to choose this chemical over white phosphorus due to the huge tax imposed by the government on the white phosphorus matches.

HOW DOES A MATCH WORK ?

Did you know there are two types of matches: the safety match and the 'strike anywhere' match? The safety match needs to be struck against the striking surface of a match box in order to light. A 'strike anywhere' match can be struck on any solid surface.

The head of a safety match is made of sulphur, glass powder and an oxidising agent (usually potassium chlorate). And the striking surface is made of sand or powdered glass and a chemical called red phosphorus. To ignite a match, the match head is struck against the striking surface. The glass powder rubs together causing friction which produces enough heat to turn a very small amount of red phosphorus into white phosphorus. The white phosphorus catches fire in air producing enough heat to start a chemical reaction that decomposes the potassium chlorate liberating oxygen gas. The sulphur bursts into flame as a result of the heat and oxygen gas. This flame causes the wood of the match to catch on fire.

The 'strike anywhere' match works in a similar way but instead of the phosphorus being on the striking surface it is found in the head of the match. Do you know how to tell whether a match is a safety or 'strike anywhere' match just by looking? A safety head will be of one colour while the 'strike anywhere' match has two colours: one for phosphorus and the other for the oxidising agent.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Rudyard Kipling was an author and poet. You are probably familiar with many of his works such as *The Jungle Book* - which features the jungle boy Mowgli - and the *Just So Stories*.

Kipling's father was an Englishman who lived and worked in India. While his parents were in Bombay, Kipling was born. He lived in India until he was sent home to England to begin his schooling. At the age of seventeen, his schooling completed, he returned to India and began working as a journalist. It didn't take long for the name of Rudyard Kipling to become famous across the world, due to his poems and stories.

Kipling was an extensive traveller. He made his way all through India, China, Japan and America before eventually settling in England. Here, he continued to write.

Rudyard Kipling is famous for his stories of India. *Kim*, the story of Kimball O'Hara, the orphaned son of an Irish sergeant, gives us a vivid picture of life in India. Kipling's patriotism: his great love of Britain and the British Empire, are evident in many of his writings.

In 1907 Rudyard Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Have a look in your library for Rudyard Kipling's stories and poems. Perhaps you can find *Stalky and Co.* or *Puck of Pook's Hill*.

Greg, however, had further requirements. "Remember? I said there was one more thing for all six of us to do, to be complete Bush Boys? We've gotta take the Kipling Oath on a Kyber knife." Even Pete looked puzzled. So Greg declaimed,

"O East is east and West is west..."

...Kev thought how appropriate it was for their black and white gang. Greg kept quoting...

...He opened his pocket knife and hacked off six pieces of his mum's homemade bread. He sprinkled each with a pinch of salt. "Leavened bread and salt," he said. "Eat it! It means we are at peace like blood brothers." Each ate solemnly...

...Greg held out the blade of the knife. "You've got to put your finger on it, he told them, "because it's an oath like a 'cross my heart and spit', and 'cut my throat if I break it.'" Somehow six greasy, grimy fingers fitted on the short, stout blade of the scout knife. "Now say after me," he ordered. They repeated his words, phrase by phrase. "I promise - to save the bush - and keep the Ten Commandments - so help me God. - Amen."

From *Bush Boys on the Move*, Chapter 7: At King's Cave, p 91-92

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

OH, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth! ..

...They have looked each other between the eyes,
and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

From *The Ballad of East and West* by Rudyard Kipling

Read the complete poem, *The Ballad of East and West*.



THE KHYBER PASS

If you had been a Briton in the days of British rule in India (from 1805-1947), the Khyber Pass would have been a name well known to you. This pass is an important route through the great wall of mountains that separate Afghanistan and present day Pakistan. In days gone by, Pakistan was part of India and so the pass was known as the gateway to India and had to be closely guarded. The Khyber Pass was the scene of many battles. In 1841, a British army of 16 000 men was wiped out as they retreated from Kabul, in Afghanistan. Forty years later, the pass came under British control and for the first time, a road was made through it. This must have been quite a feat as the pass is shut in by high rocky cliffs which, at one point, are only several metres apart. Forts were built at each end, and near the middle, to protect travellers from the wild mountain tribes who frequently raided the country around Peshawar.

PERSONAL CONVENANT

Based on the Scout Promise, the Baptismal Promises, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Bible

On my honour, I promise
that I will do my best
to be God's glory-giver:-
a child of the Father,
a cross-bearer with Jesus Christ,
my Saviour and Friend,
with the Holy Spirit
as my Helper and Guide;
I reject Satan, sin and selfishness;
I will be a child
of Mary and the Church,
a Good Samaritan to my neighbour
and faithful to the duties
of my vocation in life
to which it has pleased God to call me.

From **Catholic Family Catechism, Disciples Edition**, with 50 Questions and Answers, p 121

HOMESCHOOLING

Many people are surprised to find out that homeschooling is a legal option for education in Australia, although requirements and regulations differ from state to state. Maybe you are being homeschooled and already know this. You might also know that 'broader activities' count towards the required hours of schooling.

Try the following fun and educational 'broader activities'.

1. Read lots of books. Keep a reading notebook. Write something about each book read, eg a summary of its contents, a description of a character, a retelling of your favourite part, a critical review. Add your own illustrations, or pictures photocopied from each book.
2. Celebrate the feast days and do some liturgical craft. Make an Advent or Christmas (or Easter or saints) theme book.
3. Listen to an audio book. Make your own audio books.
4. Read to your younger siblings to practice your read-out-loud skills.
5. Have a spelling quiz (like *Little House on the Prairie*) or a catechism quiz (see KIT term 3, 2004), with prizes, of course.
6. Make your own crosswords on various topics using a downloadable online crossword generator. Make a word search puzzle.
7. Put together a family magazine including news, photos, stories etc. Learn to use Word or Publisher. Give magazine to family and friends.
8. Record favourite poems on cassette. Have a poetry recital evening.
9. Play some word games such as scrabble, hangman, boggle.

10. Keep a diary, journal or logbook, see *Bush Boys on the Move* and *Bush Boys Explorers*, Spring 2006
11. Borrow a selection of craft books from the library. Try a new craft such as salt dough modelling, paper making, or friendship bracelet weaving. Use your skills to make Christmas and birthday presents.
12. Put on a magic show using tricks that have scientific concepts behind the magic. Look in the library for science magic books.
13. Plan and dig a vegetable garden. Keep a logbook of changes in the garden.
14. Plan a week's menus and write shopping lists.
15. Add to the number of main meals you are able to prepare.
16. Buy a new pet (with permission) such as a mouse or an axolotl, investigate its life cycle and draw it. Make a *How to Care for a Mouse* book.
17. Look out for some science kits.
18. Play some maths games. Practice times tables and other maths skills using online interactive games and activities.
19. Learn to draw geometric shapes including, pentagons, hexagons, octagons and stars using a compass and ruler. Draw patterns, and colour. Make 3D models such as tetrahedrons and triangular prisms. Using wire, different papers and cards, beads and other decorations assemble solids into mobiles.
20. Go bike riding as a family. Learn how the gears on a bike work and how to do bike maintenance.
21. When bushwalking take along your nature notebook. Experiment with a new medium such as pastels or watercolour paints when recording flora and fauna.
22. Go bird watching or record birds found in your back yard. Make a bird table or bird seed treat.

Greg's mother had much more to say. "They expect 200 school days a year. We keep to four terms, an average ten weeks each. And remember that broader activities are important and count towards the total."

What were 'broader activities'? Kev wondered. So did his mother, "I suppose you mean, Mary," she said, "that physical education and craft are a part of the five school hours a day?"

Mrs Mary Cumberland smiled. "Of course, just like in ordinary schools. Also excursions, sport, ball games and other games, and swimming in your pool, Flo. Also works of mercy...All the chores count as the practical aspect of 'home science'..."

...Mrs Mary Cumberland continued, "All their projects count - hobbies, indoor and outdoor, carpentry, household repairs, growing flowers and vegetables, planting trees, care of pets and farm animals like our cow..."

...Then there's their recreational reading, not to mention roaming the bush, swimming in the creek, and camping...It's all *educational* - in the broad sense."

From ***Bush Boys on the Move***, Chapter 5: The Day Before the Picnic, pp 60-61